# Coronavirus Testing Hesitancy among Masses in India

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**ABSTRACT**

With Coronavirus (COVID-19) affecting everyone, few people are trying to escape the testing process. The psychology of escaping using tricks and references of high-profile people is difficult to understand at this time and can range from hesitancy to ignorance. Some of the attributions can be the long waiting period for getting results after submitting samples or the poor lodging and food facilities in quarantine centres once quarantined for 14 days. An adequate responsibility and accountability from the various health departments, health workers and most importantly the general population is needed to overcome this pandemic.

*Keywords:* Corona virus, COVID -19, escaping, hesitancy, India, quarantine period

## INTRODUCTION

The current pandemic of the coronavirus (COVID19) hasn't remained a new thing now. It has been over four months since its appearance on the planet infecting around 5.31 million people and causing demise of around0.35 million people worldwide. The situation is no better in India where the number of cases is exponentially increasing and currently the number of infected people has crossed the mark of 1.25 lakh leaving more than 3700 people dead. [1] The initial analysis of the statistics suggested that the elderly people and those with associated comorbidities are at an increased risk of mortality due to this virus .The horizon of affected people has however widened now.

This COVID-19 pandemic is having a disastrous and quite perceptible effect on the physical, mental social health of the population an also on the global economy. Apart from these spheres, the lesser discussed is the social stigma associated with it. People have tried all kind of tricks like having paracetamol to get normothermic and get through the thermal scanning at the high security areas; airports and railway stations. [2] People didn't even hesitate to use their high profile links in escaping the screening and quarantine points. During the tedious process of contact tracing, the COVID teams even had to face the problem of people giving the wrong addresses to avoid the home visits by the team and tests.

All these experiences forced us to cogitate that why are the people so hesitant to get themselves tested? Is it because of the impact on their social profile or is it because of the mere inability to stay in isolation for 14 days if tested positive. In spite of the clear instructions from the Government of India stating that no loss of wages should be suffered by the people undergoing quarantine, many people especially the ones belonging the economically weaker sections of the society still face the fear of losing their livelihood. One of another contributing to the hesitation can be a long waiting

period between the sample collection and the declaration of the reports. This waiting period is full of apprehension and discomfort for the people as they can't even leave the facility till their reports are negative. If the reports are positive, the period of 14 days of quarantine and isolation has to be followed. [3] The unsatisfactory condition of the quarantine centres with poor lodging and food facilities is another reason of people being reluctant for COVID-19 testing.

The Author knows many scenarios in which the people having contact with a positive case were kept hidden to escape the COVID testing. These months of following a restricted lifestyle, a standstill like life and the fruitless quest for the manufacturing of the vaccines by the scientists for COVID has led to the dilution of fear in the minds of people now. The absence of any specific treatment has led to the belief that testing for COVID is in vain. Due to the self-resolving course of disease especially in healthy young population, testing and waiting for results seem to people as a mere waste of time. This kind of thinking has to be changed and it can be done by creating target specific information and education health material. Due to persistent and prolonged lockdown worldwide, social life has come to a halt and people are being forced to live in isolation. Amidst this if they are tested positive for COVID-19, it will add on to the existing mental trauma. Initially, the general population didn't know about the case fatality of the disease and were scared of it but over the while they have realized the low fatality rate and have adopted precautionary measures to stop the spread of COVID 19.They have stopped accepting it as a threat. This has also caused the frameshift of the thinking and led to the hesitation turning into ignorance for testing. A study has revealed that even if the vaccine is manufactured and introduced soon,26 % of participants refused to use it even if available and 37% of these people belonged to the low-income class of society. [4] The resistance shown toward the testing is not a

maiden response of such kind as in the past also hesitancy has always been encountered for new tests and vaccine introduction.

The awareness among people regarding the spread, mortality, morbidity, meaning and purpose of screening and benefits of quarantine related to COVID 19 needs to be well taught. The content of the information being circulated among people needs to be regularly checked and filtered so that the authenticity of the IEC material can be maintained and the spread of rumours and myths be prevented. The importance of valid IEC material lies in curbing the increasing horizon of the disease.

## CONCLUSION

The spread and containment of any disease or pandemic depends upon the policies of government to tackle with them, the health department efforts but most importantly the active participation by the masses. Rather than making stringent and impractical policies, public friendly policies should be made in order to improve the long-term compliance by the population. The common people should also try to understand the grievous situation and act like responsible citizens and provide their support to the government and the frontline corona fighters to defeat this danger to the human race.

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