



## Reopening of Medical Colleges in India Post Covid 19 Second Wave. How to Gear Up Medical Education?

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After COVID19 pandemic, the Government of India has announced countrywide lockdown as one of the measures which included temporary closing of all the medical colleges, educational institutions and universities to curtail the transmission. In order to contain the spread of virus and to ensure proper education of the students, Ministry of Education and University Grant Commission issued several guidelines to the universities and colleges, including the one to impart online education by making the best use of e-resources. Currently we are in the end of second wave, certain precautionary measures will be required to be followed for quite some time to avoid its recurrence, especially in educational institutions like medical colleges. Our medical colleges are varied geographically, in management, in their size, infrastructural capacity, facilities, etc. So, considering all of the above factors they may plan to reopen their campuses in a phased manner, ensuring safety, health and well-being of all students and staff. However, since the states/UTs are in different COVID-19 phases, colleges are likely to face a number of issues at the time of reopening. So, the proper planning and implementation is mandatory in reopening medical colleges. The colleges should follow strict COVID-19 protocol, preparation for risk assessment for hostel students, psychological issues of students on fear of infection, safety measures including sanitisation of premises, thermal screening, ensuring physical distancing, face-cover/mask wearing, respiratory hygiene, hand-hygiene and they should be ready with a plan for monitoring disinfecting measures, safety and health conditions, screening and detecting the infected persons, containment measures to prevent the spread of the virus in the campus are necessary. The active involvement of staffs and students in their colleges are to assist and undertake the work re-

lated to safety and health to prevent an outbreak of the pandemic in their campuses, regular visit of the counsellor for the students to reduce their psychological issues, adequate isolation and quarantine facilities for patients and their contacts, early referral of symptomatic individuals to higher centres, as per local health guidelines, proper hygienic measures should be followed in the hostel mess, wash rooms, kitchens, libraries etc., proper sign boards, symbols, posters should be prominently displayed at appropriate places to remind the students, faculty and staff for maintaining social distancing. Finally, the institutional planning for the smooth conduct of the teaching-learning process during these difficult times is necessary. Colleges should open in a phased manner initially through online education and gradually implementing clinical teaching programmes for the students.

The effective method of preventing COVID-19 infection is the cooperation of the management, students and the staffs. In this multidisciplinary approach the role of state and central government also has an important role in helping the colleges to prepare an effective plan for reopening their campuses, to provide proper supply of disinfectants, facemasks and prepare a plan in advance for their distribution, to create a region specific measures instead of uniform state wise plan, and to have a constant communication between the government and colleges regarding the status of COVID19.

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