



COVID-19 is Not Over Yet - A Personal Experience!

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I am an ophthalmologist currently working in New Delhi, India. When India experienced the initial impact of COVID-19, I was working in a Government Hospital in New Delhi. One of my colleagues (a young, energetic person with no comorbidities) working in the same department, unfortunately, tested positive for COVID-19 in October 2020. He developed severe pneumonia with a high-grade fever which needed hospitalization for 14 days. He had post-viral myalgia and weakness for another two weeks and then he finally resumed his duties after a gap of one month to serve the people of the country.

In Jan 2021, India introduced vaccines for healthcare workers. He got both the doses within one month with mild fever and myalgia as side effects which lasted for a couple of days. After being fully vaccinated, he was relieved as well as excited to perform his duties and contribute to the community with full commitment.

When the second wave struck India in April 2021, he got posted for ICU duties and catered to the sickest COVID cases for many months. After being vaccinated, he was quite sure that he had made it to the list of immune human beings and it gave a sense of confidence to him while working in the most susceptible environment. While he was posted in ICU in May 2021, he developed mild flu symptoms. The thought of going through the same ordeal terrified his soul but luckily, the test results came out to be negative and he recovered completely in 4 days.

As time elapsed, cases declined gradually, and finally, the second wave waned off. Now, in the last week of August 2021, less

than a hundred cases are being recorded in Delhi on a daily basis. One would simply assume that it is extremely unlikely to contract COVID in Delhi in this situation and may even believe in the popular opinion that "COVID is over". But alas, he has again tested positive for COVID-19 with mild symptoms in August 2021 and is currently observing home quarantine.

The silver lining of this story is that he recovered completely from both the episodes but we have extensive data and experience which shows that things have not been so smooth for everyone.

What factors drive the susceptibility of an individual to get infected, and what are the elements which contribute to the severity of the disease, are still under research. Some of the well-known risk factors are age, comorbidities, pregnancy, occupations like healthcare workers, etc [1,2].

Healthcare workers are particularly susceptible to COVID-19 because of the obvious nature of our work. Getting vaccinated and motivating others is a very important part of our fight against this virus and it is the least we can do to help mankind. The vaccine protects from the severe form of the disease and it also helps in curbing the viral mutations which could stop the disease recurrences in the future. Following COVID appropriate behavior even after vaccination is a must, because people can still get infected and can pass on that disease to someone who is not vaccinated yet [3].

I would like to conclude this by wishing everyone good health. There is always a light at the end of every tunnel and we hope to see that light very soon!

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