COVID-19 CASE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE FOR HOME-BASED CARE IN MYANMAR

1 September 2021
WHO MYANMAR
**Foreword**

COVID-19 Case Management Guideline for Home-based Care in Myanmar is developed based on WHO Global Guidelines, adapted and aligned to Myanmar context and needs, when and where hospitalization is a challenge.

The guidelines are targeted for general practitioner medical doctors and have been carefully crafted for different situations taking into account the availability of resources the situation entails. Caution and emphasis have also been made clearly where and when certain medications, procedures and processes are not recommended for home-based settings together with who and what needs to be in place for them to be implemented.

This is an alive Guidelines that will be updated as the knowledge in science progress in the confront of COVID-19.
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COVID-19 Case Management Guideline for Home-based Care in Myanmar

Introduction

This guideline is intended to help the health care providers who are providing life-saving medical treatment to COVID-19 patients in the context of home-based care when referring the patients to the designated health care facilities are not feasible. When possible, a doctor and his/her team should follow the patient at home, in person or by teleconsultation to be sure that the family and the patient have the best follow up.

It is strongly recommended to transfer the patients to the designated health care facilities whenever it is available and it is indicated at any point during the course of home-based management.

Some investigations in this guideline may not be available in some parts of the Myanmar and/or may not be done for certain period of time due to limitation of the resources, health care providers are needed to treat the patient with their own clinical judgement. Similarly, some medicines are out of reach for various reasons, general measures such as prone position, breathing exercise, oxygen treatment, steroid therapy and anticoagulation therapy are the paramount of managing the mild to moderately severe COVID-19 patients and preventing the disease progression.

As infection prevention control measures are the key component of preventing the COVID-19 disease transmission, caregiver training is important in managing the COVID-19 patients at home. Therefore, adequate time should be allowed to give a proper caregiver training and reassessment of their understanding and practicing while managing the patient either at home visit or via teleconsultation.
1. Overview

The natural history of COVID-19 is thought to be driven by two main processes, replication of virus in early phase and dysregulation of immune/inflammatory response to the virus in later phase leading to tissue damage. In view of this understanding, the therapies targeting the replication of the virus are likely to be more beneficial in early phase of disease course whereas immunosuppressive/anti-inflammatory therapies would have the greatest impact in later phase of COVID-19.

Management of COVID-19 patients depend on the clinical spectrum of the infection: mild, moderate, severe and critical. This guideline provides guidance for health care providers on the management of COVID-19 patients in Myanmar where resources are limited.

The newly approved neutralizing antibodies therapy such as Casirivimab plus Imdevimab or Sotrovimab is exclusively for selected patients who are at high risk of disease progression within 10 days of onset of symptoms as WHO has not approved yet. Once WHO has approved, it will be included in guideline for moderate cases with high risk of disease progression.

*Refer to annex 15.8

2. Overall assessment of the COVID-19 suspected patient

For every patient with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 infection, it is recommended as follows:

- Clinical assessment such as conscious level, shortness of breath, respiratory rate, heart rate, blood pressure, SpO2 level and body mass index (BMI)
- Check comorbidities and optimize the comorbidities
- Check current medications
- Do Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) as soon as symptoms develop
  - If positive, treat the patient according to the severity
  - If negative, repeat RDT in 2 days. Advise the patient to self-quarantine till the second RDT’s result is out

3. Confirmation of COVID-19 cases

1. Rapid diagnostic test/PCR test – positive or

2. Rapid diagnostic test – negative but either one of the following features are present together with constitutional symptoms such as fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath, vomiting, headache, muscle ache, acute loose motion, abdominal pain, loss of taste, loss of smell, skin rashes, and red eye

- SpO2 <90% on room air
- Chest X ray → Pneumonia
4. Severity assessment

- Recommend to do severity assessment to all COVID-19 patients

Mild

- Any signs/symptoms of COVID-19 without shortness of breath or low SpO2 or clinical signs of pneumonia or abnormal chest X-ray finding

Moderate

- Clinical signs of pneumonia or imaging suggest pneumonia without low SpO2

Severe

- *SpO2 <90% on room air or Respiratory rate >30 breaths/min or signs of severe respiratory distress such as inability to complete full sentences, use of accessory muscle use

*It is noted that the oxygen saturation threshold of 90% to define severe COVID-19 was arbitrary and should be interpreted cautiously when used to define disease severity. For example, clinicians must use their judgment to determine whether a low oxygen saturation is a sign of severity or is normal for a given patient with chronic lung disease. Similarly, a saturation 90–94% on room air is abnormal (in patient with normal lungs) and can be an early sign of severe disease if patient is on a downward trend. Generally, if there is any doubt, it is suggested erring on the side of considering the illness as severe.

Or

*SpO2 <95% on room air in non-chronic obstructive pulmonary disease patients and SpO2 <88% in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease patients

Note: Severity assessment for paediatric patients is different. Refer to Annex 15.6

Critical

- Respiratory failure, septic shock and/or multiple organs dysfunction

5. Low Vs High risk of disease progression

Recommend to do Low Vs High risk of disease progression to moderate COVID-19 patients

Low risk (Fulfill all the criteria below)

- Age <30 years
- No chronic comorbidities
- No shortness of breath
- Respiratory rate <21 breaths/min
- Normal SpO2
- CRP ≤ 20mg/L
• LDH ≤ 550U/L
• Lymphocytes ≥1 x 10^9/L
• Neutrophils ≤3 x 10^9/L
• Normal CXR

**High risk** (Fulfill *any of the one* criterion below)

• Age 30 and above, particularly >50
• Chronic comorbidities (Chronic lung, heart or kidney disease, Diabetes, immunosuppression, body mass index >25 if age <60)
• Shortness of breath
• Respiratory rate >20 breaths/min
• Low SpO2
• CRP >20mg/L
• LDH >550U/L
• Lymphocytes <1 x 10^9/L
• Neutrophils >3 x 10^9/L
• CXR → Pneumonia

6. **Management of COVID-19 patient depending on the severity**

![Diagram showing risk stratification and severity assessment]

- **Mild**
  - Symptomatic management
  - Inform or seek advice from the healthcare provider immediately if SpO2 <90% on room air at any point

- **Moderate**
  - Consider neutralizing antibodies cocktail (REGN-COV2) if WHO is approved
  - Recommend to start Venous thromboembolism prophylaxis if *PADUA score ≥ 4 with no contraindication

- **Severe or supplementary oxygen is needed**
  - Dexamethasone (or equivalent steroid)
  - Add Tocilizumab or Baricitinib if there is a rapidly increasing oxygen needs despite the patient is on steroid therapy
  - Baricitinib if steroid cannot be used

*Refer to Annex session 15.3*
Notes:

1. When the patient’s condition deteriorates (critically ill or supplementary oxygen needs >15L/min) during the course of the treatment, it is strongly recommended to transfer the patient to nearby health care facility immediately.

2. All intravenous therapies are ideally to be delivered at the health care facility under the supervision of Specialists. However, if intravenous treatment needs to be given at home, it is recommended that anti-anaphylactic measures such as Hydrocortisone, Chlorpheniramine and Adrenaline 1:1000 must be in-hand and must be attended by a medical doctor for every case receiving intravenous treatment.

6.1. Mild

- Do not recommend Dexamethasone (or equivalent steroid) and antibiotics therapy in mild cases

6.2. Moderate

- Recommend neutralizing antibodies cocktail (REGN-COV2) once WHO approved it
- Recommend Enoxaparin (1st line) for prevention of venous thromboembolism if PADUA score is ≥ 4. Fondaparinux or Rivaroxaban can be used if Enoxaparin is not feasible

6.3. Severe or Supplementary oxygen is needed

- Recommend Dexamethasone or equivalent steroid
- Recommend Baricitinib if steroid cannot be used
- Recommend to add Tocilizumab or Baricitinib if there is a rapidly increasing supplementary oxygen needs despite the patient is on steroid therapy

6.4. Critical

- Recommend to refer the critically ill patients to hospital immediately

6.5. Confirmed Venous thromboembolism

- Recommend the patient to refer to the health care facility for therapeutic anticoagulation therapy and do not recommend to treat confirmed venous thromboembolism patient at home in view of patient safety
7. General measures and infection prevention control measures including waste management

7.1. General measures

- Recommend the medical team to provide caregiver training to household members ensuring the safety care for both patient and community. [Refer to Annex 15.7.1]
- All the patients are encouraged
  - To do deep breath-in and breath-out exercise (take a deep breath-in, hold for 5 seconds and deep breath-out, do it for 5 times and one big cough after covering the mouth at the end of the 6th deep breath-in. This is one cycle and repeat another cycle). (Doctor demonstrates breathing technique for coronavirus patients - YouTube)
  - To stay in Prone position (unless it is contraindicated such as recent abdominal open surgery, pregnancy, massive ascites, peritoneal dialysis), left lateral and right lateral position (A Guide to the Awake Prone Position - YouTube)
  - To avoid supine position as much as possible
  - To advise minimal exertion to decrease the oxygen demand
  - To do foot exercise to prevent/minimize deep vein thrombosis

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Fig 1: Foot exercise for Deep Vein Thrombosis adapted from (be7242f30ce13194fc3783c8ee8ba9c5.jpg (600×850) (pinimg.com))
- To eat well, sleep well and hydrated well

Fig 2: Food Pyramid (Source: food-pyramid.jpg (1200x889) (lucanleisure.com))

- Recommend to follow strictly the infection control guideline for COVID-19 by all the household members while taking care of the patient. [Refer to annex 15.7.1]

7.1. Infection Prevention Control measures including waste management

- Recommend to place the patient in adequately ventilated rooms with natural ventilation
- Recommend to limit the number of household members present during any visits by health care person and taking care of the patient
- Recommend to perform hand hygiene after any type of contact with the patient or his/her immediate environment by washing the hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using alcohol based (at least 60% alcohol) hand rub
- Recommend the patient and caregiver to wear medical masks as much as possible and to change the masks on daily basis or whenever wet or dirty
- Recommend to practice rigorous respiratory hygiene; i.e., coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow or tissue and then immediately disposing of the tissue followed by hand hygiene
- Recommend to provide instructions to caregivers and household members on how to clean and disinfect the home using alcohol based solution and 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution at least once a day
- Recommend to use dedicated linen and eating utensils for the patient; these items should be cleaned with soap and water after use
• Recommend to clean the patient’s clothes, bed linen, and bath and hand towels using regular laundry soap and water, or machine wash at 60–90 °C (140–194 °F) with common household detergent, and dry thoroughly
• Recommend to pack the waste generated at home while caring for a COVID-19 patient during the recovery period should be packed in strong bags and closed completely before disposal and eventual collection by municipal service or buried them if municipal service is not available
• Recommend to remove PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), clean and disinfect reusable items such as eye protection and perform hand hygiene before leaving the home
• Recommend to dispose of waste generated from providing care to the patient as infectious waste in strong bags or safety boxes as appropriate, close completely and remove from the home
• Do not recommend to allow the visitors to the patient’s home till the patient is release from home isolation i.e., 10 days after test positive in asymptomatic patient or a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset, plus at least 3 additional days without symptoms (including without fever and without respiratory symptoms)

8. Symptomatic treatment

• Fever → Paracetamol 500mg-1000mg 6 hourly
• Runny nose → Cetirizine 10mg once at night
• Cough with phlegm → Bromhexine 8mg 8 hourly
• Cough without phlegm → Dextromethorphan 15mg 8 hourly
• Muscle pain → Ibuprofen 200mg 4-6 hourly
• Loose motion → Oral rehydration solution as needed, Probiotics 1-2capsules 2 times a day, Dioctahedral Smectite 3G sachet as needed

9. Oxygen Management

• Recommend supplementary oxygen therapy if the patient SpO2 level below 90% on room air even after trying prone position and breathing exercise. [Refer to annex 15.7.2] How to use a pulse oximeter at home I NHS - YouTube
Recommend to inform the health care providers by the household members if the patient’s condition is deteriorating such as declining of SpO2 level, increase needs of supplementary oxygen and conscious level.

Target: SpO2 >90%. Reassess the patient 6 hourly or at least once a day whether it meets a target or not:

- Oxygen 1-5L/min using nasal prong
- Oxygen 6-10L/min using face mask
- Oxygen 11-15L/min using face mask with reservoir bag
- If the patient cannot achieve target SpO2 despite supplementary oxygen 15L/min → refer to hospital immediately

Fig 3: Different types of oxygen delivering apparatus

Fig 4: Oxygen delivery algorithm for adults
10. Steroid therapy

10.1. Currently recommended steroids

- Dexamethasone 1st line
- Alternative: Prednisolone, Methylprednisolone and Hydrocortisone

10.2. When to start

- All the severe cases or confirmed cases with supplementary oxygen is needed

10.3. Dosage and duration

- Dexamethasone 6mg oral/IV once a day with Proton pump inhibitor cover for 10 days or supplementary oxygen is no longer needed, whichever comes first. Alternative: Prednisolone 40mg once a day, Methyl Prednisolone 32mg (8mg 6 hourly), Hydrocortisone 160mg (50mg 8 hourly)
- Maximum duration: 10 days

10.4. How to monitor

- Monitor blood sugar (fasting and 2 hours post-prandial) and blood pressure
- Recommend to consult with an Endocrinologist if blood sugar level >200mg% for blood sugar management

11. Tocilizumab and Baricitinib

- Recommend to consult with a specialist if possible before starting these medicines

11.1. When to start

- Baricitinib → Steroid cannot be used or rapidly increasing oxygen needs and systemic inflammation despite the patient is on steroid therapy
- Tocilizumab → Rapidly increasing oxygen needs and systemic inflammation despite the patient is on steroid therapy
- Do not recommend to use these two drugs together at the same time in home-based management

11.2. Dosage and duration of Baricitinib

- 4mg orally once a day for 14 days or supplementary oxygen is not needed whichever comes first

11.3. Dosage modification of Baricitinib

- Absolute lymphocytes count <200 cells/mm3 → avoid initiation or interrupt the dosing
Absolute neutrophils count <500 cells/mm³ → avoid initiation or interrupt the dosing

eGFR 30 to <60 mL/min → 2mg once a day

eGFR 15 to <30 mL/min → 1mg once a day

eGFR <15 mL/min → not recommended

Increased ALT/AST → consider interruption till the diagnosis of drug-induced liver injury is excluded

Active TB → Not recommended

11.4. Dosage and duration of Tocilizumab

- 8mg/kg, not to exceed 800mg/dose
- May administer 1 additional IV infusion 8 hour after first infusion if clinical signs or symptoms worsen or unimproved
- Maximum: 2 doses

11.5. Dosage modification of Tocilizumab

- eGFR <30mL/min → Not recommended
- Active liver disease or hepatic impairment → Not recommended
- Monitor renal and liver function

12. Anticoagulant therapy

12.1. Currently recommended anticoagulants

- Enoxaparin Subcutaneous – 1st line
- Fondaparinux Subcutaneous
- Rivaroxaban Oral if self-injection is not feasible

12.2. When to start

- PADUA score ≥4 in mild/moderate patients
- All severe and critical patients
- Calculate the risks of bleeding by *HAS-BLED score and justify risks and benefits and explain to the patient

* Refer to Annex session 15.4

12.3. Dosage and duration

- Enoxaparin s.c 40mg once a day
- Fondaparinux s.c 2.5mg once a day
• Rivaroxaban 10mg oral once a day if self-injection is not feasible
• Duration: Till clinically improve (normal heart rate, normal respiratory rate, no shortness of breath, ECG normal) and mobilize. If the patient needs therapeutic dosage of anticoagulants, prophylaxis dose for 3 months is needed

12.4. Dosage modifications
• Renal impairment CrCL <30 mL/min \(\rightarrow\) 20mg once a day for Enoxaparin
• Renal impairment CrCL <30 mL/min or Platelets <100,000/µL \(\rightarrow\) Do not use Fondaparinux
• Renal impairment CrCl <15 mL/min or *Child-Pugh B or C \(\rightarrow\) Do not use Rivaroxaban
• Monitor any signs of bleeding

* Refer to Annex session 15.5

13. Antibiotic therapy

13.1. Choice of Antibiotics
• Depends on local antibiotic guideline or based on clinical judgement

13.2. When to start (Fulfill any of the one criterion below)
• Clinical signs/symptoms of bacterial infection
• Procalcitonin \(\geq 0.25\mu/L\)
• To prevent secondary bacterial infection

13.3. When to stop (Fulfill all the criteria below)
• Clinically stable
• Procalcitonin <0.25\mu/L

14. Special populations (Children, Pregnant and lactating mother)

14.1. Children
• Recommend Dexamethasone 0.15mg/kg IV or oral once a day (maximum dose 6mg per day) if criterion in recommendation 6 are met
• Do not recommend monoclonal antibodies therapy in Home-based management
• Recommend to consult a Paediatrician whenever possible
14.2. Pregnant women and lactating mother

- Recommend steroid therapy in both pregnant women and lactating mother if criterion in recommendation 6 are met as follows;
  - 24 – 33 weeks of gestation ➔ Dexamethasone 6mg IM 12 hourly for 4 doses followed by methyl prednisolone 32mg daily (oral or IV) for total 10 days or till recovery whichever comes first
  - After 33 weeks of gestation or post-partum and lactating ➔ Methyl prednisolone 32mg daily (oral or IV) for 10 days or till recovery whichever comes first
- Do not recommend monoclonal antibodies therapy in both pregnant women and lactating mother in home-based management
- Recommend Enoxaparin or unfractionated heparin for venous thromboembolism prophylaxis in pregnant women if criterion in recommendation 6 are met
- Do not recommend Enoxaparin in lactating mother
- Recommend to consult an Obstetrician whenever possible

14.3. Cancer and immunosuppressive patient

- Recommend to check drug interaction between COVID-19 treatment and cancer-directed treatment and/or current immunosuppressive treatment before giving any COVID-19 treatment
- Recommend to seek an advice from respective specialist before adjusting and/or switching the cancer-directed medication and/or current immunosuppressive treatment
15. Annex

15.1. Drugs need to be stopped in COVID-19 patients

- Azathioprine – need to check with consultant to substitute with other immunosuppression due to risk of flare-up of underlying condition
- SGLT-2 inhibitors
- Metformin – patient who need hospital admission and/or need supplementary oxygen
- Recommend to seek specialist advise for hypoglycemic agent

15.2. Baseline investigations whenever available

Recommend to do the following investigations as baseline

- Full blood count
- Urea and electrolytes and Creatinine
- ALT, AST, Direct Bilirubin, ALP
- LDH
- Ferritin
- C-reactive protein
- Procalcitonin
- D-Dimer
- Uric acid
- Chest X ray

15.3. PADUA Prediction Score for Risk of Venous Thromboembolism

1. Systolic blood pressure >160mmHg – 1 point
2. Abnormal renal function – 1 point
3. Abnormal liver function – 1 point
4. Age >65 years – 1 point
5. Previous stroke – 1 point
6. Prior major bleeding or predisposition – 1 point
7. Labile INR (<60% of time in therapeutic range) – 1 point
8. Taking drugs predisposing to bleeding – 1 point
9. Alcohol use – 1 point

Interpretation

- 0 – low risk
• 1-2 – intermediate risk
• 3 and above – high risk

15.4. HAS-BLED score

1. Systolic blood pressure >160mmHg – 1 point
2. Abnormal renal function – 1 point
3. Abnormal liver function – 1 point
4. Age >65 years – 1 point
5. Previous stroke – 1 point
6. Prior major bleeding or predisposition – 1 point
7. Labile INR (<60% of time in therapeutic range) – 1 point
8. Taking drugs predisposing to bleeding – 1 point
9. Alcohol use – 1 point

Interpretation
• 0 – low risk
• 1-2 – intermediate risk
• 3 and above – high risk

15.5. Child-Puge score

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</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation

Class A → 5-6 points

Class B → 7-9 points

Class C → 10-15 points

15.6. Severe COVID-19 criteria for paediatric patients

• SpO2 <90% on room air or Respiratory rate ≥60 breaths/min in < 2months old, ≥50 breaths/min in 2-11 months old, ≥40 in 1-5 years old or signs of severe respiratory distress such as inability to complete full sentences, use of accessory muscle use, chest indrawing, grunting, central cyanosis
15.7. Caregiver training

15.7.1. For caregivers
15.7.2. How to use pulse oximeter

- Medical team should be included
  - Medical doctor
  - Certified nurse or phlebotomist
  - Mobile laboratory service which can run the investigations mentioned in annex session 15.2, portable ECG and Chest X ray
15.9. Essential equipment and medicines list

15.9.1. Essential equipment (Medical grade)

A. Thermometer
B. Blood pressure measuring machine
C. Pulse oximeter
D. Glucometer
E. Portable ECG machine, oxygen concentrators and/or oxygen cylinders with necessary apparatus such as trolley, flow meter, adjustable wrench, nasal prongs, face masks and face masks with reservoir bags especially for the medical team
F. Mobile laboratory vehicle for the medical team

15.9.2. Medicine list

A. Oral
Paracetamol 500mg
Cetirizine 10mg
Dextromethorphan 15mg
Bromhexine 8mg
Ibuprofen 200mg
Omeprazole 20mg
Domperidone 10mg
Dexamethasone 6mg
Co-amoxiclav 625mg
Azithromycin 500mg
Doxycycline 100mg
Levofloxacin 500mg
Rivaroxaban 10mg
Prednisolone 40mg
Methyl prednisolone 32mg
Baricitinib 4mg
Oral rehydration solution
Probiotics
Dioctahedral Smectite 3G sachet

B. Injection form
Dexamethasone 6mg
Prednisolone 40mg
Methyl prednisolone 32mg
Pantoprazole 40mg
Meropenem 1G
Cefoperazone + Salbactam 1G/2G
Enoxaparin 40mg or Fondaparinux 2.5mg
Tocilizumab 200mg/10mL
15.10. Notes

15.10.1. Do not recommend the use of the following at home-based management

1. Convalescent plasm for the treatment
2. Interferon
3. Hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine
4. Ivermectin for the treatment or prophylaxis of COVID-19
5. Remdesivir and Favipiravir as there is no significant survival benefit even though it can shorten the recovery time in patients who need supplementary oxygen
6. Other non-corticosteroid immunomodulators besides Baricitinib, Tocilizumab, Casirivimab and Imdevimab
7. Over the counter medications/supplements such as Immune booster, liver tonic, placenta stem cells treatment and high dose vitamins supplement

15.10.2. Do not recommend the use of immunosuppression/anti-inflammation medications beyond the maximum recommended dose and duration due to increased risk of developing opportunistic infection, increased risk of venous thromboembolism and no safety data nor evidence of benefits beyond the maximum recommended dose and duration.
References

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Acknowledgements

This guideline was developed by the WHO Country Office staff involved in the COVID-19 Case Management and Infection Prevention and Control Team and discussed with WHO SEARO and HQ. We are thankful to Dr Thant Zin Win who supported the Team as a consultant, Dr Olivier Cattin, a member of COVID-19 case management and infection prevention and control working group, for his significant contribution to the development of this guideline, and to the Myanmar Medical Association for their crucial inputs, most of them incorporated in the Guideline. WHO-Myanmar acknowledges with thanks the time and invaluable advice provided by the COVID-19 Advisory team of the Myanmar Medical Association, the members of whom are Professor Pe Thet Khin, Professor Rai Mra, Professor Myint Han, Professor Soe Lwin Nyein and especially Professor Aye Aung, Acting President of the Myanmar Medical Association for his coordination and facilitation towards making this adaptation possible.