

COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Sameeksha

Volume 6 | WHO Country Office for India | 15 September 2020

A compilation of recent publications on COVID-19 relevant for IPC and AMR containment in India

Publications from scientific journals

Low-cost measurement of face mask efficacy for filtering expelled droplets during speech

- Mask use in public during the recent pandemic, worsened by global shortage of commercial supplies, have led to widespread use of homemade masks and mask alternatives.
- Authors demonstrated a simple optical measurement method to evaluate the efficacy of masks to reduce the transmission of respiratory droplets during regular speech. In proof-of-principle studies, they compared a variety of commonly available mask types and observed that some mask types approach the performance of standard surgical masks, while some mask alternatives, such as neck gaiters or bandanas, offer very little protection.

Science Advances | Article | 2 September 2020 | [Online link](#)

Two metres or one: what is the evidence for physical distancing in covid-19?

- Highlights that rules on a single specific physical distance (1 or 2 metres) between individuals to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 are based on an outdated, dichotomous notion of respiratory droplet size.
- Authors propose graded recommendations that better reflect the multiple factors that determine risk. This would provide greater protection in the highest risk settings but also greater freedom in lower risk settings, potentially enabling a return towards normality in some aspects of social and economic life.

BMJ | Analysis | 25 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

Air travel in the time of COVID-19

- Airlines and airports have introduced new rules and measures to minimise the chances of infection with SARS-CoV-2, which include wearing masks in airports and during flights, expanded cleaning of public spaces to reduce the presence of the virus on inanimate surfaces, physical distancing and ensuring hand hygiene.
- The high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters used on aeroplanes have been found to remove almost all particles of the typical size of coronavirus.
- Enhanced cleanliness and sanitisation will become the norm, and touchless technology will reduce human interaction and facilitate payments and processes linked to travelling.

The Lancet | Editorial | September 2020 | [Online link](#)

Improving handwashing habits and household air quality in Africa after COVID

- Handwashing with soap under running water is a key intervention for preventing the spread of COVID-19. But, this simple and effective intervention for preventing sanitation-related diseases, such as cholera, diarrhoea, etc. and soil-transmitted helminth infections, was not practised.
- Exposure to household air pollution could exacerbate the severity of COVID-19 as it is associated with reduced lung function and increases the risk of respiratory illnesses.
- COVID-19 pandemic may leave a legacy of improved handwashing habits and addressing household air pollution.

The Lancet | Comment | September 2020 | [Online link](#)

What are the sources of exposure in healthcare personnel with coronavirus disease 2019 infection?

- Exposure history of hospital personnel with COVID-19 was evaluated at a medical centre in the US.
- Twenty-five percent of personnel with COVID-19 were exposed to an infected patient or co-worker. Exposure to infected co-workers occurred in nonpatient care settings. Fourteen percent of personnel with COVID-19 were exposed in the community.
- This highlights the need to practice infection prevention and control precautions not only in patient care settings, but also in non-patient care settings and the community.

American Journal of Infection Control | Article | 11 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

WHO and other guidelines

Infection prevention and control for the safe management of a dead body in the context of COVID-19

- Designed for individuals who tend to the bodies of persons who have died of suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Potential users include managers of health-care facilities and mortuaries, as well as religious leaders and public health authorities.
- New or modified content includes clarification of body bag requirements; clarification of personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements during autopsies; updated ventilation requirements during autopsy; additional guidance for burial or cremation in the community, including deaths at home.

WHO | Interim guidance | 4 September 2020 | [Online link](#)

Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of Covid-19

- Annex to *Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19*, and examines considerations for school operations, including openings, closures and re-openings and the measures needed to minimize the risk to students and staff of COVID-19.
- Applies to educational settings for children under the age of 18 years and outlines general principles and key recommendations that can be tailored not only to schools but to specific school-related contexts, such as extracurricular activities.

UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO | Web annex | 14 September 2020 | [Online link](#)

Advice on the use of masks for children in the community in the context of COVID-19

- Provides guidance to decision makers, public and child health professionals to inform policy on the use of masks for children and adolescents in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Recommended use of masks by children and adolescents in schools – less than 5 years (no masks); 6-11 years (risk based approach) and more than 12 years (like adults).
- Accompanied by Q&A: Children and masks, related to COVID-19 questions ([link](#))

UNICEF and WHO | Overview | 21 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

COVID-19 Guidance for Shared or Congregate Housing

- Created to help owners, administrators, or operators of shared (or congregate) housing facilities – working together with residents, staff and public health officials – to prevent COVID-19 spread.
- Shared housing includes a broad range of settings, such as apartments, student hostels, faculty housing, transitional housing, and shelters.
- Guidance provided for emergency operation plans, planning strategies, maintaining safe operations, communicating to staff and residents, common spaces, managing a COVID-19 suspect resident and accepting new residents.

CDC | Guidance | 22 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

Operational considerations for COVID-19 management in the accommodation sector

- This interim guidance includes COVID-19 management in hotels/accommodation sector, including campsites. It includes physical distancing measures, hand and respiratory hygiene, PPE, ventilation and air conditioning, water disinfection, cleaning and housekeeping.
- It is accompanied by frequently asked questions on
 - Staying at hotels and accommodation establishments and COVID-19 ([link](#))
 - Working in hotels and COVID-19 ([link](#))

WHO | Interim guidance | 25 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

Preventing and managing COVID-19 across long-term care services

- A comprehensive set of actions for policymakers, national and local decision-makers and other stakeholders.
- These key objectives and actions are slightly modified but linked to the policy objectives from the policy brief, and their prioritization will depend upon the local context and situation.

WHO | Web annex | 28 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

Diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2

- Provides interim guidance to laboratories and other stakeholders involved in diagnostics for SARS-CoV-2 – and includes safety procedures during specimen collection and handling.
- Updates WHO guidance on “Laboratory testing for COVID-19 in suspected human cases”, dated 21 March 2020

WHO | Interim guidance | 11 September 2020 | [Online link](#)

Promoting public health measures in response to COVID-19 on cargo ships and fishing vessels

- Provides guidance for ship-owners, seafarers and authorities on protecting seafarers working on cargo ships and fishing vessels from transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and management of COVID-19.
- Advises the shipowners to develop a written contingency plan covering surveillance and reporting, case management, cleaning and disinfection, communication and training.
- Preventive measures including general measures, hand hygiene & respiratory etiquette, physical distancing, use of masks; environmental measures; and managing suspected COVID-19 cases and their contacts.

WHO | Interim guidance | 25 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

Considerations for quarantine of contacts of COVID-19 cases

- Intended for those responsible for establishing local or national policy for quarantine of individuals, and adherence to infection prevention and control measures.
- Updates the interim guidance on *Considerations for quarantine of individuals in the context of containment for coronavirus disease (COVID-19)*, published by WHO on 19 March 2020.

WHO | Interim guidance | 19 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

MoHFW/GoI guidelines

Revised SOP on preventive measures to be followed while conducting examinations to contain spread of COVID-19

- Provides minimum precautions to be followed during planning and conduct of examinations by all universities, educational institutions, authorities and examination centres.
- Includes planning of examination, transportation to and from, entry and exit, special precautions for high risk individuals, movement within the examination centre, seating arrangement, conduct of examination and sanitation and hygiene measures.

MoHFW | SOP | 10 September 2020 | [Online link](#)

SOP on preventive measures to contain spread of COVID-19 in skill or entrepreneurship training institutions, higher educational institutions conducting doctoral courses and post graduate studies in technical & professional programs requiring laboratory/experimental work

- Outlines various precautionary measures to be adopted in addition to specific measures to prevent spread of COVID-19.
- Provides guidance on steps to be taken before opening the institution, planning and scheduling of activities, availability and management of supplies, after opening of the institution, activities in common areas – library, canteen, common rooms, gymnasium, etc. and transportation to and from the institution. Includes hygiene and sanitation measures, ensuring safe stay at hostel, guest houses and other residential complexes and management of suspect cases in students or staff.

MoHFW | SOP | 8 September 2020 | [Online link](#)

SOP for partial reopening of Schools for students of 9th to 12th classes on a voluntary basis, for taking guidance from their teachers

- Outlines various generic precautionary measures to be adopted in addition to specific measures to be taken when schools are reopening.
- Provides guidance on steps to be taken before opening of the school, planning and scheduling of activities, availability and management of supplies, after opening of the schools, activities in common area – library, mess, canteen, common rooms, gymnasium, etc. and transportation to and from the institution.
- Includes hygiene and sanitation measures, management of suspect cases amongst student or staff.

MoHFW | SOP | 8 September 2020 | [Online link](#)

Guidelines on safe ophthalmology practices in Covid-19 scenario

- Outlines the preventive and response measures to be observed to minimize and avoid the spread of COVID-19 in eye care facilities.
- Includes preventive measures, and protocols for services in out-patient departments, wards and OT, and for hospital staff.

MoHFW | Guidelines | 19 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

Trainings / IEC resources

Occupational health and safety for health workers in the context of COVID-19

- All health workers require knowledge and skills to protect themselves and others from the occupational risks they encounter, so that they can work safely and effectively.
- Consists of five sections – introduction, infectious risks, physical risks, psychosocial risks, basic occupational health & safety in health services.

WHO | OpenWHO training course | [Online link](#)

WHO COVID-19 mass gatherings risk assessment training

- Purpose of this course is to provide guidance for health authorities and organizers of mass gatherings in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Specific aim of this training is to contain risks associated with transmission of infection.

WHO | OpenWHO training course | [Online link](#)

Emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19: methods for detection, prevention, response, and control

- This course provides a general introduction to COVID-19 and emerging respiratory viruses and is intended for public health professionals, incident managers and personnel working for the United Nations, international organizations and NGOs.
- The specific aim of this training is to contain risks associated with transmission of this infection.

WHO | OpenWHO training course | [Online link](#)

Antimicrobial Resistance and COVID-19

No time to lower the guard on AMR

- The pandemic has underscored the importance of hand hygiene, driving a fast-behavioural shift that might help reduce the spread of all infections.
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infections also promote the inappropriate use of antibiotics in healthcare settings.

The Lancet Microbe | News | 1 September 2020 | [Online link](#)

Multidrug-resistant *Candida auris* infections in critically ill coronavirus disease patients, India, April–July 2020

- A new concern coinciding with the brisk expansion of critical care facilities for COVID-19 patients is the potential for nosocomial spread of *Candida auris* infections.
- *C. auris* is a global health threat because of its ability to colonize skin, persistence in environment, cause nosocomial outbreaks, and lead to severe disease with high mortality rates.
- Candidemia affected 15 critically ill coronavirus disease patients admitted to an ICU – *Candida auris* accounted for two thirds of cases and case-fatality rate was high (60%).

Emerging Infectious diseases | Dispatch | November 2020 | [Online link](#)

Bacterial pneumonia coinfection and antimicrobial therapy duration in SARS-CoV-2 infection

- Despite low rate of bacterial coinfection in SARS-CoV-2, prolonged courses of antimicrobial therapy were prescribed in this cohort.
- The authors recommend active antimicrobial stewardship in COVID-19 cases to ensure appropriate antimicrobial prescribing.

JAC – Antimicrobial Resistance | Article | 25 August 2020 | [Online link](#)

Implications of antibiotics use during the COVID-19 pandemic: present and future

- During the current COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals and medical workers are facing enormous pressure, including a higher risk of infection.
- The article suggests a higher than normal level of administration of antibiotics, and considering the scarcity of data so far, it is likely that the number, type and amounts of antibiotics used are currently undocumented and thus underestimated.

Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy | Article | 24 August 2020 | [Online link](#)