

Turning Around the Current Pandemic to Everyone's Advantage

The ongoing pandemic, COVID-19, is a powerful reminder that the world is at risk for this kind of outbreak and that our role as health professionals and leaders includes support of strong health and emergency preparedness, especially for vulnerable populations. Among various professions, communication professionals should be the voices for health equity and social justice by providing facts about causes of COVID-19 and neglecting fake news in order to bolster people's confidence. For instance, there was a movement going on in social media saying that 'don't spread rumours', where people participated in encouraging people to not follow the rumours and become paranoid, but discover facts by themselves (Pazzanese, 2020).

Political leaders and media also participated in communicating about social distancing and frequent hand-washing, staying at home all the time during the initial months to decrease the number of people infected by the disease. Majority of the people did not take this disease seriously and did not follow the social distancing rule. So, leaders decided to include legal force by preventing people from getting out of their respective houses. Despite these measures, the number was increasing. Migratory people wanted to go back to their home towns because of the lockdown that had happened immediately with no prior announcement by the government. They did not have basic necessities due to temporary closing of work, and they had to leave for their houses on foot as there was no transportation (Biswas, 2020).

After intensive lockdown for a couple of months, people were extremely eager to leave their homes irrespective of the fact that it may lead to a rapid spread of disease due to lack of social distancing. Also, the people who left their homes did not follow certain rules of normalcy like wearing masks, using sanitizers, and avoiding going to crowded places. In certain countries where the government lifted the lockdown, the number of people infected by COVID started increasing, and so the people had to go through the lockdown again. Overall this disease affected several people in different ways globally, and it is primarily the public's responsibility to prevent it from spreading on an immeasurably large scale. COVID-19 has demonstrated that systemic changes

are also critical on a social, political, and economic scale apart from a behavioural scale (Nixon, 2019).

Health professionals have played an important role in this pandemic by treating the patients and also taking risks of getting the disease themselves. Also, this virus has given all the focus to the patients who are infected by the virus, and away from other health problems that also need attention and care. Doctors and nurses take precautions everyday in order to keep themselves and their family safe from this virus. The major concern for all the governments is safety of nurses (Choi, Jeffers, & Logsdon, 2020) at this period as nurses comes in close contact with patients infected by the virus, thereby endangering themselves and their closed ones. Nurses are considered to be leaders in their communities. Nurses play an important role of earning public trust and providing health-related issues to community forums. They are available throughout the processes of healthcare such as mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. What they say matters to the public; therefore, the information provided by them is accurate and upholds the highest standards of nursing ethics (Al Thobaity and Alshammari, 2020).

Certain countries continue to advocate for immediate action to address the personal protective equipment (PPE) shortage, for example, AACN suggests including nurses in key decision-making groups regarding COVID-19. Nursing care is essential during this pandemic. Nurses have proved to be the health warriors who have taken up responsibility willingly. Nurses in every country have stepped up and stepped beyond their calling, putting their lives on the line, with limited resources. They are working round the clock, tackling the pandemic. Therefore, provision of appropriate equipment and resources to nurses is paramount to help them in their fight against this pandemic (Huang et al., 2020).

Nurses comprise the largest component and vital part of workforce, playing a key role in taking care of patients, managing communication between their families at this crucial time where there is no contact, and boosting confidence of patients who are physically and emotionally drained. Despite all odds, nurses continue to advocate for health equity. During this pandemic, nurses continue to research, inform policy, and

effect change to the full extent of their expertise for the benefit of public health. Health systems are inter-dependent in our globalised world. WHO's efforts focus on improving the availability of critical resources for heavily affected countries, through collaboration with the governments and industries around the world. Some effective changes have been made in this pandemic such as routine surgery procedures have been postponed to maintain the resources available for COVID-19. Equipment sharing also has been done to meet the needs (Gibson and Greene, 2020).

The services in some hospitals have also been split into COVID and non-COVID components, with mechanisms to identify and transfer the patients and staff between them to reduce cross-contamination. Nurses everywhere are demonstrating innovation and change, and act as leaders in their positive approach to keeping communities, patients and themselves safe. Public health is important in nursing education. Nurses play an important role in many community programs. Many health centers have promoted new models of nursing care delivery that calls for rapid critical care teaching and preparing the new nursing workforce to minimize risk, optimize patient safety and reduce the burden of supervision (Liu et al., 2020).

Communication plays a major role for advocating new policies and social norms, handling misinformation and fostering behavioral and social change during COVID-19. As health professionals, we know it's worth specifically when it's well planned and inspired by trust and transparency. Epidemics thrive on inequities and weak health outcomes. Since social distancing is difficult, we need to come up with innovative solutions that address key social and economic barriers for the implementation of protective measures (Maqbool and Khan, 2020).

Across the world, vulnerable, marginalized and undeserved communities are at the highest risk of getting this disease. We need to put across these solutions towards strong communities like community leaders, traditional healers, religious figures, women's groups and youth groups. They are the most influential and are able to connect wide range of people within and beyond each community. We can work with them to pass on information, as people are more likely to follow the examples of leaders and trusted groups involved in their community. We need to work with both men and

women influencers. Several communities need certain initiatives to help others. We need to find out what they want like resources such as cash or raw materials, and information such as government measures, hygiene practice, and development of the outbreak. Another approach may be to include other communities, organizations and authorities to help wide range of people. Communities are experts in making good decisions about helping others. So they can be helped by providing the service they need like technologies they are comfortable with, language they prefer and what role they want to play. They are resilient and always find solutions, so health leaders can work with them to continue supporting the services that are required in keeping everyone safe (Guner et al., 2020).

In conclusion, these are certain steps that can be taken in our everyday life to protect ourselves and our loved ones:

- Do not misinform or spread rumours. This virus is unknown and experts are learning about it every day. We have to check our sources of information and make sure they are reliable. Spreading false rumours only creates panic.
- Do not share personal details of people who are sick with anyone. Only health professionals need to be informed. When helping households that are affected with virus, do so discreetly, and with small teams to minimize attention.

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