

## COVID-19 Pandemic: Significance of Lockdown and When to Revoke?

Dear Editor,

The ongoing Corona Virus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has forced the public health authorities to implement stringent measures to interrupt the chain of transmission of the disease.<sup>[1]</sup> In order to contain the rapid spread of the disease, some of the affected nations (like India, United Kingdom, etc.) has imposed complete lockdown.<sup>[1,2]</sup> This has been done as the impact of imposing lockdown in China is very much evident, as the nation has succeeded in interrupting the chain of transmission of the disease and the caseload has reduced significantly.<sup>[1]</sup>

Moreover, it is very important to acknowledge the fact that mere lockdown will not bring about a downfall in the caseload, unless it is simultaneously accompanied by interventions like active interventions (viz. case detection, isolation, treatment, contact tracing, quarantine and strict adherence to infection prevention and control measures).<sup>[2,3]</sup> Further, it is important to consider that the lockdown cannot be there for prolonged periods of time as it interrupts the social life and negatively affects the nation's economy.<sup>[1]</sup>

Thus, it is quite essential to lift these restrictions, but of course the decision should be not taken in haste, as it will again result in the resurgence of the cases and will overwhelm the health system. Thus, the decision to lift a lockdown should be based on the status of the containment of the transmission and the availability of adequate medical services, including logistics.<sup>[2]</sup> In addition, the risk of disease outbreaks in special settings (viz. camps, refugee, etc.) has to be minimized. Further, once the restrictions are lifted, schools, workplaces, or public transport will reopen and it becomes extremely crucial that all measures are in place to minimize the risk of acquisition and at the same time, be well prepared to respond to an occasional outbreak of the disease.<sup>[2]</sup>

In addition, the decision to lift the lockdown restrictions should also be determined by reducing the risk of importation of cases, which will essentially require strengthening of the activities at various points of entries. Finally, the members of the community should be aware about the essential aspects of the disease and should support the government by adhering to the infection prevention measures and other strategies like social distancing.<sup>[1,3]</sup>

In conclusion, the decision to impose a lockdown has been an effective strategy to reduce the risk of transmission. However, it is also important to plan for revoking the same and this will obviously require strengthening of the health system and the complete support from the community.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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