

Letter to the Editor

## Keep the Pot Boiling-The Impact of Social Distancing to Curtail the Transmission of COVID-19 in Non-Healthcare Setting

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**Dear Editor**

Social Distancing is a non-pharmaceutical measure to prevent to decrease and slow down the rate and extent of disease transmission in a community [1]. The Government of India (GoI) through Ministry of Health and Family welfare (MoHFW) has provided guidelines time to time to state and local authorities in order to assist them in decision making for the use of these measure to minimize spread of COVID 19 [2]. These recommendations are built on a foundation of previous knowledge [1, 3-5].

Health care workers are the most exposed and worst affected in this recent pandemic worldwide. Here we narrate an incident where one of our healthcare workers (HCW) contracted COVID 19 infection. The HCW was actively involved in blood donation camps organized by the institute and might have caught infection there. Another HCW, brother of the index case is associated in the office of the authors and was quarantined at home with his family. Families of two brothers were living in a two storey house. All the members of the families living there took all the precautions as per the guidelines of Government of India and when the rest of family members were screened for COVID-19 on day twelve; all the members of the household were negative for the dreaded COVID-19. The younger brother joined office after completing the quarantine period following all the precautions meticulously.

He was interviewed by the authors to know about what measures did they take to avoid getting infected despite living in an apparently congested place. The HCW narrated that they have been following all the guidelines regarding hand hygiene, social distancing meticulously as they were sensitized about the same at the hospital. They had isolated the elder brother, who participated in the blood transfusion camps, very early on first floor of their house. The room had an air condition and a separate washroom. They supplied him the food in his room and he himself washed the utensils. In this course the whole family was taking the precautions like wearing mask, following steps of hand hygiene i.e. before exiting or entering the common places in their house such as kitchen and washrooms. The close contact of the patient self-isolated themselves from the children and elderly at early stages itself even before the test report was received. The family took utmost care in keeping the hygiene of home environment and maintains physical distancing. As a result, their family protected themselves from further transmission of the virus, which is not very much reported in scientific literature.

The importance of preventive measures cannot be emphasized enough. We had an impression that the individuals of lower socioeconomic strata would be more prone to infection considering the congested dwellings and may be the transmission in urban areas would not be in the same proportion. But in fact the importance of following all preventive steps regardless of the environment is realized. This may be food for thought for future studies to study the impact of these non-pharmaceutical steps to prevent not only infectious diseases but also noninfectious ones.

### **Conflicts of interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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