



Editorial

COVID-19 & NCD – A geopolitical health compulsion

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COVID-19 is an immediate threat to global health status. This novel zoonotic virus probably had a recent human-human spread. In spite of severe containment exercises, including “Lock Down” measures, it did spread rapidly among humans to reach “Pandemic status.”^[1] As the global health resources were directed to combat this deadly pandemic, there was undue stress placed on routine non-communicable diseases (NCDs) care system. In the initial phases of the pandemic, in several parts of the world, the NCD care system saw the diversion of valuable workforce, finances, space, and other resources.^[1-3] With understanding of this viral disease, it was eventually identified that the NCDs were vulnerable and that the mortality rate was influenced by the NCD status.^[4] Taken together, surveys identified that NCDs care delivery system in nearly all countries was drastically affected to the extent that a “wave” of NCDs following COVID-19 was predicted.^[1-5]

This probably emanates from the diversion of scarce resources, inability of the patients to reach the hospitals and laboratory, delayed or restricted access to prescriptions, drugs and laboratory facilities, etc. Furthermore, the misconceptions about nosocomial spread of COVID-19, less than ideal understanding of the COVID-19-NCD relationship could add fuel to the raising NCDs wave in post-COVID-19 situation.^[1-3]

We are in the pandemic mode for more than 6 months continuously. The toll of COVID-19 on NCDs in 185 countries portrays a worrisome trend.^[1] Even among the NCDs, few of them have attracted more attention of global health community than others.^[5] NCDs such as mental health and oral health are more often neglected than others and drastic alterations in outlook are the need of the hour.

Most the countries and policy-makers are currently focusing on containing COVID-19 under geopolitical health compulsion. Their aim also includes reviving economy. While doing so, authorities also should be aware of the consequences of poorly managed or overlooked NCDs for a longer duration during COVID-19 situation. Simultaneously, they should encourage the use of telemedicine for virtual medical consultation and examination, rendering diagnostic tests from remote places, and doorstep delivery of the prescribed drugs.^[1] It is everybody's wish and expectation that there should be no large second wave of COVID-19. In all possible scenarios, it can and should be avoided. However, such an endeavor should not culminate in a wave of worsening NCD.

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