

Importance of Home Care during COVID-19 Pandemic

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On January 9th, 2020, the World Health Organization issued a statement warning of the resurgence of a disease that has a possibility of a human-to-human epidemic. It wasn't until March 11th, 2020, that the WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic affecting every country in the world.

Healthcare during the COVID-19 epidemic has been a difficult undertaking. Patients were terrified of contacting medical services for fear of this completely unknown disease. Healthcare workers, on the other hand, were not only frightened but also suspicious of COVID-19 cases or potential carriers of any patient they came in contact with. As a result, there was a large disconnect between patients and providers. The situation undoubtedly hindered the continuity of medical care and prevented in-person medical consultation and physical examination. This may have played a role in the deterioration of the health status of many patients, especially those with chronic diseases. The psychological impact of the pandemic and reports of mass deaths from COVID-19 were also major factors driving anxiety and poor health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted not just personal prosperity, but all areas of life, from the economy to other sectors. It affected every aspect of health and living conditions, and the economic damage was immense.

In response to this new situation, health policymakers began to consider other alternatives to alleviate the health disadvantages of the population. Among many others, telemedicine and home care (HC) was the

most important. Telemedicine was a simple process to help provide advice and re-prescribe medications via telephone consultation, but it didn't allow healthcare workers to physically consult and examine patients. As such, significant abnormal signs or symptoms that could lead to patient-defining illness were missed. Home care, on the other hand, tended to be the better option because it allowed physical contact with the patient and increased patient and professional satisfaction.

Home care is a type of care that is provided for patients in their own homes or facilities. This care may be medical, social, or psychological, provided by an interdisciplinary team consisting of professionals and skilled medical personnel such as physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, paramedics, caregivers, and unlicensed assistive teams with or without certification. The role of these teams is to provide patients with necessary services in their home environment to meet their needs without the hassle of moving the patient to primary, secondary, or tertiary care units and preventing the spread of diseases during the epidemic crisis [1].

HC is not a new concept and has been around for a long time. As late as the Islamic era, Muslim doctors would visit patients' homes and provide holistic medical care. There are many factors that make HC a necessity rather than a luxury, such as the current pandemic facing the world, an aging population, changes in family structure from extended to nuclear families, changes in the disease pattern (more non-communicable diseases), a greater focus on person-centred care, and the need for efficient and continuous care that extends beyond the facility.

Providing home care services during the COVID-19 epidemic had many benefits, including reducing the fear and anxiety of being in the health care facility, and avoiding the stress of being quarantined in a hospital which may lead to reduced immunity making the patient more prone to complications. Moreover, it can prevent the stigma of being a case of COVID-19, especially in the culture that is dominant in our part of the world. Nonetheless, COVID-19 patients feel secure because they are surrounded by their families. This provides a positive element of support, reduces separation stress and anxiety, and decreases the risk of nosocomial infections due to prolonged hospitalization. When delivered in a professional and well-planned manner, HC can replace non-urgent hospitalization and reduce or prevent the spread of disease.

In addition, COVID-19 patients who have been discharged from the hospital require regular follow-up and ongoing care. This may potentially be provided by healthcare workers through efficient home care services. Also, the home environment is ideal for increasing family health awareness and close contact with COVID-19. In terms of money, HC has been advocated as a more cost-effective method than hospitalization [2].

In summary, home nursing has proven to be an ideal way of providing healthcare services to patients, especially during infectious disease epidemics.

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