

# Health workers treating Coronavirus pandemic are now at high risk of infection says public health experts

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Jaipur,

To mark the priceless contribution of health workers on this World Health Day, leading University in public health, IIHMR University, Jaipur hosted a webinar to create awareness for all these medical frontlines on protection of Health Work Force. Doctors, nurses, care takers and paramedics around the world are facing an unprecedented workload in overstretched health facilities, and with no end in sight. In India, as the positive cases are rising drastically overnight, it is giving birth to a situation where our health workers will be at high risk of getting this infection.

The webinar was hosted by the panel of experts including Dr SD Gupta, Chairman, IIHMR University, M.D. (Preventive & Social Medicine), Ph.D. (Epidemiology), Dr. DK Mangal, Dean, Research, IIHMR University, MD (Preventive and Social Medicine), Fellow, Indian Public Health Association; and Dr. Pankaj Gupta, PhD, CMA, Fulbright Fellow, GCPCL (Harvard), President, IIHMR University. The Webinar was attended by 187 participants across India.

The panelists discussed on various risk factors of infection when health workers treating patients with COVID-19. They request to adhere to the guidelines of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that recommended the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) including a gown, gloves, and either an N95 respirator plus a face shield/goggles or a powered, air-purifying respirator (PAPR).

“In the midst of pandemic, healthcare workers are at the frontline. When the frontline becomes incapacitated, the health system disintegrates. So, it becomes pivotal that we support them, who are stepping directly into COVID-19’s path to aid the afflicted and help halt the virus’s spread despite their own well-founded fears. The potentially overwhelming burden of illnesses that stresses health system capacity increases the pressure and at the same time, the adverse effects on health care workers, including the risk of infection also adds on to this pressure,” said Dr SD Gupta, who is also one of the members of the advisory committee for COVID 19, Rajasthan Govt.

Dr D K Mangal added, "The heroism, dedication and selflessness of medical staff allow the rest of us a degree of reassurance that we will overcome this virus. As the outbreak is progressing day by day, healthcare worker infection rates would range from 2.1% to as high as 50%."

Dr Pankaj Gupta said that IIHMR University has been leaving no stone unturned as this was the 3rd webinar hosted in the series to create awareness against different aspects of coronavirus pandemic.

The experts had urged people to maintain social distancing which helps to break all the channels of transmission, hence blocking community transmission.

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