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**Title: A Quick Assessment of Medicines and other Food items used by COVID-19 positive (+ve) persons at home**

Dr. Muntasir Faisel; Dr. Maksudul Islam; Nuhad Raisa Seoty; Dr. Sayeda Shabnam Malik; Nusrat Jabin; Prof. Saidur Rahman (Khasru); Dr. Abu Jamil Faisel

There is a scarcity of the health service providers (only 0.3 doctor and 0.17 nurses for 1000 people in Bangladesh). In that kind of a situation COVID-19 pandemic started where many patients preferred home treatments. That is why there has been a need to understand the treatment arrangement, medicines and alternative medicine used commonly in managing COVID-19 positive patients at home set up. To understand the home-based COVID-19 care and treatment management a qualitative study was conducted between 04 June 2020 to 30 August 2020.

In this study, in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted among the confirmed COVID-19 positive (+ve) patients after they have recovered over telephone of which 66.6% respondents were from urban and 33.4% were from rural areas.

The mean age of the respondents was  $31.3 \pm 10.9$  years and most of the respondents about 63% of them have completed their graduation level of education. The respondents were predominantly Muslims (94%), with 5% being Hindu and 2% were Catholic Christians. The income levels of the respondents were of moderate quintile.

Fever was the most frequent symptoms of the respondents (71%) followed by generalized weakness, body ache, and the cough and sore throat. About 17% had a loss of smell and 23% suffered from Aguesia (loss of taste).

It was found that on an average the respondents spent Tk. 12, 000 for the cost of medicines etc. during their illness due to COVID-19. It was said that the specific medicines were not available in the pharmacies and they had to procure it different sources with high price.

All of the patients interviewed took Paracetamol followed by different Vitamins such as Vit. C, B and A. In the study antibiotics particularly Azythromycin has been taken by almost 70% of the patients followed by Doxycycline in 10% and Chloroquine and Hydroxychloroquine in about 9% of the patients. Very few of the patients mentioned of taking other antibiotics such as Amoxicillin, Levofloxacin and Amoxicillin plus Clavuronic acid etc. In very few cases the positive patients have used hydrocortisone and Ivermectine.

All of the patients took precautionary measures and supplementary food besides taking medicine and regular foods. Hot water gurgling (84%), steam inhalation (79%), drinking hot water (76%) were the most used items by the +ve patients, followed by breathing exercise (35%), free hand exercise (10%) and prone breathing (20%).

There had been lots of challenges in this study of which getting full address and telephone numbers collection was the biggest one. The positive persons had a lot of questions and did not want to give complete interviews.

COVID-19 infection and its scourge are not going away from the country. Thus the common people should be provided with suggestions and help. The recommendations thus coming out of the study is that the Government should have a thorough review of how and what +ve patients are doing while staying at home. The findings of this study will help the Government in taking the next step of doing a national level review and develop future guidelines for home care and management of COVID-19 positive patients.

People should be made aware that many of the medicines taken are un-necessary and have not been proven to be effective in curing/treating COVID-19 and have side effects and, in that case, they should know what steps should be taken if any untoward reaction happens.

Taking of vitamins, different kinds of fruits and spices are certainly of no harm but may be some nutritionist could develop a list of the most important and essential ones and those could get on to the national guidelines for home care of COVID-19 positives.

Many of the precautionary measures used by the positive persons are very helpful such as the respiratory exercises but currently not being promoted by the Government. These should get incorporated in detail in the National Guideline for the Care and Management of COVID-19 infections.

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Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW)

## **Bangladesh Health Watch**

68 Shahid Tajuddin Ahmed Sharani, 5th Floor, icddr,b Building, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh  
Phone: 880-2-9827501-4, Fax: +880 2 58810383, Email: [bhw@bracu.ac.bd](mailto:bhw@bracu.ac.bd), Web: [www.bangladeshhealthwatch.org](http://www.bangladeshhealthwatch.org)