Concept of family physician is required to relaunch in post Covid19 era for Urban India

Dear Editor,

Family doctor was known old concept of Indian Family Health care. If you ask people who are in the age group of 50+, they can remember the concept of family doctor, which was popular during their childhood. Each family has one family Doctor Kaka (Uncle), in any small to big problem first family was approaching him/her and based on his/her guidance they do full treatment or further referral. The words of family doctor were final and no one argue.

This concept was gradually lost over period. Today it is almost disappeared. In urban area, the family physicians are almost eliminated. In urban area of India, all citizens have direct access to the any consultant or specialist. They can visit them, in walking to specialist without any control. This freedom of access of services have created burden to the health system in the current second wave of Covid19 pandemic. The almost all urban and metro cities are flooded with unusual load of patients and the system almost breakdown. Hospital beds are full, oxygen supply exhausted, drugs are out of stock, and manpower is fatigued. End result is that the citizens are dying and queued dead bodies at crematories. Worst affected part of India is urban and metro cities.[1]

What is the root cause of the devastating loss of Indian urban life? Personally I feels, the elimination concept of family doctor is the root cause. Urban people are more dependent on the consulting practice or hospital practice. In normal days, such model is acceptable but in such pandemic or any epidemic this model will disrupt the service. The hospital industry without support of primary care will soon get exhausted. Everyone wants to admit in hospital and everyone is showing mediclaim or money power to get in hospital. However, this will not work. There is urgent need to redistribute the health care delivery in urban area. Here as primary health care system is strong enough in rural areas of country, so suggestion is for urban and metro areas.

What should be the model of redistribution of urban health care?

The urban or metro cities has population ranging from 1 to 20 million. Government has to develop model which should be similar to primary health care in rural area with slight modification. There should be appointment of general practitioners arewise and allot 1000 families to each general practitioner with objectives to provide full primary care to these families. These families will contact their family physician and if required he/she will approve referral as per government or the local system to develop for secondary or tertiary care. The basis of the economic model can be developed based on various models which are successfully running all over world.[2]

Such model is need of hour to prevent the current system overburden and collapse. New Delhi has tried Mohalla clinic and said that it can be useful in such pandemic if use effectively.[3] So as public health and community health expert, I suggest to implement primary health care model in all urban and metro cities of India without delay. It will surely help to reduce burden at secondary and tertiary care. Effective referral and feedback mechanism will improve situation also.

Financial support and sponsorship
Nil.

Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

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Received: 01-05-2021
Accepted: 12-05-2021
Published: 05-11-2021

How to cite this article: Pandit N. Concept of family physician is required to relaunch in post Covid19 era for Urban India. J Family Med Prim Care 2021;10:3939-40.

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