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Impact of COVID-19 on obstetrician and gynaecologists

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Abstract

COVID 19 pandemic is spreading across the world. It is a major public health problem globally. It's important to know the effects of COVID 19 on doctors who are treating this huge pandemic. Hence this study determines the knowledge, attitude, practice among Obstetrician and Gynaecologists about COVID 19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID 19, pandemic, obstetrician and gynaecologists, public health

Introduction

A novel disease called 'Corona virus Disease 2019' was first detected in Wuhan, China ^[1]. In India, the first case of COVID 19 was first reported on 30th January 2020 ^[2]. WHO officially named the disease as Corona Virus Disease 2019 [COVID 19] on 11 February 2020 ^[2]. It is a major public health problem globally. WHO declared it a global pandemic on 11 th March 2020 ^[1]. COVID 19 is caused by a novel human corona virus [SARS-COV-2] ^[3].

There is a lot of fear, anxiety, panic, and controversies about this disease. In India many studies have been carried out about the impact of COVID 19 on health workers and the general population. But in this study we are focusing on the impact of COVID 19 only on Obstetrician and Gynaecologists. Each and everyone is at risk of getting infected by COVID-19. But those with immunocompromised states are at increased risk of COVID 19 infection. Pregnancy with its physiological changes is one of these conditions. Therefore pregnant women are at increased risk of COVID 19 infection compared to the general population. It is also equally important to know that Obstetrician and Gynaecologists treating them are also at increased risk. Tele consultation won't be enough and Obstetricians need to examine and treat them in person even in suspect or positive cases. The cytokines storm that occurs in COVID 19 infection is mostly the cause that makes pregnant women with COVID 19 infection to have increased morbidity and mortality ^[3].

Materials and Methods

A cross sectional electronic survey was conducted among Obstetrician and Gynaecologists between July 15th 2020 and July 30th 2020 during the first wave. Study was conducted in Mysore and Madikeri district. Only Obstetrician and Gynaecologists were allowed to participate in this study.

A survey questionnaire was generated in English on Google forms. The survey covered the aspects of COVID 19 impact on Obstetrician and Gynaecologists. The participants were contacted on whatsapp. All were provided with the weblink of the survey form. All participants were informed about the study objectives. Consent for participation was obtained. Participants identity data was not collected. All participants were given only one chance to fill up the form.

During the second wave in 2021 there was significant change in SOP (Standard operating procedure). Depending on the knowledge gained in the first wave resurvey was conducted between 1st May 2021 to 31st May 2021 during the second wave. Improvement in management and changes in protocol noted.

Results Of Questionnaire During 1st Wave

A total of 100 participants completed the survey. All the participants were Obstetrician and Gynaecologists. Among them, 56% were working in medical colleges, 20% were working in nursing homes, the remaining 24% in government set ups, clinics etc.

Among 100 participants 64% of them underwent training or webinar regarding COVID 19. 36% did not undergo training or webinar.

All the participants knew that COVID 19 was a viral disease. 92% of them knew about the mode of transmission i.e through respiratory droplets and spread from contact with contaminated surfaces and objects.

69% of them knew the definition of what is known as “close contact”, definition being “being within 2mts/6 feet of a patient with COVID 19 or direct contact with secretion of COVID 19 patients.

All of them had knowledge about hand hygiene

79% of them had knowledge about hand hygiene of visibly soiled hands and were practicing hand hygiene through soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

76% of them were using N95 masks during their work. 22% were using surgical masks.2% were using cloth masks.

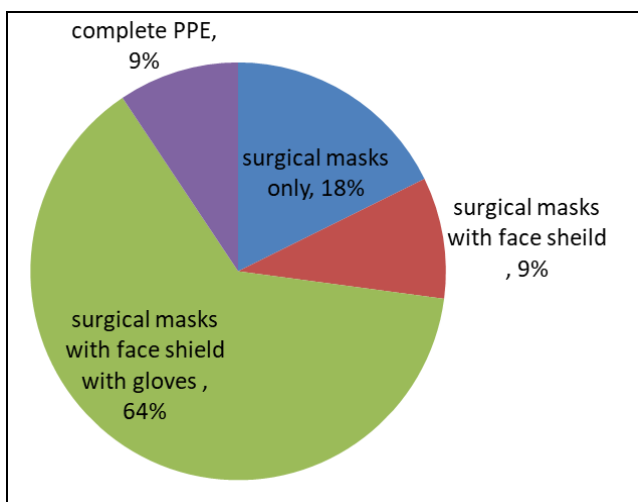


Fig 1: 64% of them were using surgical masks with gloves with face shield as PPE. 18% were using surgical masks only as PPE. 9% were using surgical masks with face shield as PPE. 9% were using complete PPE kit during work.

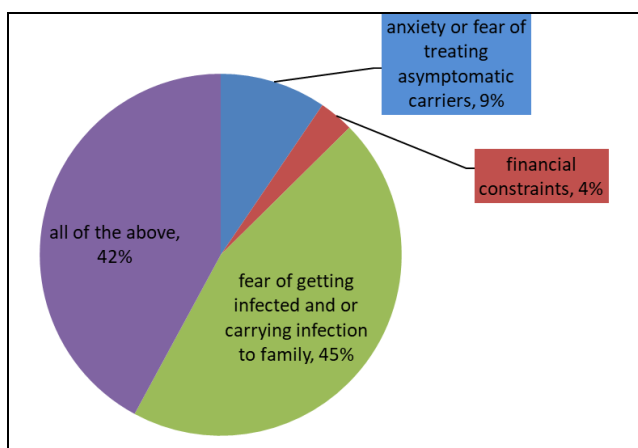


Fig 2: Knowledge about mental health status was documented. 45% were having the fear of getting infected and /or carrying infection to family. 42% of participants had anxiety or fear of treating asymptomatic carriers and fear of getting infected and /or carrying infection to family and financial constraints. 9% had only anxiety or fear of treating asymptomatic carriers. 4% had only fear of financial constraints

95% of them had knowledge about prevention of COVID 19 infection spread which was the use of alcohol based sanitizers,

use of soap and water wash, social distancing and wearing a mask.

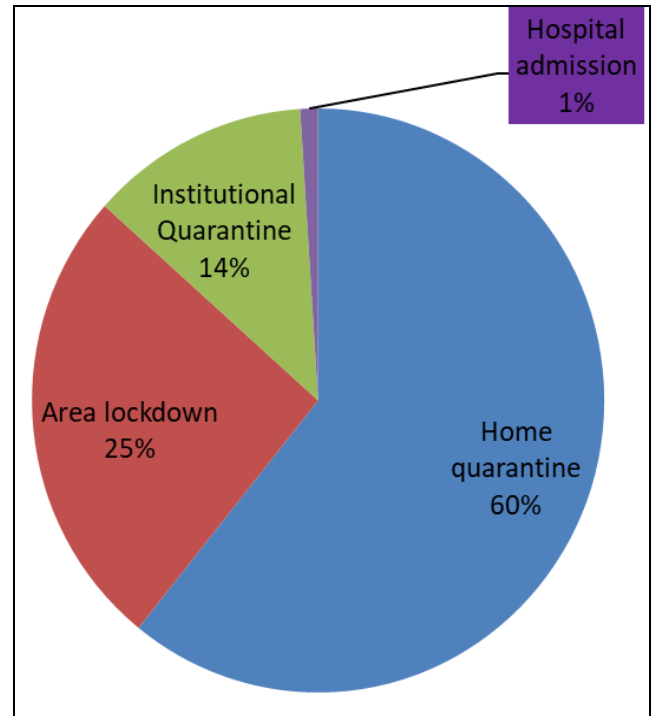


Fig 3: 60% of them had knowledge about the best method for prevention of community spread i.e through home quarantine. 25% thought it would be an area lockdown.14% thought it would be institutional quarantine. Remaining 1% thought it would be hospital admission.

97% were aware of HCQ prophylaxis

62% of them had taken HCQ prophylaxis according to the ICMR guidelines.

75% of them were aware about the disinfection of the area and instruments exposed to a suspected person with 1% sodium hypochlorite solution.

61% of them had attended COVID positive or suspected patients during ANC checkups or during labour.

54% of them wore surgical masks and face shield only as precautionary measure during the ANC Out Patient Examination. 33% of them wore only surgical masks with PPE during ANC Out Patient Examination. 12% of them wore only surgical masks as precautionary measure. 1% of them did only thermal screening of patients.

78% of them wore complete PPE kit as a precautionary measure during conducting labour or surgeries in OT. 13% wore only surgical masks , face shields with boots while conducting labour or surgeries. Remaining 7% wore only surgical masks with a face shield. 2% wore only surgical masks.

67% of them wanted to do elective surgeries during COVID 19 pandemic situation.

75% of them were of the opinion that COVID patient or a suspect can breastfeed the infant.

Questionnaire During 2nd Wave- resurvey was conducted during 2nd wave in 2021 to note the changes in knowledge, SOP (Standard operating procedure).

98% had undergone some training or webinar regarding COVID -19. All knew modes of spread , close contact and importance of SMS(Social distancing, Masking, Sanitisation).

86% used sanitizer for hand hygiene, & 14% used soap and water after every patient contact.

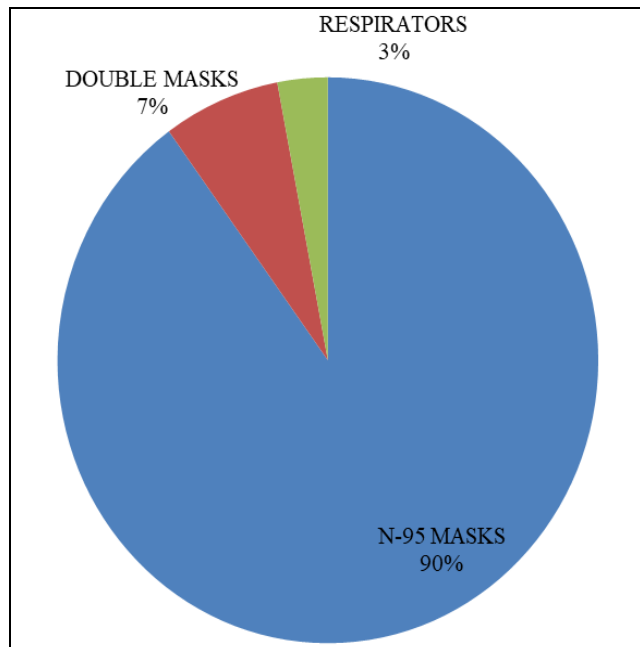


Fig 4: 90% used N-95 masks, 3% used respirators, and 7% are using double masks in OPD & OT.

95% are using N-95 with face shields. 5% use PPE in OPD.

86% are fully vaccinated with 2 doses of COVISHIELD or COVAXIN. 14% have taken a single dose.

All believed that vaccine reduces the chance of infection and severity of disease.

All agreed about increased stress in treating COVID -19 Cases.

All agreed it was necessary to screen the patient before admission.

52% had access to COVID -19 RTPCR / RAT test in their workplace and were screening all patients before admission. 36% were referring patients to nearby government centres for screening. 12% referred the patient to nearby government OR private hospital for admission and were doing only OPD practice.

76% of gynaecologists have attended to the positive patient in labour. 84% wanted to deliver the patient by LSCS only . 16% were willing to wait for normal delivery.

Discussion

This study was conducted keeping in mind to know the impact of COVID 19 only on Obstetrician and Gynaecologists. We have attempted to know the knowledge of practitioners about COVID 19 about the precautionary measures taken while treating ANC patients, while conducting deliveries and while operating. In our study most participants had undergone training or webinar. Hence they knew to manage the pandemic well without putting themselves into much stress. All of them knew the mode of transmission. Hence they took care to follow proper precautionary measures. All participants had knowledge about hand hygiene which is very important in tackling the pandemic. Use of N95 masks during their work has increased significantly in 2nd wave compared to the first wave which says that most of them took proper care while handling patients. 45.3% of them had fear of getting infected or carrying infection to family. This fear is expected to be in every doctor treating but Obstetricians and Gynaecologists are the ones who are exposed to a patient for a longer time during operation and deliveries. 95.9% of them had knowledge about prevention of COVID 19 infection spread which is very important in managing the pandemic and also taking care of patients keeping aside all obstacles. 97.9% of

them had taken HCQ prophylaxis during the 1st wave and stopped once cases were reduced. This practice was not followed during the 2nd wave . 75.3% of them were aware about the disinfection of areas and instruments exposed to a suspected person which implies that most of the practitioners disinfected their working areas and instruments. 76% of them attended COVID positive or suspect patients which implies that more than 2/3rd of the practitioners were exposed but most of them had very good knowledge about use of PPE's and disinfection measures. 78.9% of them wore complete PPE as a precautionary measure during conducting labour surgeries, as all of us are exposed for a very long time during surgeries and also exposed to body fluids. 75% of them were of the opinion that COVID patient or a suspect can breastfeed the infant. All believed in vaccines and followed vaccine protocol.

Hence we conducted this study especially to know the impact of COVID 19 on Obstetrician and Gynaecologists and knowledge of Obstetrician and Gynaecologists about the practice during this pandemic.

Conclusion

This study highlights the overall impact of COVID 19 on Obstetrician and Gynaecologists and knowledge among practitioners about this disease. Even though knowledge about Covid -19 infection during pregnancy has improved significantly among OBG practitioners in the last year, fear of infection and stress of work is still significant . It is still necessary to conduct routine training to improve knowledge among all Obstetrician and Gynaecologists so that clinical practices will be strengthened and enhanced. SOP should be used by all and strategies to address fears to improve attitude to work during COVID 19 pandemic should be employed since we have to live with this pandemic for many more years to come.

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