



PUBLIC
HEALTH
FOUNDATION
OF INDIA

GDC
GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE



RIS
Research and Information System
for Developing Countries
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



**e-Workshop Series on
Occupational Health & Safety
in the Context of
Covid-19**
9th - 13th May 2020

REPORT

Training Division, PHFI

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INTRODUCTION

Countries around the globe are currently tackling the pandemic with lockdown and other containment measures. Many countries are now trying to open up trade and industries. Bringing life back to normal after lockdown remains a major concern in the coming weeks. Looking at this urgent need of tackling the pandemic and preparing for opening of workplace specially industries and healthcare facilities, there is a need for preparing the healthcare professionals on the occupational health & safety.

The healthcare professionals are the backbone of a country's defenses to save lives and limit the spread of disease. They play a central and critical role in global response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthcare professionals face higher risks of potential COVID-19 infection in their efforts to protect the greater community and are exposed to hazards including pathogen exposure, long working hours, psychological distress, fatigue, occupational burnout, stigma, and physical and psychological violence. The protection of healthcare professionals is one of the priorities for the response to COVID19 outbreaks. Occupational health services in health care facilities have an important role for protecting health professionals and is crucial to maintaining an adequate and functional workforce and ensuring the continuity of the emergency response and essential health services.

In the above context, PHFI, in collaboration with Global Development Centre (GDC) and Research Information system (RIS) has taken the initiative to develop and implement a five webinar series on Occupational Health & Safety in the context of COVID-19 for healthcare, occupation health and disaster management professionals from Asian and African countries.

Partner Organizations

Global Development Centre (GDC)

Established at RIS, the Global Development Centre (GDC) aims to institutionalize knowledge on India's development initiatives and promote their replication as part of knowledge sharing in Asia and Africa with the help of its institutional partners, including civil society organizations. It attempts to explore and articulate global development processes within a micro framework and works as a unique platform to collate and assimilate learning processes of other countries towards promotion of equity, sustainability and inclusivity based on a multi-disciplinary and multi-functional approach.

For more information, please visit: www.gdc.ris.org.in

Research and Information System (RIS)

Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) is a New Delhi-based autonomous policy research institute that specializes in issues related to international economic development, trade, investment and technology. RIS is envisioned as a forum for fostering effective policy dialogue and capacity-building among developing countries on global and regional economic issues. The focus of the work programme of RIS is to promote South-South Cooperation and collaborate with developing countries in multilateral negotiations in various forums. RIS is engaged across intergovernmental processes of several regional economic cooperation initiatives. Through its intensive network of think tanks, RIS seeks to strengthen policy coherence on international economic issues and the development partnership canvas.

For more information, please visit: www.ris.org.in

Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI)

The Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) is a public private initiative that has collaboratively evolved through consultations with multiple constituencies including Indian and international academia, state and central governments, multi & bi-lateral agencies and civil society groups. PHFI is a response to redress the limited institutional capacity in India for strengthening training, research and policy development in the area of Public Health.

PHFI recognizes the fact that meeting the shortfall of health professionals is imperative to a sustained and holistic response to the public health concerns in the country which in turn requires health care to be addressed not only from the scientific perspective of what works, but also from the social perspective of, who needs it the most.

For more information, please visit: www.phfi.org

Objective of the e-Workshop

The overall objective of the e-workshops was to raise knowledge and awareness of participants in ensuring the continuity of the emergency response and the essential health services while tackling any new and emergent health needs. The specific objectives include:

- A** | To provide the healthcare professionals credible information on practice and applicable principles for effective COVID-19 prevention & management.
- B** | To orient the participants on occupational health needs and response in the context of COVID-19
- C** | To equip the participants with information, procedures, and tools required for Hospital Preparedness during and post COVID-19 lockdown.
- D** | To orient the participants on disaster management & preparedness during the times of COVID-19 and the mental health implications of COVID-19.

Preparation

Selection of Topics

In response to tackle the urgent need of the pandemic and preparing for opening of workplace specially industries and healthcare facilities, there is a need for preparing the healthcare professionals on the occupational health & safety. PHFI took the initiative of developing a webinar series on Occupational Health & Safety in the context of COVID-19.

The 5-webinar series for participants from Asian and African countries included the following topics:

- Occupational Health & Safety: Practicing Principles Applicable for Effective COVID-19 Prevention & Management.
- Hospital Preparedness During and Post COVID-19
- Understanding COVID-19 & Tackling Post COVID-19 Situation
- Disaster Management & Preparedness During the Times of COVID-19
- Mental Health Implications of COVID-19

Program structure and schedule

Webinar duration: 1 hour and 15 minute session each day on consecutive days

Looking at the content that needed to be delivered and minimum time that a participant could spare, we decided to have 60-minute lecture with slides followed by 15 minutes of Question & Answer session. However, in practice, the Q&A session usually extended beyond 15 minutes depending on the number and type of questions. The 5-webinar series was planned on consecutive days with one session each day.

Timing – 3.00 – 4.15 pm India Standard Time (9.30 – 10.45 am GMT). Timing was arrived based on the local time of South Asian and African countries.

Program schedule:

Table 1 – e-Workshop Program Schedule

S. No	Topic	Date	Faculty
1	Occupational Health & Safety: Practicing Principles Applicable for Effective COVID-19 Prevention & Management	9 th May 2020	Prof G Jayaraj
2	Hospital Preparedness during and post COVID-19	10 th May 2020	Dr Pawan Kapoor
3	Understanding COVID-19 & tackling Post COVID-19 Situation-Risk assessment & management	11 th May 2020	Prof G Jayaraj
4	Disaster Management & Preparedness during the times of COVID-19	12 th May 2020	Dr Raghotham Narayanaswamy
5	Mental Health implications of COVID-19	13 th May 2020	Dr Sidharth Arya

Participant nomination/registration

The first step towards advocacy of the webinar series was to reach out to the 743 participants from 35 countries who had registered for the previous series. These participants were sent a link to register again for the new series. PHFI also reached out to various networks and international collaborators for wide publicity and advocacy of the e-Workshop series. These included GDC fellows, professional societies, training collaborators and international contacts of our faculty. The program details were also disseminated by GDC-RIS through Twitter. We established a dedicated team for rigorous follow up with key contact person through email, WhatsApp and phone calls. Participants queries were promptly answered by the team.

Registered participant profile

A total of 264 participants from 18 countries registered for the e-workshop. Detailed participant profile is as follows:

Table 2 – Participant profile

S. No.	Characteristics	Number	Percentage
1	Number of participant registered	264	
2	Gender		
	Male	160	60.6
	Female	104	39.4
3	Age distribution		
	Up to 30 years	56	21.2
	31-40 Years	114	43.2
	41-50 years	47	17.8
	51-60 years	27	10.2
	Above 60 years	20	7.6
	Average Age	39.5 years	
4	Educational qualification		
	Medical Graduate/Post Graduate	182	68.9
	Others (Nutrition, Public Health etc.)	82	31.1
5	Affiliation		
	Government	147	55.7
	Private	104	39.4
	Others (NGO, UN bodies etc.)	13	4.9

Table 3 - Country wise distribution of registered participants

S. No.	Country	Participants
1	Afghanistan	2
2	Australia	1
3	Bhutan	6
4	Burkina Faso	1
5	Egypt	1
6	Ghana	3
7	Kenya	5
8	Malaysia	1
9	Mozambique	7
10	Myanmar	80
11	Nepal	67
12	Nigeria	42
13	Oman	1
14	Pakistan	1
15	Rwanda	8
16	Saudi Arabia	2
17	Sri Lanka	33
18	United Arab Emirates	3
	Total	264

Faculty selection & Content development

Faculty for the webinar were selected on the basis of their expertise and experience in Occupational Health & Safety, disaster management, hospital administration and mental health. Further contents were developed keeping in view the current and future needs in the COVID-19 context. A detailed faculty profile is given in Annexure-1

Implementation

As in case of earlier webinar series, Zoom Webinar platform worked well for the participants and panelists. Therefore, we decided to continue with the same platform to implement this e-Workshop series. Speakers were oriented in advance regarding proper use of the Zoom Webinar platform. A dedicated team of IT professionals provided support during each webinar session. The IT team worked with the faculty in advance to ensure unhindered delivery of sessions. Overall, the delivery of webinars on the Zoom Webinar platform was of good quality without technical glitches.

Technical Sessions

Each technical session was moderated by Dr Sandeep Bhalla, Director-Training, PHFI. At the beginning of each session, the moderator provided the global update of COVID-19 situation followed by an introduction to the speaker and the topic of the day. This was followed by the one-hour session by the faculty using slides. During the session participants were free to type their questions in the Q&A section. Questions were usually taken up at the end. In case the participant faced any difficulty in following the session the same was promptly handled by the IT team and the moderator. At the end of the lecture, the moderator summarized the key points and opened the floor for Q&A. The moderator also ensured that all questions were adequately addressed by the faculty. Each session had a rapporteur who reported on the proceedings. A detailed session wise proceeding is given in Annexure – 2.

Attendees

A total of 217 participants from 23 countries attended various sessions during e-Workshop series. The following table shows the country wise number of participants who attended one or more webinar sessions.

Table 4 – Country wise number of attendees

S. No.	Country	Participants
1	Afghanistan	5
2	Australia	1
3	Bhutan	5
4	Canada	1
5	Germany	1
6	Ghana	2
7	Hong Kong	1
8	Kenya	2
9	Malaysia	1
10	Maldives	1
11	Mozambique	7

12	Myanmar	79
13	Nepal	39
14	Nigeria	42
15	Oman	1
16	Pakistan	1
17	Rwanda	5
18	Saudi Arabia	1
19	Singapore	2
20	Sri Lanka	12
21	Uganda	1
22	United Arab Emirates	3
23	USA	4
	Total	217

Participant Queries

The following table summarizes the queries raised by the participants that were addressed by the respective faculty:

Table 5 - Summary of participant queries

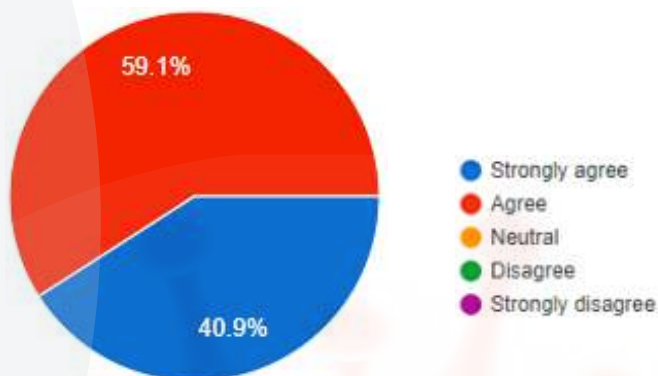
Session	No. of query	Summary
1	8	The questions focused on improvement of occupational health measures in India, compulsory implementation of occupational health measures, use of PPE, disposal of samples and issue of manual labour and if spraying of chlorine or alcohol will kill corona virus.
2	27	The questions focused on the reuse and types of PPE's, forecasting the additional need of PPE's, disinfection of human body by spraying disinfectants, handling of dead patients, infection rate difference in rich & poor countries, organization of human resources in post COVID era and the multidimensional route towards health strengthening.
3	14	The questions focused on if zinc, vitamin D, Garlic can help, why men are more affected than women, how to survive alongside COVID-19, if the corona virus can spread from money and is portable UV sterilizer handy.
4	15	The questions focused on the different infectivity rates for different people, different ways to be prepared for the future, precautions during dead body removal, handwashing guidelines and if exposure to sun can prevent exposure.
5	12	The questions focused on adequacy of sleep, digital hygiene, burnout, anxiety, books on mental health, maintenance of health force after COVID, any guideline on alcohol to manage stress and awareness in times of lockdown.

Participant Feedback

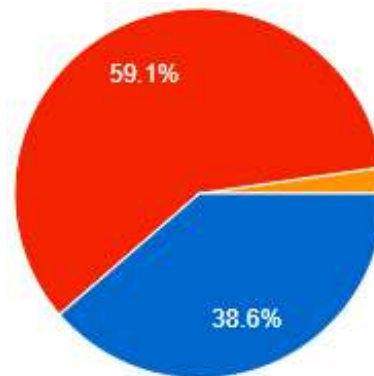
The entire webinar was highly appreciated by the healthcare professionals. Session-wise feedback was taken from the participants for further improvement of the program. The overall feedback about the e-Workshop series is as follows:

Participant feedback for e-Workshop series

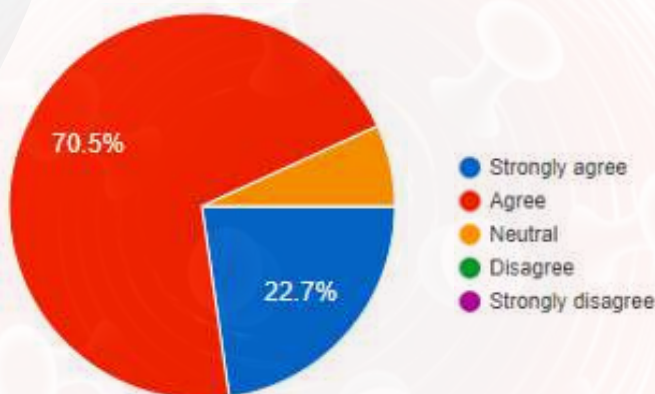
1. The choice of topics were informative and met your learning expectations



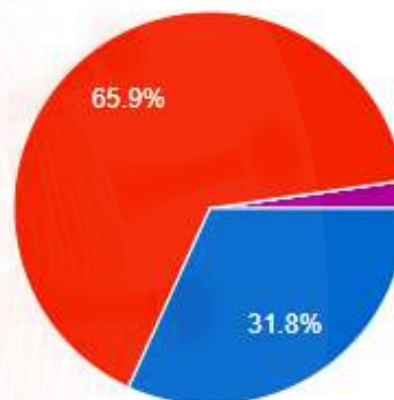
2. Speakers were able to deliver their topics efficiently



3. Timing of webinar session was appropriate



4. Quality of delivery and overall implementation by PHFI met your expectations



Participant Testimonials

Participant Testimonials from SAARC countries

Dr Naeemullah Aubey, Family Medicine Specialist, Afghanistan

“I am very happy to be participant of such good workshop.”

Dr Stephen Tetteh Engmann, Family Physician, Ghana

“ *Great and Informative webinar series* ”

Dr. Benson Singa, Clinical Research Scientist, Kenya

“ *The organization of these series has been phenomenal and presenters quite well versed with their fields. This has been an eye opener and very educative to me* ”

Dr. Joao Portela Macuba Junior, Medical Doctor Mozambique

“ *It was a beautiful course. You could learn a lot, super experienced teachers* ”

Nay Lin Oo, General Practitioner, Myanmar

“ *Very happy and please to attend this e-workshop and many thanks to all for workshop. Hope to continue to make many CME and workshop.* ”

Prof (Dr) Sunil Kumar Joshi, Head, Department of Community Medicine, Kathmandu Medical College, Nepal

“ *It's a nice presentation and as a board member of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH), I commend your activities related to Occupational health* ”

Dr. Deborah Aladi Ododo, Registered Dietician & Nutritionist, Nigeria

“ *I have acquired more knowledge on covid19 The myths and truth about it; how to communicate with the patients at the same time observing OHS measures and procedures thereby improving my skills as a HCW and trainer. The e workshop has also helped me to improve my counseling skills* ”

Dr Kwibuka Bertin, Rwanda

“ *I strongly appreciate your organization, team work, commitment and empathy to other HCW around the world to help each other to have common understanding for good performance to approach a certain pandemic as a public health trainer. Please, think about certificate to empower all attended participants to encourage them to continue following different workshops prepare by PHFI and to inspire them to become good leaders and ambassadors of PH in their institutions. keep going.* ”

Dr Milton Mathushanan Mahendrarajah, Medical Officer & Flight Surgeon, Sri Lanka Air Force, Sri Lanka

“ *I can recommend this kind of Distance learning are really beneficial to all of them.* ”

Annexures

Annexure 1- Faculty Profile



Prof. (Dr.) G Jayaraj (Managing Trustee- Occupational Health Foundation & Managing Partner- Occupational Health Services):

Dr Jayaraj is Ph.D, DNB (OH), M.Sc (Occ. Med-UK), MBA (HR), Dip. Ind. Health, Dip. Ind. Safety, MBBS. He has served more than 35 years in the major PSU ' Neyveli Lignite Corporation India Limited (a mining & power generation industry) in various positions since 1973 & retired as the Executive Director- Medical Services from this organization in 2007.



Air Marshal (Dr.) Pawan Kapoor (Retd.) (Vice Chairman, Rus-education and Vice Chancellor, Lincoln American University):

Dr Pawan Kapoor is MBBS (AFMC, Pune), MHA (AIIMS), DNB (Health & Hospital Admin), DHHM, M Phil, MMS, MBA and FAHA. Dr Kapoor is currently the Vice-Chairman of Rus-education and Vice Chancellor of Lincoln American University. He was also the Former Director General Medical Services in Indian Air Force, Former President and Honorary Surgeon. Dr Kapoor has published in more than 50 National, International Journals and text books. He is also one of the Founder members of National Accreditation Board for Hospital & Healthcare and has been the Chairperson of Technical and Accreditation and Ethics Committee.



Dr Raghotham Narayanaswamy (Physician, Occupational Health Specialist, Ergonomist & Industrial Hygienist, Flipkart Group):

Dr Narayanaswamy is currently heading the occupational health PAN India for Flipkart Group (Flipkart, Myntra, Jabong, F1 Solutions, Jeeves & Phonepe). He was a medical adjudicator for two studies- Predictors of Arrhythmic and Cardiovascular Risks in End Stage Renal Diseases (PACE) and Decisive Support Interventions in Renal Replacement therapies (RRT). He has also done extensive work on Ergonomics in E-Commerce and manufacturing industries.



Dr Sidharth Arya (Assistant Professor, Institute of Mental Health):

Dr Arya is MBBS, MD (Psychiatry) and Fellow in Addiction Medicine. He is currently working as an assistant professor in Institute of Mental Health. He is an honorable board member and representative of South East Asia region of Network of Early Career Professionals working in Addiction Medicine (NECPAM). Dr Arya is the recipient of early career awards from World Psychiatry Association, World Health Organization, and International Society of Addiction Medicine. His interests include addiction psychiatry, community mental health, and psychological help seeking.

Annexure 2- Session Wise Proceedings

Proceedings

Day 1: 9th May 2020

The session started with Dr Bhalla with an update on the global statistics and asking for cooperation in defeating COVID-19 pandemic. He introduced Ambassador Amar Sinha & Dr Srinath Reddy. Dr Reddy emphasized on the importance of knowledge sharing and mutual learning. The role of occupational health and safety was highlighted as working conditions once the lockdown is removed will require adequate protection for the workers. Dr Bhalla then introduced the eminent faculty Professor Dr Jayaraj for his session on ***“Occupational Health & Safety: Practicing Principles Applicable for Effective COVID-19 Management”***

The technical session covered how occupational safety concepts of anticipating, recognizing, evaluating and controlling hazards can be applied to COVID-19 infection. The session covered the management of COVID-19, epidemiological triad, disease pattern, psychological hazards like PTSD, job loss related frustration, role of technology in overcoming the problem of working remotely, fitness and anxiety, stress and loneliness management and the hierarchy of controls being used in defeating corona virus.

The queries focused on implementation of occupational safety measures in COVID-19 infection. Dr Bhalla finished the session by summarizing the session and thanking the participants, faculty and his colleagues.

Day 2: 10th May 2020

The session started with Dr Sandeep Bhalla with updating the participants with the global and Indian statistics for COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Bhalla then introduced the eminent faculty Dr Pawan Kapoor for his technical session on ***“Hospital Preparedness during and post COVID-19.”***

The technical session covered the hospital preparedness with a focus on triage, surge capacity, characteristics & requirements of isolation wards in hospitals, training of HCW in IPC practices like hand hygiene, donning & doffing of PPE, adoption of safety measures when seeing OPD patients or performing aerosol generating procedures, proper disinfection & decontamination procedures, biomedical waste management, grading of COVID care facilities, proper ways of handling and transporting of dead bodies. The faculty emphasized that structural and procedural changes are required for future hospital preparedness post COVID-19 pandemic. He finished his lecture by asking the participants to think global, act local and be vocal and learning from this pandemic to be prepared for the future.

Dr Bhalla then summarized the lecture and Dr Kapoor answered all the questions. Dr Bhalla ended the session by thanking all the participants and the faculty.

Day 3: 11th May 2020

The session started with an update on the global and local statistics of corona virus pandemic. He also stated how the virus has caused a big havoc by spreading across the world and not limiting to any country's boundaries. He then introduced the respected faculty Professor Dr D Jayaraj for his technical session on ***“Understanding COVID-19 & tackling Post COVID-19 Situation.”***

The faculty introduced the participants to different myths present in different parts of the world, explaining the role of culture and mental aspects of myths. He also discussed the various rumors persisting about corona virus and debunking them with the actual facts. He deliberated on the concept of fear and stated the fact that post corona, the world has changed.

Dr Jayaraj also cleared all the queries from the participants. Dr Bhalla appreciated Dr Jayaraj for his take on a difficult topic and thanked him and the participants for the webinar.

Day 4: 12th May 2020

The session started with Dr Bhalla updating the participants with statistics from Africa and Asia. He stated that the disaster preparedness is crucial before the disaster strikes. HE then introduced the eminent faculty Dr Raghotam Narayanswamy for his session on ***“Disaster Management & Preparedness during the times of COVID-19”***

His session focused on viewing COVID-19 as a disaster and planning response to it as such. He covered the topics on disaster cycle, various stages of pandemic response, different countries like New Zealand, South Korea, India & Africa's response to COVID-19, the sustainable developmental goals in dealing with disaster, integration of occupational safety and health like reduction of chemicals, physical and psychosocial hazards in the response and the strategies for COVID-19 like social distancing, disinfection, sanitization and transportation.

Dr Bhalla summarized the lecture and all the queries were addressed by Dr Raghotam. Dr Bhalla finished the session by thanking the participants and the faculty.

Day 5: 13th May 2020

The session started with Dr Bhalla with updating the statistics on COVID-19. Dr Bhalla introducing the topic stating that doctors are facing mental health problems as they are come in contact with infected patients and that's why the mental health problems need to be addressed. Ambassador Amar Sinha said all topics of COVID were covered with this webinar and gave introduction for the next webinar focused on women handling COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr Siddharth Arya then started his session on ***“Mental Health implications of COVID-19.”*** He started stating that first pandemic is COVID but the second pandemic would be on mental health. He focused on symptoms like burnout, moral injury, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, excessive internet use, stigma etc. are being faced by both the healthcare workers and patients. He also suggested interventions to manage mental health some specific to the doctors and some general guidelines for the patients. He also covered psychological first aid, sleep & digital hygiene and relaxation techniques to help with your emotions rather than suppressing them. Dr Bhalla then summarized the webinar and Dr Arya cleared all the doubts of the participants. Dr Bhalla closed this session by thanking the support of all participants, GDC-RIS team, faculty and his colleagues.

Annexure 3- PHFI Team



Prof. K Srinath Reddy
President



Mr Prashant K Singh
Director, Coordination & Strategy Development



Dr Sandeep Bhalla
Director, Trainings



Dr Pushkar Kumar
Senior Public Health Specialist



Dr Haresh Chandwani
Public Health Specialist



Mr. Dilip Kumar Jha
Senior Program Manager



Dr. Deepak Monga
Program Manager



Mr. Vikas Dogra
Program Coordinator



Mr Vishnu Nair
Senior Web/ Graphic Designer



Mr. Mohammad Adnan
Web/Graphics Designer



Mr Vivekanand Tripathi
Web/Graphics Designer



Mr Himanshu Sharma
Web/Graphic Designer



Dr Paridhi Mody
Program Officer



Ms Nayan Agrawal
Program Assistant



Mr. Girish Nayyar
Program Assistant

Few Glimpses from the webinar sessions



Prof K Srinath Reddy and Ambassador Amar Sinha giving opening remarks



Prof. (Dr.) G Jayaraj's Session



Dr Pawan Kapoor's session



RESPONSE
Standby - Sustained community person-to-person transmission of virus.

- Initiate emergency management arrangements as required.
- Check stockpiles, pre-deploy essential items and plan use of resources and medical stockpile items (e.g. PPE, antivirals and vaccines, and resources for support administration).
- Enhance surveillance activities that enable early characterization of disease.
- Commence communications to mobilize health services, emergency responders and to inform the public about the pandemic and other key response strategies.
- Awareness campaigns developed to reflect the age and cultures of at-risk groups.
- Review and consider appropriateness of social distancing measures.
- Ensure laboratory capability/capacity, including specimen collection and transport are ready.
- Review support arrangements for home isolation of cases and home quarantine of contacts.
- Prepare primary and secondary care services for anticipated surge in patients (e.g. use of triage protocols, plans for cohorting and using infection control protocols and resources).

Dr Raghotham Narayanaswamy's Session



Dr Sidharth Arya's session





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