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COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown: Changing trends in Ophthalmology for in-patient and emergency services

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Statement of the problem: Changing trends in terms of patient load, presenting complaints, surgical procedures, and resource utilization in a multispecialty tertiary care hospital have been noted after lockdown due to COVID-19. **Methods:** Retrospective data were collected from Ophthalmology in-patient and emergency services of a government medical college and multispecialty tertiary care hospital in North India. Data pertaining to patient census, presenting complaints, surgical procedures and resource consumption were compared in the 6-month period (March 25 to September 30, 2020) following national lockdown and subsequent gradual unlock to data of same period of the previous year. **Findings:** A total of 1152 new patients visited Ophthalmology emergency service, whereas 324 sought tele-ophthalmology consultation. Majority were males (61.8%, n = 712), whereas average age of presentation was 34 ± 7.2 years. The number of patients seeking emergency ophthalmic care reduced by 23.9% in the current year, in-patient record reduced by 96.53% and number of surgeries reduced by 98.13%. Tele-ophthalmology services comprised 21.95% of the total patient load. Use of triple layered surgical masks increased by 85.7%, use of disposable gloves increased by 89.5% but interestingly the availability of chlorhexidine hand rub fell by 15.9%, in the current year compared to last year. **Conclusion and Significance:** COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown have reduced the number of patients visiting tertiary health care facility for ophthalmic care. As manpower and resource consumption has increased, smart management is needed to tackle the current scenario efficiently. Tele-ophthalmology must be promoted and we must understand the changing trends to plan for the future accordingly.

Biography

Dr. Parul Ichhpujaani has her expertise and passion in the field of glaucoma and neuroophthalmology. She is the Member of Associate Advisory Board and Education Committee of World Glaucoma Association. She was enlisted in the Powerlist 2015 of "Best 40 ophthalmologists under 40". She is an avid researcher and an academician having Co-authored and edited several books.

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