

COVID-19: Shortage of Oxygen in India

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Editorial

COVID-19 second wave in India causing the rapid increase in cases and deaths. India is experiencing a severe shortage of oxygen supply to the hospitals in every state of the country. The statistics show the increase in cases from March 2021, rapid spread, and late detection of the corona, resulting average of 3.5 lakh cases every day. Most COVID-19 patients have a respiratory tract infection, and their symptoms can include shortness of breath in the most severe cases. Patients suffering from severe respiratory stress and are hospitalized, but facilities at hospitals and delay treatment following deaths. Due to an increase in the number of cases, several hospitals have developed Fever OPDs to provide efficient patient screening based on COVID-like symptoms. The main goal of establishing a fever OPD is to separate the most suspicious patients who are most likely to contract the deadly virus inside to make a diagnosis rapidly, and the infection can be contained. Following the appropriate sampling through swab testing and PCR, the diagnosed person is admitted to COVID-19 wards to undergo specific care, including regularly encouraging the patient. The viral load is an important consideration, as it influences the onset of symptoms and the number of days a person may stay positive.

Oxygen is the primary requirement for patients in intensive care units. Standard lungs value ranges about 100 mm HG alveolar oxygen partial pressure and 90-100 mm Hg arterial oxygen partial pressure. Oxygen is a relatively inexpensive but life-saving resource. A bulk cylinder manifold,

oxygen concentrators, or liquid oxygen could be used to supply the hospital. The oxygen requirement in a hospital is calculated as follows: approximately 25% of patients admitted to a hospital may need approximately 6 L of oxygen per minute at any given time. Since many patients need oxygen therapy as part of their COVID-19 treatment, there are oxygen shortages. Medical practitioners have seen the survival advantages of supplying high-flow nasal oxygen rather than artificial ventilation to many COVID-19 patients throughout the pandemic.

Furthermore, due to design limitations, many older hospitals' oxygen pipes cannot meet the increased flow demands. Portable oxygen is being used in hospitals to reduce the demand for wall oxygen, especially in alternative treatment sites; however, the increased usage of portable oxygen leads to an oxygen cylinder shortage of all sizes. Delivery of oxygen to hospitals on time has also been an issue, and oxygen flow regulators needed for both wall and portable oxygen tanks are in short supply. The government of India is trying to fulfil the demand for oxygen supply to hospitals by stopping the supply of oxygen to industries and receiving a supply of medical equipment globally. Significant companies like Tata group, Reliance industries, and other government-aided industries started supply oxygen to hospitals in different states of India. The prospect of this product being rationed or inaccessible is frightening in and of itself. Although oxygen may be available in operating rooms and intensive care units, it may not be available on the wards. Similarly, pulse oximeters, which are essential for diagnosing hypoxia, may not be readily accessible, increasing the risk. Despite all advancements in medicine, healthcare workers may feel powerless in treating patients if they cannot administer oxygen, the most straightforward and yet most important medicine of all.

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