

Awareness of COVID-19-related ocular symptoms in a tertiary health care hospital

Dear Editor,

The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) has left our healthcare system fractured for some time to come. Though ocular manifestations of COVID-19 in reported cases are few and far between, an understanding of it among healthcare workers is pertinent for watchful management during this pandemic.^[1-4]

To assess the level of awareness among healthcare workers and to further educate them, we distributed a questionnaire-based survey form (via Google Forms) to gauge their current level of grasp on the ocular manifestations of COVID-19 [Appendix 1]. This was followed by a brief educational session conducted

by the post-graduate residents. Following a stratified random sampling, the survey form of 18 yes/no variant questions on various ocular manifestations of COVID-19 was circulated among doctors (consultants, post-graduates, and interns) as well as staff nurses in all departments of our hospital for a period of 30 days.

Responses from the 18-question survey were segregated into four levels of awareness, tabulated, and statistically analyzed. Our results showed that 51.6% of the total respondents had *moderate awareness*, followed by 35.3% who either had *low awareness* or were *unaware* while only 13.1% had *high awareness*. Of note was, 19.9% were not aware that COVID-19 can affect the eye and 19% felt ocular transmission cannot occur alongside nasopharyngeal transmission. Only 23.8% of respondents said they came across patients with ocular manifestations of COVID-19 during this pandemic and 19.5% of them referred the patient to an ophthalmologist.

We conclude that a majority of health care workers at our hospital were at least *moderately aware* that COVID-19 can affect the eye; however, recognition of clinical features with prompt referral to an Ophthalmologist during this pandemic was significantly low. We correlated this to the lack of sufficient awareness and education of health care workers. As ocular manifestations are often overlooked, time spent on raising awareness would prove prudent for vigilant management of COVID-19.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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APPENDIX 1

AWARENESS OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) RELATED OCULAR SYMPTOMS IN A TERTIARY HEALTH CARE HOSPITAL

QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

NAME:

AGE:

SEX:

DEPARTMENT:

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT ROLE/DESIGNATION IN THE HOSPITAL?

- INTERN
- POST GRADUATE RESIDENT
- SENIOR RESIDENT
- FACULTY
- STAFF NURSE

1. ARE YOU AWARE THAT- COVID 19 CAN AFFECT THE EYE?
 - YES
 - NO
2. DO YOU FEEL OCULAR TRANSMISSION CAN OCCUR ALONG WITH NASOPHARYNGEAL TRANSMISSION IN COVID 19?
 - YES
 - NO
3. AS A HEALTH CARE WORKER ARE YOU REGULARLY WASHING YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP, WEARING A FACE MASK, PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING IS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE FOR COVID 19?
 - YES
 - NO
4. AS A HEALTH CARE WORKER ARE YOU USING PROTECTIVE EYE CARE AND FACE SHIELDS REGULARLY?
 - YES
 - NO
5. DO YOU FEEL REDNESS OF THE EYE CAN BE AN OCULAR SYMPTOM OF COVID 19?
 - YES
 - NO
6. DO YOU FEEL WATERING OF THE EYE CAN BE AN OCULAR SYMPTOM OF COVID 19?
 - YES
 - NO
7. DO YOU FEEL IRRITATION AND FOREIGN BODY SENSATION OF THE EYE CAN BE AN OCULAR SYMPTOM OF COVID 19?
 - YES
 - NO
8. DO YOU FEEL EYE PAIN CAN BE AN OCULAR SYMPTOM OF COVID 19?
 - YES
 - NO
9. DO YOU FEEL DEFECTIVE VISION CAN BE AN OCULAR SYMPTOM OF COVID 19?
 - YES
 - NO
10. DO YOU THINK COVID-19 CAN SPREAD FROM PERSON TO PERSON VIA THE EYE AND ITS SECRETIONS?
 - YES
 - NO

11. DO YOU THINK COVID-19 CAN PRESENT WITH CONJUNCTIVITIS?

- YES
- NO

12. DO YOU THINK CATARACT CAN BE A FEATURE OF COVID 19?

- YES
- NO

13. DO YOU THINK GLAUCOMA CAN BE A FEATURE OF COVID 19?

- YES
- NO

14. DO YOU THINK COVID-19[°]CULAR SYMPTOMS ARE SELF LIMITING?

- YES
- NO

15. DO YOU THINK AFFECTION OF THE EYE DURING COVID 19 CAN HAVE LONG TERM OCULAR COMPLICATIONS?

- YES
- NO

16. HAVE YOU BEEN EDUCATED ABOUT OCULAR SYMPTOMS OF COVID 19 BY YOUR HEALTH CARE FACILITY?

- YES
- NO

17. HAVE YOU DEALT WITH PATIENTS WITH COMPLAINTS LIKE REDNESS, ITCHING AND WATERING DURING THIS CURRENT PANDEMIC OF COVID 19?

- YES
- NO

18. HAVE YOU REFERRED A PATIENT WITH SUSPECTED COVID 19 FOR AN OPHTHALMOLOGIST'S OPINION?

- YES
- NO

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION