

Resorting to information technology methods to strengthen our fight against coronavirus disease-2019 pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has affected almost every person across the world and it is high time that we reach to each and every one of them with reliable information at the earliest to minimize the risk of acquisition as well as transmission of the infection. In these testing times, there is an immense need to utilize the communication technology in the various activities of the disease mitigation, treatment and advocacy, communication and social mobilization. It is important to acknowledge that this is the first pandemic in which technology and social media are simultaneously being utilized to ensure people safety. In conclusion, in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic, information technology and social media have emerged as one of the important tools for the health sector to create not only awareness about the disease, but also it has aided in the prevention and control of the novel viral infection.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, Information Technology, World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID 19) pandemic has affected almost every person across the world and it is high time that we reach to each and every one of them with reliable information at the earliest

to minimize the risk of acquisition as well as transmission of the infection.^[1] As on 4 August 2021, a total of 197,865,160 people have been diagnosed with the infection, of which 4,219,861 people have succumbed to the disease related complications. It is important to note that the global case fatality rate has been estimated as 2.1% and the disease continues to challenge the preparedness of health care delivery system in heterogeneous settings.^[2]

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Need and Scope of Information Technology

In these testing times, there is an immense need to utilize communication technology in the various activities of disease mitigation, treatment and advocacy, communication, and social mobilization.^[1,3] Because close to 3.6 billion people do not have regular access to the internet, of which the majority are from low income nations, it is ideal to reach them through a simple text message and thus three international welfare agencies have joined their hands to ensure delivery of important health messages to safeguard people from the novel viral infection.^[1] It is the need of the hour to ensure that technology becomes the tool which can aid the public health authorities in reaching everyone.^[1]

Employing information technology

It is important to acknowledge that this is the first pandemic in which technology and social media are simultaneously being utilized to ensure peoples' safety and stay connected, even when social distancing has been advocated.^[3] To reduce exposure of people who are suffering from some other ailments to health care settings (which are high risk settings), and vice versa (preventing exposure of health care providers from the community), the option of telemedicine has found lots of attention, relevance, and application.^[4,5] In fact, many of the health care professionals have adopted telemedicine to diagnose both COVID 19 suspects as well as other illnesses and coordinate their management, including implementation of a triage mechanism.^[4,5]

Additional applications

Another important application of technology has been in the form of artificial intelligence, which has been used in the current pandemic to aid in predicting the caseload and distribution of the disease, detection of the complications, and containment of the disease.^[6] As this technology found merit in reading reports of the computerized tomography scans, it indirectly reduced the time spent by a potential suspect in the hospital and overall exposure.^[6,7]

Other than the application of technology in the field of health, it has found extensive application in averting stress and burnouts. This is a very valuable application of technology as many nations have imposed lockdown

in their settings and residents have to stay indoors, and these technological approaches have kept people well informed, abreast with the recent developments, enabled children to continue their education through online classes/assignments, and allowed people to work from home.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in the battle against the COVID 19 pandemic, information technology, and social media have emerged as one of the important tools for the health sector to create not only awareness about the disease but also it has aided in the prevention and control of the novel viral infection.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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