

# Navigating public transport in era of SARS-CoV-2

Baluja *et al.*<sup>[1]</sup> review the article, COVID-19 pandemic and safety of taxi services in Jan 2021 issue of the Journal, and they are looking beyond primary care. They highlight that how are the cab drivers at a high risk of exposure due to their professional obligation, suggest safety practices to be adopted by them for self-protection, and what should the passengers do to mitigate the risk.

In the brief overview of COVID-19, the authors state that the spread of Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) occurs mainly by aerosol (such as during talking, coughing, sneezing, laughing) and contact (such as by fomites e.g. door handles, surfaces). Here, we want to underscore that now mounting evidence suggests that fomite-borne risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is not supposed to be an important route.<sup>[2]</sup> As repeated attempts to culture the virus from inanimate surfaces failed, we now conclude that that is an unlikely route of infection transmission.

Under a heading, “Safety practices by the drivers for self-protection,” the authors state that they must drive (the cab) with windows open. What we need to realize is that although that is the best option, it may not always be possible when driving due to some urgent work in a cold early morning. Under these circumstances, researchers at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst conducted an assessment of computational fluid dynamics around a specific vehicle- Toyota Prius- moving at a speed of 50 miles per hour.<sup>[3]</sup> What they found is that when it is not possible to open all the windows or three of them, and only two occupants are there inside the vehicle, the next best possible option is to open windows at the opposite side of the travelers.

By their presumptions under specific preconditions, they show that due to various pressure changes around a moving car, air moves in a specific way and when it tries to enter inside the vehicle, empty space opposite the travelers provides suitable conditions to disperse aerosol generated by either person. This insight should guide us to practice the best strategy to ward off the chances of cross-infection.

Then, under the heading, “Care and cleaning of the vehicle for preventing transmission,” the authors write that the air conditioner may be used preferably on the fresh air/recirculation mode. Here, apparently, the authors provide an option for choosing this mode. We want to add that choosing the recirculation mode of an air conditioner in enclosed spaces is fraught with risk as it may carry biological agents to another healthy person from an infected one.<sup>[4]</sup> Therefore, only fresh air should be allowed inside the space and that is the only choice. Air changes per hour are the defining standard to specify the mitigation strategy used under these circumstances, and higher values indicate better safety protocol.<sup>[5,6]</sup>

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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Letter to Editor

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We accessed all the webpages at the time of submission of this Letter to the Editor.


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