

# Experiences With COVID During its First and Second Waves

Paper Submission: 10/10/2021, Date of Acceptance: 24/10/2021, Date of Publication: 25/10/2021

## Abstract

COVID – 19 wrecked havoc across the globe and in India too. Daily reporting of more than 0.4 million cases forced India to take all preemptive, precautionary and preventive measures. This study has been conducted with the objective to understand the process of corona positivity among COVID patients and to know about support systems to COVID patients and also to examine the role of Yoga during and post COVID periods. Primary information was elicited through case studies from ten corona positive cases and through Focused Group Discussions from COVID positive personnel. Exploratory and descriptive research designs were used in the study. It has been unearthed that the majority of respondents were shaken emotionally, upset mentally and physically drained during COVID. Ninety percent of them had mild fever, loss of appetite, acute weakness, giddiness, nausea and body pains. However, the severity of body pains ranged from mild to unbearable. All the respondents lost their smell and taste. It is discernible that all respondents got care from their family members, relatives and friends. After corona negativity, all the respondents have been practicing Yoga, breathing exercises and meditation to have better health, normal functioning of lungs and to raise the level of immunity.

**Keywords:** COVID, fever, weakness, body pains, Yoga.

### Introduction

#### Experiences with COVID during its first and second waves

COVID-19 wrecked havoc cutting across developed and developing nations, countrymen and urbanites, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, employed and unemployed, elderly and young. First wave of Coronavirus swept India during 2020.

#### Review of Literature

The second wave of coronavirus spread like a 'tsunami' in India. It evolved at a phenomenal speed as compared to the 1st wave (Jain et al., 2021).<sup>[1]</sup> In the second wave, there appears to be a lack of coordination between different health agencies and the government in India due to speculative reasons viz. as per the constitution of India, health is a state subject, which means that the state government should be the one calling the shots. At the same time, the state government has limitations in their human resources and technical expertise which affects their ability to scale up key public health interventions for COVID-19 such as the vaccination strategies (Kar et al., 2021).<sup>[2]</sup> Covid-19 deaths have already crossed a grim milestone of over 400K in first week of July 2021. Thus India has acquired the dubious distinction of being a country with third highest fatalities due to Covid-19, the first and second being USA and Brazil with above 600K and 500K deaths respectively. India has experienced the world's worst outbreak with new corona positive cases surging past 400K a day, the highest number ever recorded in a single day across the world. The country has already geared up its vaccination drive against COVID to save the countrymen from the ongoing second wave and anticipated third wave which could occur somewhere in September 2021.

In fact the first case of COVID-19 in the country was reported on 30 January 2020.<sup>[3]</sup> In view of the rising number of COVID cases, the central government declared 21 day nationwide lockdown w.e.f. 25 July 2020. However, the first case in the state of Himachal Pradesh was registered on 20 March and owing to spike in COVID positivity, total number of cases reached 55,229, including 2615 active cases, 51692 cures and 922 deaths as on 31 December 2020.<sup>[4]</sup> On 18 June 2021, total number of COVID cases in the state crossed the grim milestone of 2, 00,000. <sup>[5]</sup> These numbers are not merely statistics. Each case has its own tale, entrenched in anguish and tragedy. Therefore, it is of great sociological significance to have case studies, the in depth study of some cases to understand the kind of trauma and even stigma,

### Sujit Kumar Surroch

Associate Professor,  
Dept of Sociology,  
Government PG  
College, Palampur,  
H.P., India

### Anita Surroch

Associate Professor,  
Dept of Sociology,  
Government PG  
College, Palampur,  
H.P., India

## *Remarking An Analisation*

apart from socio-economic and health hazard, each person undergoes on being corona positive. Not only the corona positive personnel but nears and dears and caregivers also have to come across from fatalities to trauma, health hazard to social stigma and what not. Daily reporting of more than 0.4 million cases a day stirred the national conscience of India to take all possible measures to save the citizenry from COVID. The ongoing COVID vaccination drives which have crossed the 1 billion in October 2021 has a silver lining that the countrymen will have better protection from COVID in the days to come. In spite of all preemptive, precautionary and preventive measures, the people cannot afford to lower their guards and need to religiously adhere to COVID appropriate behavior including bearing of masks, maintaining of social distance, keeping hands face hygiene and administering of vaccination etc.

### **Objective of the Study**

This study has been conducted with the following objectives;

1. To understand the process of corona positivity among COVID patients.
2. To know about support systems to COVID patients.
3. To examine the role of Yoga during and post COVID periods.

Move on elaborating your idea with example and comparison. You may refer to previous research done on the same topic/pattern and explain how your work differs from and contributes to the existing literature.

### **Methodology**

Information was elicited from primary and secondary sources. The primary source comprised 10 corona positive cases including 5 males and 5 females. Series of interviews and observation was used as main methods to collect information from primary sources. For in depth understanding of process of Covid-19, six Case Studies (3 Males and 3 Females), all of them being teachers at SCVB Government College Palampur in state of Himachal Pradesh were done and Focused Group Discussions with four COVID positive staff members (2 Males and 2 Females) were held. Thus a purposive sample of only corona positive subjects who comprised above twelve percent of total staff members was taken in the study. Secondary information was collected from government publications, authentic websites and other agencies reporting the state of COVID from March 2020 to mid July 2021. Exploratory and descriptive research designs were used in the study. Males and females were units of study.

### **CASE I**

In mid fifties, keeping a normal state of health and has been teaching in college cadre for about a quarter century, 'A' started a little shivering and body ache on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021, isolated himself from his family members immediately and started a 5 day antibiotic course from the next day. On the third day, apart from fever he had severe back ache and the physician changed an earlier prescription from paracetamol to ZeroDol. With every passing day he experienced loss of appetite & loss of energy. On doctor's recommendation he went for COVID test after 5 days and was found to be COVID positive after the test. It was a big blow to him & family and his confidence was shaken completely. After taking the prescribed medicines in a strict self imposed isolated state and due to the grace of almighty & good care of his family he started recovering after 10 days, he informed. However, COVID resulted in loss of appetite, severe weakness, giddiness and disorder of taste & smell. It took him almost one month to come back to his near normal state of health. Based on his experience he suggested trying to maintain intake of a compulsive nutritious diet at small regular intervals of time to withstand the lowering energy and to stay patient, keep a good control on the brain without getting panicky. Normally COVID 19 attacks lungs & one may struggle for oxygen deficiency therefore, inclusion of Yoga, breathing exercises and meditation in daily routine functioning helps. Above all, the interest of a COVID patient lies in keeping full faith in almighty and also learning good lessons from mistakes, he pointed out. In spite of sincere adherence to SOPs, utmost avoidance to move out of his residence and none of other co-resident three family members had corona positivity, COVID occurred. However, its cause couldn't be traced. He religiously took prescribed medicines and strictly followed home quarantine protocol. From this case it is discernible that COVID can happen to anyone even after following SOPs. But taking prescribed medicines, maintaining positive attitude, moral and

material support of family and friends, trust in supreme power and to maintain cool and calm despite painful COVID and above all practice of Yoga, *Pranayama* and *dhyana* together help the patient tide over traumatic conditions of COVID.

**CASE II**

Enjoying good health, 'B', in mid thirties is an energetic person, has been teaching in the dept. of Biosciences for about 12 years caught COVID despite following all precautions. The tricky virus infected his daughter who got a fever on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 which was misconstrued to be a normal phenomenon due to seasonal variations of temperature. Antibiotics course was started for her. But on the same evening 'B' felt chills but could not recognize it as fever. The next day daughter's fever subsided and he was feeling normal too. However, on the same day his son started coughing and was having fever the next day. 'B' too started an antibiotics course and recouped after two days. On 5<sup>th</sup> May his wife had a fever and a mild cough and she started having regular fevers with a lot of sweating. She isolated herself and started a 5-day antibiotic course. As a precautionary measure all the four members of the family started taking routine steaming with lot of herbs as well as saline/Betadine gargling. 'B' would observe nausea in him daily but didn't feel like having COVID symptoms. On 8<sup>th</sup> May, he suddenly lost his smell and taste. He had a fever on the same day. He immediately started taking antibiotics. All family members got tested through the Rapid Antigen Test on 9<sup>th</sup> May. The test results were positive for him and his wife; however, both the kids were tested negative. Doctor prescribed them a standard kit of medicines. Both of them isolated themselves from their children in a separate room. On the very first day of isolation, 'B' was a mess physically and emotionally as they had to keep away from their kids for over a month. Medicines began that day itself along with vitamins and minerals. Struggle for 'B' began on 10<sup>th</sup> May onwards as he started having fever regularly. His nausea increased and it was tough to have food. Every part of the body had enormous pain as if hundreds of needles were being poked or someone hit him hard all over the body. Family, friends and well wishers kept motivating them during this time, but receiving their calls and talking nicely to them was a real challenge. Besides home remedies, they continued to take all other precautions and ate a good amount of fruits on a regular basis. Temperature would shoot up at night resulting in a disturbed sleep. All this persisted although the medicines were being taken. His Oxygen levels would fluctuate between 92-95. During May 9-18 he struggled to do things and slept the whole day but the fatigue never went away. He would wake up to have a little food and slept again. Eventually the cough worsened. He would cough unstopping. However, his smell and taste partly returned by 16 May but he continued coughing badly. Besides, he had weakness, indigestion, tiredness and even frustration of not getting well. During the next few days his fever and cough subsided. Now he started practicing yoga and breathing exercises. On 25<sup>th</sup> May his quarantine period was over. He again started doing his daily chores. Even after one month of infection his body is still in an on and off mode. After recovery from COVID he had insomnia for three days and had to take the help of sleeping pills. He would suggest not taking COVID lightly because it can change the course of your life and worsen it. During COVID he experienced anxiety, solitude and occurrence of negative thoughts that affect more than the virus. The things are gradually returning to normal corona positivity.

In spite of being a doctorate in biosciences and well read and observing symptoms of COVID in him and other members of family 'B' could not recognize the fact that he had corona positivity till he lost his smell and taste. The corona initially infected a child and then eventually all the four family members. Positive results of the corona test traumatized him. His body had severe pains during 9-18 days of infection and oxygen level kept fluctuating at lower side. A second and third week of COVID was a critical period for his physical and mental health. However, fourth week and post quarantine period came with some respite. Even one month past initial symptoms, normal state of health could not be restored in spite of having nutritious meals. In his case psychological turmoil affected him more than corona positivity. It is discernible that even highly educated symptomatic of corona positivity may not get to know that they have COVID.

**CASE III**

At fifty, 'C' has been keeping a good state of health. He has been a teacher in the college cadre for almost a quarter century. He opted for COVID test because he had to drop his son in the medical hostel and it was compulsory for parents accompanying to come with a negative RTPCR report. He had no symptoms of COVID but the report showed him to be positive on December 1, 2020. After doing all the permutations and combinations he could not figure out any solid reason for being corona positive. He had no symptoms still isolated himself in a separate room and used a separate washroom in order to prevent his family from being infected. On advice of a friend doctor he got COVID test done w.r.t. family members. His wife came out to be COVID positive and both the sons were negative. They isolated from each other simply thinking they could be at different levels of recovery. On advice of doctor they started taking prescribed medicines viz. dolomycin, ivermectin and a multitude of multivitamins. Their meals were largely delivered by their parents in law, neighbors, friends and relatives as neither his wife nor he could cook. Food served by well wishers really helped during tough times. However, in the vicinity some people tended to behave oddly sometimes but others helped you and showed humanity. They usually stick to home-remedies routine like taking steam twice a day, drinking two glasses of hot water in the morning and gargling. They took normal breakfast, lunch and dinner but included a plateful of fruits, especially those rich in vitamin C and green *tulsi* and ginger tea in our diet. After following norms of Home Quarantine, 'C' was declared COVID negative on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and his wife on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 i.e. after about three weeks of positivity. He expressed his concerns about the casual attitude of many people with respect to precautions irrespective of strong ongoing second wave of Corona. He advises not to take this coronavirus lightly. Thus 'C' in spite of taking all necessary precautions and being asymptomatic, undertook COVID test by default and was found to be positive. Still he self home quarantined and increased vitamin C intake. The take is that COVID-19 is associated with a very high rate of infectivity; therefore, utmost care should be taken while following the SOPs/ guidelines issued by Government and Doctors. In addition, we should become mentally stronger to fight against COVID-19 in view of the fact 'No health without Mental Health.' It unearths that even if asymptomatic, once declared corona positive, one should isolate oneself and also take prescribed medicines.

**CASE IV**

The case 'D' has been teaching in the college cadre for about 22 years is in mid fifties. On 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2020 she had a mild fever. She didn't have any idea that it could be a corona infection as at that time she was only aware of a few symptoms of COVID like cold and cough. Along with fever, she started getting body chills. Late in the evening she informed the Chief Medical Officer of Kangra who advised her to get isolated with immediate effect and also get COVID test done. The very next day, she got her test done in a Civil Hospital. She was declared corona positive. She was stunned to learn about it. On coming back home she immediately got isolated in one room. Her husband is diabetic. She told him to go somewhere else but he didn't go. Her daughter served her a lot during those difficult times. She stayed in a room adjacent to her. In the evening, Asha workers sent her medicines. She was very much stressed. Her daily routine would start with yoga and the diet was under the supervision of doctors. The CMO, a couple of other doctors and an Asha worker helped her in keeping her spirits high during those stressful ten days. After recovering, she believes that she got her life as a bonus. She has taken a pledge to boost up the spirits of corona victims. Since October 2020, she would call the affected people and cheer them up because when she was affected, her colleagues and students used to call her. She sums up, 'the situations in which many people wish to die, in such odd circumstances, she has committed to live.'

In fact 'D' was corona positive during the first wave of COVID. It was a time when corona positivity was considered to be a sort of stigma and most of the people would keep distance from the patients. It would add to the stress level of the patient. However, somehow good connections in the medical profession helped the respondent getting better treatment which a normal patient may not

## *Remarking An Analisation*

get. Corona positivity changed her attitude towards life and also towards corona infected. It is discernible from this episode that even educated personnel may not have an idea of being corona positive in spite of having some of the symptoms.

### **CASE V**

**Code named as 'E'**, she is in mid thirties and has been teaching at college level for about a dozen of years. At the end of April 2021 she developed some symptoms of flu. She had a runny nose and cough. So she thought it was some irregularity in the food she had taken. She tried home remedies for 2-3 days but it was in vain. On 3<sup>rd</sup> day i.e. 28th April 2021 she got her test of COVID done and on 1st May she was declared to be corona positive. She got a phone call from BMO who advised her to shift to COVID care center Dash. On 2nd May an ambulance picked her up from her residence at around 10.00 a.m. and reached Dash around 11 o'clock. She was allotted a room and all the arrangements there were good, she informed. She was not allowed to come out of that room. Doctors and health workers there assured that her oxygen level was good and her pulse rate and temperature were also stable. They also informed her that coughing would take some time and she should not worry about it. On 5th May she got a phone call from her husband who informed her that he was having a cough and was feeling uncomfortable. The 'E' advised him to visit the hospital and not to ignore the problem.

On 6th May around 10 a.m. SDM Palampur informed her that her husband's RAT report was positive and his oxygen level was low. Administration was shifting her husband to district hospital Dharamshala on the same evening 'E' came back home who was in dilemma whether to touch or not to touch her children. The nine years old daughter co-operated, but the son who was younger was insisting on sharing the room with Mother. Friends and family members extended their helping hand. During those unforgettable days she realized the real meaning of life, she informed. The role of administration was also found to be very positive. Above all yoga, meditation and positive thoughts are panacea.

Hospitalization and being away from young children would traumatize and add to the woes of COVID patients. News of her husband also being positive shattered her confidence further. However, the positive role of administration, health officials, support of family and friends help in boosting up the morale of corona patients.

### **CASE VI**

'F' narrating her experiences with COVID made several revelations. She is in late thirties, keeping good health and has been teaching for about a dozen years. On 25th April 2021, late in the evening she felt pain all over her body. She had a 99 degree Celsius fever. She thought it was probably because of getting wet in the rain. Next morning the pain was the same and the fever was close to 99 degree Celsius. On checking the oxygen saturation with a pulse oximeter, it was found that it has been reduced to 97%. She doubted that it might be a Corona infection.

After several telephonic consultations with the family doctor she was fully convinced that she had COVID positive. So without wasting any time she embarked on the following course of action;

1. Quarantined in a room to prevent corona spread to other family members and followed basic protocols of distancing, usage of masks, frequent hand washing and sanitizing.

*Remarking An Analisation*

2. Herbal tea 'Kadha' thrice a day.
3. Listerine /Beta dine Gargles thrice a day.
4. Steam inhalation twice a day.
5. Regular sipping of warm water.
6. A well-balanced diet including fruits, nuts, proteins and salads.
7. Started taking medicine which is given to corona patient at the preliminary stage like ivermectin (anti parasite), doxycycline (antibiotic), paracetamol (for fever).
8. Vitamin C and the Zinc Tablets (immunity booster).

She tried breathing exercises but failed because at that time there was a lot of weakness in her body. On checking her fever and oxygen level after regular intervals for about 3 days, she found her fever was less than 100 degree Celsius and oxygen level was 96-97. After 3 days of infection, her fever and oxygen level came back to normal. The body pain was over, but the weakness in the body was too much. After 4 days of infection, taste and smelling power were gone. She took a course of antibiotics for 5 days. Immunity booster, she took for about 1 month and remained in isolation for 3 weeks. After 3 weeks she started a half an hour morning walk, light physical exercises, breathing exercises such as Anulom Vilom, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Kapalbhathi etc. and also meditation. These things helped her a lot in her speedy recovery. During corona positivity and post COVID period she utilized this time to rejuvenate mind, body and soul together. She would listen to music, play online games, watch favorite shows and movies and laugh a little harder.

Being engulfed by most of the symptoms of corona positivity, wisdom lied on immediate embarking taking all necessary measure including home isolation, medication and healthier diet. Maintaining self confidence, support of family and friends and practice of yoga, breathing exercises and regular walk helped speedy recovery.

**CASES VII-X**

Informant 'E', a senior faculty in bio-sciences and almost in mid fifties was infected by corona during a marriage of one of her family members. But she misconstrued corona fever as a fever from the second doze of corona vaccine. Upon losing smell and taste, she isolated herself. But in the meantime her son in early twenties had developed symptoms of corona. She took all necessary precautionary measures including home isolation etc.

Respondent 'F', an energetic faculty, just thirty, had corona positivity during his marriage. His family members, the newlywed spouse, and close several relatives and neighbors also became corona positive. He had to struggle during positivity and even after two and a half months of initial infection he could not gain his normal health.

Subject 'G' serves in ministerial staff and is in late fifties. He had a corona during the first wave and experienced all the symptoms of corona positivity during the first wave of COVID. He had home quarantine and witnessed significant loss of health and energy level. However, now he has gained normal health.

Respondent 'H' in her forties serves as a class IV employee in the institution. Observing corona positivity symptoms, after the test, she was declared to be corona positive. She was in trauma but was well care for by her daughters who reside with her. After one month of getting corona negative, she has almost gained normal health

**Conclusion**

The study unearths that 100% COVID patients show mild fever, cough, body ache, loss of smell & taste and witness substantial loss of energy. Most of them are bewildered upon getting novel coronavirus positivity and failed to trace its source. COVID traumatizes one and all. The ones who were infected during the first wave of COVID experienced social stigma. However, elements of stigmatization withered away in the second wave probably due to rationalization of realism of coronavirus infection from a large number of evidence coming forth and also because it had engulfed the people inhabiting all parts of the country. Most of the respondents appear to be acting as ambassadors to spread the message among the masses not to take coronavirus lightly but to religiously adhere to standard operation procedure and COVID appropriate behavior. Vaccination drives undertaken by the government have provided a new ray of hope among people. The silver lining from saving Indian citizenry from third wave and to provide them a safety net lies in taking all necessary precautionary, preemptive and preventive measures including bearing of masks, keeping social distance, cleaning hands with hand sanitizer/soap, keeping face clean, sanitizing risky spots and wedding to the corona vaccination.

**Main Findings**

This study had a wide range of COVID positive cases. From asymptomatic positive to symptomatic non-tested COVID, hospitalized to home quarantined, group of families' positivity to serial family members' positivity to isolated corona infected cases within family. Main findings of this study are as given below;

1. Eighty percent respondents were corona positive during the second and ongoing wave which started in March 2021 and rest twenty percent had corona positivity during the first wave which swept India during 2020.
2. None of the cases was part of the first stage of transmission as they didn't have travel history as such.
3. Forty percent cases partly fall in the second stage of transmission of COVID as they appear to be drivers in spreading virus to their family members.
4. Eighty percent cases appear to be partly to substantially part of stage three i.e. Community transmission as source of none of these cases was traceable which unearths that stages of transmission of COVID overlap and there can't be watertight compartmentalization of much publicized four stages of corona positively as such.
5. None of the cases belonged to the area which was part of hotspots of Covid-19 or area under surveillance or the area geographically quarantined or declared as a 'quarantine zone' to prevent further prevention.
6. Majority of respondents were shaken emotionally, upset mentally and physically drained during COVID.
7. In all but one case who claims to have been asymptomatic, all (90%) had mild fever, loss of appetite, acute weakness, giddiness, and nausea and body pains. However, in terms of severity of body pains, it ranged from mild to unbearable body aches.
8. In ninety percent of cases oxygen level dipped and fluctuated between 97-92 degrees Celsius.
9. Only one case informant was hospitalized. Rest ninety percent of the COVID patients were home quarantined.
10. All the respondents lost their smell and taste.
11. All informants took prescribed medicines and protein rich healthy diet so that they could get cured and gain normal health.
12. Twenty percent of the subjects were infected by corona virus during marriage, though a very limited number of people had converged in the ceremony owing to corona curfew in vogue allowing not more than twenty people to assemble during those wedding ceremonies.
13. All the respondents were given care by their family members, relatives and friends. Thus nears and dear ones were a great support to all the informants during and even posit COVID periods.
14. Most of the informants reported to have received appreciable services from the personnel deployed in different capacities in the health

## *Remarking An Analisation*

department of state of Himachal Pradesh. They got proper guidance from family doctors, health officials even on the phone.

15. Eighty percent of the subjects could not gain a normal state of health even after one month of corona positivity.
16. One of the informants had disturbed sleep during COVID and even insomnia was reported for three days after recovery from the disease.
17. Majority of subjects opine that they got second leaf of life after getting cured from COVID.
18. Ninety percent of respondents endeavored to practice Yoga, breathing exercises and meditation during COVID. After corona negativity, they have more consciously practiced breathing exercises with the view to have better oxygen level, normal functioning of lungs, to raise the level of immunity and for speedy recovery.
19. Two of the informants complained that many people would look down upon them during the period of positivity. Thus stigma appeared to have been associated with COVID.
20. All the subjects adhered to COVID appropriate behavior during their corona positivity.

### References

1. Jain, V.K.; Iyengar, K.P. and Vaishya R. (2021), *Differences between First wave and Second wave of COVID-19 in India, Diabetes Metab Syndr.* 2021 May-June; 15(3): 1047–1048. Published online 2021 May 8. doi: 10.1016/j.dsx.2021.05.009. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8106236/>. Accessed on 15 July 2021.
2. Kar S.K.; Ransing R.; Arafat S.M.Y. and Menon V. (2021), *Second wave of COVID-19 pandemic in India: Barriers to effective governmental response.* DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1016/i.eclinm>, 2021.100915. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(21\)00195-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(21)00195-4/fulltext) Published on May 29 2021. Accessed on 15 July 2021 .
3. Covid – 19 in Himachal Pradesh', *Covid-19 India*. Retrieved on 12 July 2021.
4. Covid- Pandemic\_ in Himachal\_ Pradesh. MoHFW-GOI. Retrieved on 12 July 2021.
5. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/new/himachal>. 'Covid cases cross 2 lakh in Himachal Pradesh'. Accessed on 10 July 2021.
6. Rashmi Kundu, [howindialives.com, https://www.livemint.com/science/health/indias-1-billion-covid-19-vaccine-doses](https://www.livemint.com/science/health/indias-1-billion-covid-19-vaccine-doses)