

## The saga of an anesthesiologist: frontline COVID-19 warrior



### A saga do anestesiolista: guerreiro da linha de frente da COVID-19

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly changed the way of our living, the way we felt for our near ones, and somewhat has made us more responsible. This holds true for the hospital settings, too. For healthcare workers, this crisis has decreased their mutual discrepancies and for this war we stood as one-united.<sup>1</sup> Anesthesiologists who earlier remained behind the curtains in Operation Theatres (OT) or Intensive Care Units (ICU) have come to the front, fighting fiercely, and have been recognised as the frontline warriors.

Anesthesiologists have always been working continuously and diligently for the better patient care, several times bringing them from the claws of death, but their job remained unrecognised and far from appreciation. This COVID-19 pandemic has changed the situation and the anesthesiologists have now been recognised as the pillar of the modern medicine.<sup>2</sup> They have been respected as the frontline warriors not only by the fellow doctors, but also by the general public who merely used to consider them as the "gas" men. Recently, *Times* magazine has also given anesthesiologists the title of "Hero", recognising their untiring efforts, and spotlighting their role on the cover page.

Being airway, ventilator, and critical care experts, the onus definitely lies on the shoulders of anesthesiologists to support their respective healthcare system. Since the outbreak of this pandemic, anesthesiologists have been working hand in hand with their fellow medicine professionals right from making policies, demarcating the COVID-19 zones, understanding the pathophysiology of the disease, and preparing enough bullets to fight against it. They have geared their planning and have been the vital part in the formation as well as implementation of the institutional Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs), and actively training other medical professionals regarding intubation and operating ventilators to increase the workforce during the crisis. As a frontline warrior, they have been working in the isolation wards, coronavirus suspect wards, coronavirus high-dependency units, as well as in corona critical care units, along with running operation theatres for emergency and semi-emergency cases. Also, webinars and online courses are being conducted regularly for strategic discussions, training purposes, and most importantly to encourage each other to act and to choose "karma" over and above anything else.

Although managing the pandemic has never been a part of the traditional teaching in anesthesiology,<sup>3</sup> still they have been reading, learning, and trying to do their every bit to fight against this pandemic. Tracheal intubation and

tracheostomy (sometimes needed in critical care patients) generates maximum aerosols, which make them most susceptible to the infection.<sup>4</sup> Also, increase workload and updated minimal quarantine policy put them, as well as their families, to undue risk, which may impact their psychological integrity. Among all of these, the anesthesiologists have stood tall and strong to fight unanimously against the enemy and are proud to be the part of the core team acting against it.

To conclude, amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, the anesthesiologists have proven how versatile and dynamic they can be. Despite all the odds, learning from their own mistakes, putting all the effort and commitment, accompanied by a sacrifice of their own safety and the safety and needs of their families, the anesthesiologists stand strong, united and determined to serve the community, and hope this stature and recognition remains with them forever, even after the pandemic ends.

### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### References

1. Kalra A, Michos ED, Chinnaiyan KM. COVID-19 and the healthcare workers. *Eur Heart J*. 2020, doi: 10.1093/eurheartj/ehaa489. Online ahead of print.
2. Gupta B, Bajwa SJ, Malhotra N, Mehdiratta L, Kakkar K. Tough times and Miles to go before we sleep-Corona warriors. *Indian J Anaesth*. 2020;64:S120-4.
3. Bhatnagar S, Mehdiratta L, Karthik AR. Corona pandemic: Bringing Anaesthesiologist's professional role and other skills to the fore. *Indian J Anaesth*. 2020;64:S87-90.
4. Weissman DN, De Perio MA, Radonovich LJ. COVID-19 and risks posed to personnel during endotracheal intubation. *JAMA*. 2020;323:2027-8.

Rashmi Syal, Kamlesh Kumari \*, Rakesh Kumar, Kriti Chaudhary, Bharat Paliwal

*India Institute of Medical Sciences, Department of Anaesthesiology and Critical Care, Jodhpur, India*

\* Corresponding author.

*E-mail:* [kamlesh.gmch@gmail.com](mailto:kamlesh.gmch@gmail.com) (K. Kumari).

26 July 2020

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bjane.2020.08.008>  
0104-0014/ © 2020 Sociedade Brasileira de Anestesiologia.

Published by Elsevier Editora Ltda. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).