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RICH TRIBUTES PAID TO MAHATMA GANDHI



The Embassy of India in Qatar commemorated the International Day of Non-violence and 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi with great fervour and enthusiasm. Heads of apex bodies and officials from the embassy participated in the event while adhering to the COVID-19 guidelines. Indian Ambassador to Qatar HE Dr. Deepak Mittal paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and a sapling was planted in the embassy premises to mark the occasion. The event began with the rendition of bhajans by members of the Indian community. The Indian ambassador shared his thoughts on the life and contributions of Mahatma Gandhi. He spoke about the relevance of Gandhian principles and ideals in the contemporary world, especially in the context of the global pandemic. He also praised the efforts of the Indian community in supporting their compatriots during the COVID-19 pandemic. The event ended on a melodious note with a video show based on Mahatma Gandhi's quotes.

‘COMMUNITY ROLE A KEY FACTOR IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19’

Community associations perform a critical role in the heart health of their members by motivating lifestyle changes and by educating community members about heart health, says Dr. Syed Jaffery, who works at the Ministry of Public Health in Qatar

IN these extraordinary times of COVID-19 that we are living in, community associations play a key role in promoting our wellbeing, says Dr. Syed Jaffery, who works at the Ministry of Public Health (Qatar National Diabetes Strategy).

The doctor, who is himself very active in Indian community activities, earmarks some of these key roles for community bodies saying they ought to be offering social support, enhancing social trust, fostering civic engagement, and helping boost livability.

"I believe that community associations perform a critical role in the heart health of its members by ushering people in lifestyle changes and by educating members about heart health," says Dr. Jaffery, MD MBA(UK).

These steps, according to him, can improve life expectancy; reduce absenteeism; reduce healthcare costs of employees significantly; and contribute to the work, health and economy of the communities.

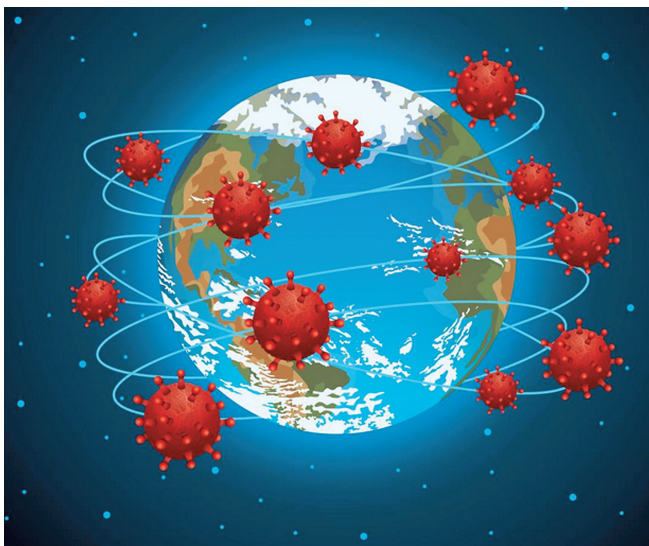
In the fight against COVID-19, every individual makes a difference and community organisations must ensure their contribution by complying with the government regulations and by educating their members on the protocols, he stresses.

"For example, they [community organisations] should be encouraging local restaurants and grocery stores to serve fresh and healthy foods; lobbying with local governments to create more bicycle - and foot-friendly commuter routes to work and home; creating

ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH HEART AILMENTS IN THE TIMES OF PANDEMIC

Follow the general instructions of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH): Practice physical distancing; stay home; avoid crowds and parks; refrain from touching one another or surfaces; and specific steps for people living with heart disease who must strengthen their immune system by:

- Not smoking
- Remaining hydrated
- Having a balanced diet – high in fruits and vegetables, eat less processed meat, less red meat, and fewer sweets
- Controlling and monitoring health conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes
- Get adequate sleep
- Maintain regular exercise schedule
- Avoid unnecessary stress as it can weaken your immune system
- Ensure you take your medications as prescribed by your doctor
- Get adequate refills for medications, sufficient for at least two weeks
- If you observe symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, fever, or shortness of breath, you must be assessed by healthcare professional. Start self-quarantine, avoid any contact with others and call the National COVID-19 hotline on 16000.



greater awareness in the community of the importance of regular medical check-ups and seeking medical advice when required; and encouraging healthy options offered by workplace restaurants."

People who have heart disease or hypertension, he points out, are more prone to be infected and develop

more severe symptoms of coronavirus, and those who have survived a stroke and might be more immunocompromised (having a weakened immune system that is more at risk from infection), need to be more careful to reduce the risk of infection.

"High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, occurs when the force of blood against the artery walls is too high. Over time, high blood pressure can lead to heart attack, stroke and other serious conditions and therefore, patients with high blood pressure need to take extra care to help manage this," he explains.

People living in Qatar have a unique advantage, he notes, since Qatar's healthcare system is among the best in the world. "To me, Qatar's healthcare system has undergone remarkable transformation in the recent past and enormous progress has been made in terms of both enhanced capacity and advanced quality of care," he notes.

"The growth has been rapid and rivals any country in the world in terms of the pace of change. Qatar has invested heavily in its healthcare infrastructure through its public healthcare provider Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), which has opened seven new hospitals and numerous specialist facilities across its Hamad bin Khalifa Medical City Doha campus: The Communicable Disease Center, Qatar Rehabilitation Institute, the Ambulatory Care Center, and the

Women's Wellness and Research Center.

"The factors that contribute to making it one of the best is that they have invested in things that matter most to patients, besides the dedicated clinical teams at HMC that provide rapid access to highly specialised services. The clinical teams have one of the best trained healthcare professionals with a deep sense of ownership and dedication to delivering the best care to every resident in Qatar -- locals or expatriates."

Dr. Jaffery also has a piece of advice for South Asian expatriates: "For people who don't exercise often, and those who are too stressed out, there is a higher risk of heart disease, which is most likely the result of several factors acting together. There may be the genetic predisposition that is exacerbated by certain environmental factors and that can be made worse by stress or poor diet.

"There might be different factors that interact to cause heart disease, and not just a single variable that contributes to heart health in South Asians. Our ethnicity predisposes all Indians to the heart conditions. My doctor [when Dr. Jaffery himself received medical treatment] remarked that if 100 Indians are subjected to angiography, 90-95% will present with a single vessel disease. This is not to spread panic but to sound an alarm that we as Indians have to be careful with our heart health."

Doctor recalls his experience at HMC Heart Hospital

MY recent journey through the Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) was a significant one because of several reasons. I am a clinician with professional experience at public healthcare systems in the UK and Canada with emphasis on Quality and Patient Safety. Also, my first-hand experience with the private and public health systems "as a patient in India, the UK and Canada", helped me establish a clear comparison.

Recently, I was admitted to the HMC Heart Hospital through the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC), after I felt an unusual tightness in my chest – something I had never experienced before. I went to Leabaib Health Center from where, following the necessary investigations, I was referred to the Heart Hospital at HMC for further specialised care. At the HMC, I was admitted to the ED following basic investigations and a referral was made to the cardiologist.

Right from the time of referral to the admission and thereof until my discharge, I was amazed to see the continuum of care and all safety procedures being followed as per copy book. The physicians who attended me, demonstrated extreme respect and knowledge, besides following the safety procedures as per the current requirement of personal protective equipment (PPE) use in the COVID-19 scenario.

The night before the procedure, the physicians explained the process to me in brief, narrating the merit and their expertise for the procedural approach. A choice was given to me and my preference was sought.

I also observed the excellent communication between the physicians, nurses, technicians and other providers in terms of provision of optimum care to the patient.

The attending nurses at the HDU coronary care were all very well trained; they knew what they were doing and followed all safety procedures, and were always ready to help. Not once did I have to push the bell to call them. I remember asking for a cup of tea at 11pm, although the pantry was closed. The nurse was courteous enough to find hot water and a tea bag even at that odd hour.

Before the procedure in the Cath-lab, the "time-out" of procedural safety checklist was adopted. The staff stuck to the time and things progressed as indicated. I did not have to wait unnecessarily between the procedures. The procedure was completed and utmost care was observed with regard to my pain with appropriate pain management principles being applied to keep me pain-free throughout my admission.

Post procedure, I was transferred to the HDU and was instructed to be in the bed for the next eight hours.

The recovery thereafter was uneventful with the physician team for rounds early next morning. My vitals were observed. The ECG was unremarkable and I was free of pain. My radial wound on the right forearm was showing signs of healing with some 3/10 pain on movement, when the decision for my discharge was made on the third day.

Post lunch, I was discharged with all my medications and follow-up appointments organised, leaving me thoroughly satisfied with the care I received during my stay at the hospital.

I fall short of words to thank the entire team of physicians, nurses, technicians, paramedics, administrators and cleaners at the heart hospital at HMC for their significant contribution to my health.

(Dr. Syed Jaffery works at the Ministry of Public Health and he can be reached at sjaffery@moph.gov.qa)

Dr. Syed Jaffery

