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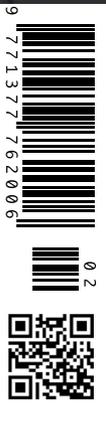
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Healthcare Warriors of India

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In India, the challenges of COVID-19 are exacerbated by the density of population, poverty, lack of education and hygiene culture. To help the public and support those on the frontline, over 7,000 healthcare professionals joined the nationwide '[We Doctors](#)' healthcare campaign. Dr Sunita Dube, a radiologist by profession, spoke to HealthManagement.org about the initiatives of her organisation, MedScapelIndia, and her work during the pandemic.

I don't know if there is such a term, but I think it was 'doctor's intuition' that made me very concerned when I initially heard the news about China. I kept thinking of what could be done if the virus by any chance came into our country. As a result, in late January, I tweeted to the Honourable Prime Minister of India requesting him to stop issuing visas to people who wanted to visit India from China. My team and I spent many days researching and trying to figure out what that virus was and how it affected the human body, so that if it reached India, we would be prepared.

Everybody is Doing Their Best

I am immensely impressed by all my colleagues. Before the pandemic, we, as doctors, used to work very close to our patients. Hygiene norms have been followed, of course, but now maintaining distance from the patients while treating them is a very challenging task. As human touch is the core factor in medical practices, we have to constantly remind ourselves that distancing is the right thing to do under the new COVID-19 protocols.

If I had had a chance to go back in time, I would have definitely worked on improving my discipline and put more effort into educating people on the benefits of hygiene and building immunity with mindfulness in their lifestyles. I would have also come up with the 'We Doctors' campaign much earlier.

The general public is also doing their best. When the threat emerged, the situation was chaotic. No one was prepared for what was happening, or had any idea of what could be done. While people were following the government's instructions and staying at home, there were some bravehearts who provided essentials like food and clothing to those who live below the poverty line. It is, of course, very important that everybody takes good care of themselves and their families, but at the same time it is the people who think beyond their own needs who make this world a better place.

The government of India and the health ministry have been very successful in framing policies for the benefit of

the society at large. It is often easy to give advice, but one cannot fully grasp the severity of the situation unless they put themselves into policy makers' shoes. We, as 'field workers,' do have some practical insight, and the government has taken it into consideration when implementing its response plan.

The virus was completely new to the medical community. In COVID-19 patients, symptomatic treatment has been dominant, which is usually not the case in medical care. All doctors have been working out of their comfort zones, trying and learning countless combinations of treatments including antibiotics, antivirals, steroids and ventilator support. Doctors have been trying their best till the patient's last breath. Some individual research in India has proven to be helpful. For example, we have recently discovered that radiodiagnostic practice can help people in critical stages with very low doses of radiotherapy; it is showing impact in critical patients.

Actions Make Impact

Our healthcare warriors have been doing a tremendous job. As doctors, we often forget to value ourselves while treating the patients, and when the situation is so fragile, we tend to get sceptical. I think, all the doctors should look out not only for their patients but also for themselves because they are the backbone of the healthcare system. Healthcare warriors need to have a lot more self-appreciation than they do now to be self-motivated.

For me personally, these times have been a great source of learning and realising my potential. I have come to understand that small steps too can lead to a better future. So now, I am more focussed on helping the society to create more awareness about COVID-19, which in turn leads towards a healthier India. We should all play our part, no matter how small or big, because more often than not our actions make significant impact. Also, family and friends should never be taken for granted because usually they are the people who support you unconditionally though hard times. ■