

To kill two birds with one stone

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Madam, novel Corona virus 2019, its infectivity and pandemic around the world has earnestly garnered much panic, especially, with its new strain spreading across the UK and possibly its spread across borders. This has increased anxiety and stress levels to many folds mainly due to its robustness and resistance to treatment.¹ The panic and paranoia of testing COVID-19 positive, restraining into isolation and being shunned by the society often lead to a vicious cycle of heightened stress, anxiety and depression levels in individuals that at times lead to the ugly consequences of COVID-19 rendering end stage in affected with admissions in the intensive care or even death upon arriving in hospitals.

China, the first ever country in world to announce COVID-19 infection, has successfully controlled and contained the infection.² In China, the new cases are negligible and has shown its capacity of treatment of COVID-19 through utility of medicinal herbs and old traditional remedies that are long ago forgotten by the other nations. The commonest treatment modality against COVID-19 in China, Thailand and other Buddhist countries are through mere inhaling of steam and intake of herbal teas.³ Many studies have shown that any form of tea especially chamomile tea is beneficial in the treatment of COVID 19. We have also currently run a clinical trial at the Aga Khan University where chamomile and saffron tea was given in twice a day dose for a month to the depressed patients to treat their depression. To our pleasant surprise many participants of the trial knew that chamomile is also effective against viral infections. Our research has shown that saffron and chamomile in combination at reduced doses has synergistic antioxidant and anti-inflammatory

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and neuroprotective effects through modulation of neurotransmitters in brain.^{4,5} It is suggested that this synergism may benefit individuals against cytokine cascade, oxidant activity and inflammatory effects of the COVID 19 as well as alleviate neuropsychological deficits like anxiety, stress and depression that are associated with the fear of catching this communicable infection. This herbal tea may indeed help to kill two birds COVID-19 and neuropsychological illness with a stone.

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