

## Covibesity — transitional pandemic

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The year 2020, as it signifies its numerical value, brought forward a turning point in history of the world. The newborn virus "Covid-19", as the name depicts arose on the ground at the end of year 2019. However, it's devastating consequences came into limelight as the world stepped into 2020, and the first quarter ended with worldwide thought provoking incidents.<sup>1</sup> Whole community was brought to stand still, new terms emerged, "lock down", "smart lock down", "social distancing", "web meeting", "online learning", and so on.

"Stay home, stay safe" was the norm of the society, fear and apprehension kept on growing as the year passed. Slowly and gradually, distances remained mandatory; meetings became limited to "online". Advancement in technology evidenced change in demographics and exhibited altered consumer behaviour.<sup>2</sup> The breakthrough technology validated in recent years is smart phones, internet and e-commerce. With this there came a boom on online delivery services, ordering became a click away, no movement from house customized the practice. Flexibility of time enhanced consumers not to follow schedule for work, sleep or eating patterns. Family time increased, gadgets became popular, and every individual loved the idea of "work from home".

Exercising prohibition in all walks of life became the new norm; however, basic necessities of life could not be compromised. Grocery stores kept functioning, like wise restaurants showed readiness for home deliveries. This strengthened sedentary life style, sitting, sleeping and no doubt eating lavishly, with home cooking and ordering online. All guidelines to combat obesity went behind the curtains, and a new surge into obesity got rampant. The new word "covibesity" was derived from a combination of covid and obesity. This new phenomenon was brought forward in mid 2020 by esteemed authors in their editorial in a renowned journal. The authors pointed out to rapid weight gain as a result of behavioural, psychological and environmental change caused by the novel corona virus.<sup>3</sup> An Italian survey studied impact of covid-19 on life style changes and eating habits; interestingly perception of weight gain was observed in

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48.6% of the population.<sup>4</sup>

Not to forget, one of the primitive phenomenons, "diabetes", which is quite self explanatory, obesity and diabetes are interdependent. The world is entering into a wheel, a vicious circle, combating the situation of corona virus is intricate, making it worse with the pandemic enhancing obesity and thereby increase in chronic disease, diabetes, or more so, metabolic syndrome.<sup>5,6</sup> This drift has been boosted with the covid pandemic, strengthening the cycle with "stay caution", consuming food at ease with flexibility. These factors augmented with sedentary life style, limited movement choices, could lead to increasing weight; hence, emerging covibesity seems realistic.

Evidence has suggested that obesity could be considered a risk factor in patients with covid-19 infection. The prognosis of obese patients with covid-19 is detrimental as it might be compounded with insulin resistance, metabolic dysfunction, adipose tissue inflammation and its effect on the immune system.<sup>7,8</sup> A meta-analysis has concluded that obesity is a risk factor for mortality in covid-19 patients, amalgamated with co-morbidities, critical illness and need for advanced respiratory support.<sup>9</sup> The intricacy of obesity and covid-19 is further complicated by the concern raised that vaccine might be less effective in obese individuals.<sup>10</sup>

The complexity of management is vague, to date no treatment for the virus is discovered, vaccine is still in trial phase. Topping up the obscurity, social distancing and lock down, altering life style, use of gadgets and technology might lead to increase in overall obesity. The front line force and the authorities are constantly focusing on pandemic of corona; in addition, there is a dire need to talk about the burden of obesity. The transition of covid and obesity, as it is named; "covibesity" remains under estimated and should be considered for a fruitful thought.

Lifestyle modification is the only way to overcome this transitional pandemic, controlling diet and exercise is the way forward. We should start focusing on movement within home, using gadgets for work outs, using social media for videos and tips for exercise and movements at home. Thinking it on a simpler note, as individuals, one should take interest in home cooking, running small

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errands at home and completing little tasks for daily routine by oneself.

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