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WOMEN
IN NEED

COVID-19 India's deadly second wave



Information and images coming out of India during COVID's second wave have been shocking. Reports from our team in Nagpur and those on Indian news channels Aaj Tak and NDTV have revealed the true scale and horror of devastation caused by the Delta variant. Yet the lack of UK and international news coverage at the height of the crisis has been surprising.

WIN's news updates are designed to report the positive impact the charity and your donations make to women's lives. Some of the charity's updates however may contain images and content deemed upsetting; such content is designed to inform our supporters.

This edition highlights the catastrophic effect COVID-19 has had across India and how your donations have been saving lives.

The second wave of coronavirus infections has devastated India, leaving millions of people infected and putting stress on the country's already overtaxed health care system.

Officially, by late May, about 27 million infections had been confirmed and more than 300,000 people were dead, but experts said the actual figures were most likely much higher. At one point, India had been responsible for more than half of the world's daily Covid-19 cases and set a record-breaking pace of about 400,000 a day.

Ashish Jha, dean of the Brown University School of Public Health, tweeted,

“There’s an old saying in global health. You can ignore, fail to test for, or undercount whatever disease you want. But you can’t ignore the dead. In India, the dead are telling us the disease is much worse than the official statistics.” “India can’t be experiencing four thousand deaths a day. [That] would barely be a blip in the background” in a country that sees about 30000 deaths on a normal day. Instead, India is “seeing crematoriums running 24 7 and running out of firewood.” “This indicates that the number of daily deaths from covid-19 is at least 25000 and may be more”.

The official numbers show signs of easing. The major cities of Delhi and Mumbai, hit hard at the beginning of the second wave, have reported drops in new infections and deaths. On May 31, Delhi lifted restrictions on manufacturing and construction, critical drivers of an economy that has been battered by the pandemic. But life in the capital city is not expected to return to normal immediately. Schools and most businesses are still closed.

Still, the virus is believed to be spreading through the rest of the country, especially in rural parts where medical facilities are in short supply. And with the Indian government having sold 70% of it’s vaccines abroad only a tiny portion of the population has been fully vaccinated.

12,000 Mucormycosis “black fungus” cases in Nagpur

Whilst COVID-19 has killed millions around the world and countless numbers in India, for those lucky enough to survive the virus, deadly fungal infections are causing devastating consequences in India.

After establishing itself in the nose and sinuses, the fungus begins to invade the tissues of the face, jaw, the eyes, and brain, blocking blood flow and causing tissues death. It is the black discolouration of the dead tissue that has led to the term “black fungus”. If not treated early, then there is a 50%-80% chance of dying from the infection.



Official figures for the end of May reported Maharashtra had 7395 cases of mucormycosis, however, WIN has access to figures for Nagpur with reports of 12,000 cases, so the total cases in Maharashtra must far exceed the official figures.

It is believed that a high use of steroids and antibiotics may contribute to COVID patients developing mucormycosis. In addition to which those who are diabetic present a greater risk. Poor hospital hygiene has also been cited as a factor in the alarming number of cases across the country.

Shortage of Antifungals

To add insult to injury antifungal treatment remains in short supply for which the Indian government has been highly criticised. Without this treatment along with surgical intervention, a patient has a high chance of dying. It’s unclear why the Government is not importing the required drugs to meet the demand of cases. Many questions remain unanswered:

- Why has mucormycosis shown such a sudden and lethal increase across India?
- Why aren’t similar increases elsewhere?
- Why didn’t we see this in the first wave?
- What other factors are at play?

Hoarding and exploitation of resources



Criminals have been capitalising on the coronavirus crisis by selling fake and sometimes non-existent medical supplies to countless desperate people across India.

Nationwide shortages of drugs and oxygen amid soaring Covid-19 case rates fuelled a black-market boom as sellers preyed on the desperation and grief of families.

A New Delhi resident paid for an oxygen cylinder that she desperately wanted for her friend's father, a Covid-19 patient who was gasping for breath after missing out on a hospital bed. After driving to her friend's home at night to deliver the life-saving oxygen, the woman discovered that she had been conned and the oxygen cylinder was a fire extinguisher. Her friend's father died the next day.



In Nagpur lifesaving drugs such as Tocilizumab and Remdesivir have been sold for £300, ten times the retail price.

Police officers in the state of Uttar Pradesh arrested seven people accused of stealing used funeral shrouds from bodies and selling them as new.

Even a hike in the cost of wood to burn the dead has led to the bodies of COVID patients being dumped in rivers.



Addressing the needs of the poor in the fight for survival

Amidst the chaos of India's second wave, WIN continues to focus on the needs of the vulnerable. Thanks to the charity's long-standing connection with wholesale medical suppliers, vital medicines remain available to women with the early stages of COVID, as well as those suffering the long-term effects of the disease.

In addition to the needs of COVID patients, women battling other conditions have been supported throughout the pandemic with vital medicines being delivered to their homes.

Women with HIV have received their monthly ART's



COVID patients treated at home have been supplied with oxygen



Throughout lockdown cancer patients across the city have benefited from WIN's door to door transport service, ensuring timely and safe travel to and from hospital



Throughout the pandemic women with mental health problems have received counselling and treatment

WIN's COVID-19 Emergency Food Appeal

Nagpur is the third largest city in the state of Maharashtra and one of India's worst affected states. Aside from helping women with their medical and socio-economic problems throughout the pandemic, the charity has responded to a food crisis affecting hundreds of underprivileged communities.

The loss of jobs for Nagpur's daily wage earners has left entire communities desperate for food. This has been further exacerbated by a shortage of essential grains due to stock piling by the wealthy.

WIN sources wholesale grains from dealers outside of Nagpur and distributes supplies, along with dried foods, cooking oil, and other essentials, to the neediest families. Over 2500 families have received support so far and our work continues. In addition to supplying grains, the charity cooks meals which are given to relatives camping in the grounds of the government hospitals and to displaced migrant workers living in makeshift accommodation on the outskirts of the city.





Over 2500 families have received emergency food supplies and our work continues



THANK YOU for your incredible donations! Anyone wishing to support this appeal please use the following link:

https://www.justgiving.com/womeninneed/donate/?utm_source=website&utm_medium=buttons&utm_content=womeninneed&utm_campaign=Donate_JG_Blue

OR for bank details contact: start2womeninneed@gmail.com



The crisis is not over yet

The two following powerful articles describe the current situation in India very clearly. Please copy and paste the links to watch.

Rural hospitals unable to cope as virus spreads

As people move from lockdowns in India's big cities to rural areas, Covid-19 continues to spread. But rundown local hospitals and health centres are unable to cope with a crisis that they were never equipped for.

BBC India correspondent Yogita Limaye has been inside one to uncover the conditions that patients are facing.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-india-57029452>



Coronavirus: The 'unknown' Covid-19 deaths in rural India

The second wave of Covid-19 ravaged India as hospitals and then crematoriums ran out of space.

Families struggled to find beds, oxygen or even medicines to save their loved ones. While cities were first hit, the second wave soon reached rural parts of the country.

Hundreds died due to poor or no access to good healthcare. Most of them were not even able to get a Covid test done.

Now experts believe that the number of deaths in rural India is much higher than official statistics.

The BBC's Vikas Pandey and Anshul Verma visit villages in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, one of the worst-hit, to investigate alleged under-reporting of Covid-19 deaths.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-india-57383131>



