

Leading During the COVID19 Pandemic

NOSM Executive Leadership Webinar

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Faculty/Presenter Disclosure

- **Faculty:** **Dr. Mamta Gautam**
- **Disclosure:** **President and CEO, PEAK MD Inc**
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- Potential for conflict of interest: NONE
- Mitigating potential bias: NOT REQUIRED
 - The content of this discussion is not related to the services of commercial interest.
 - No therapeutic recommendations for medications will be made.

Learning Objectives

- What is the impact of COVID-19 on the healthcare team?
- How can we best lead during this crisis?
- How can we care for ourselves so we can remain well?

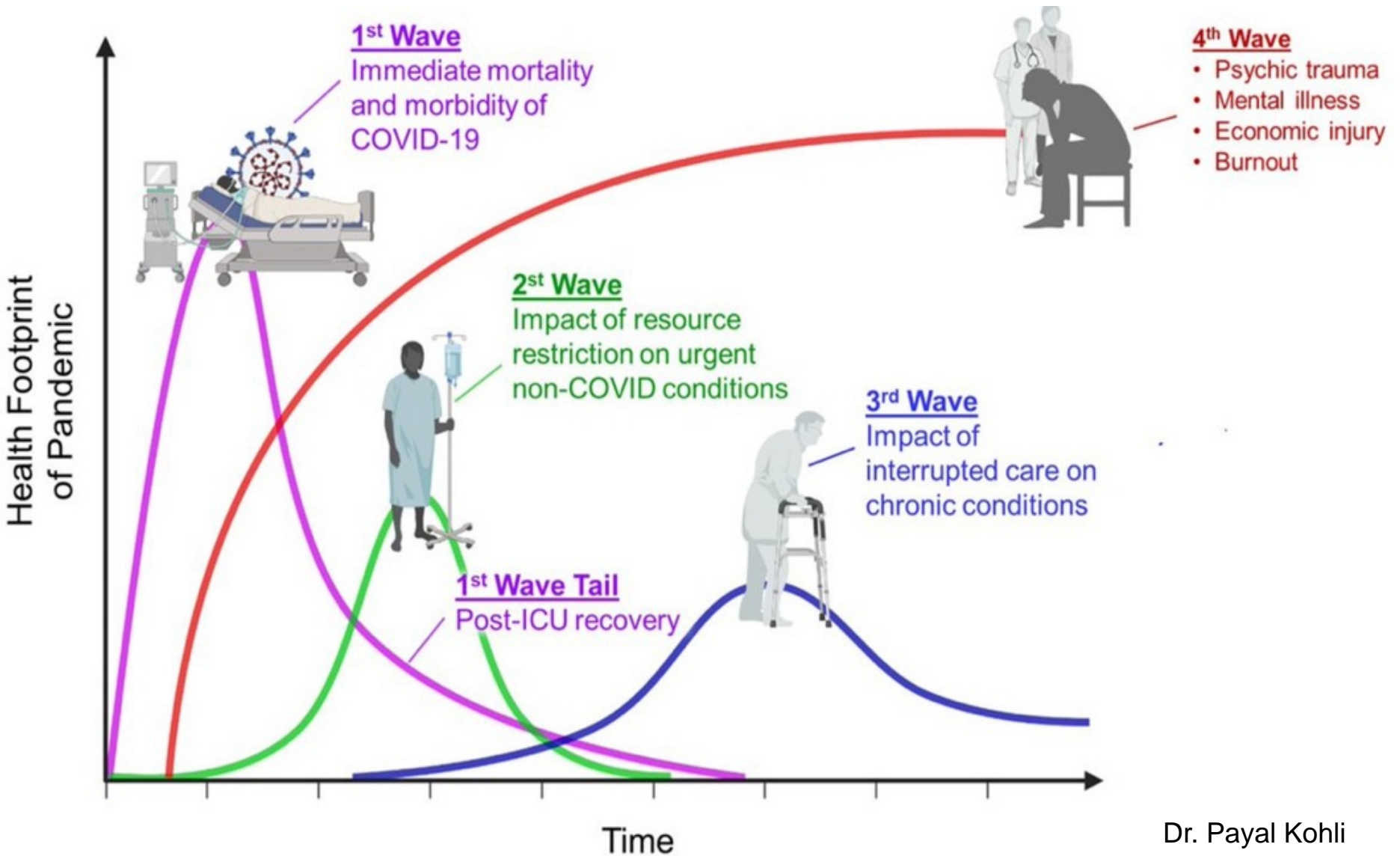
Our World is Changing

- Rapid unprecedented change in healthcare
- VUCA: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity
- Being a physician is rewarding, but is also physically difficult and psychologically demanding
- Increased stress, challenges, fatigue, worry and anxiety can occur
- Impacts all of us. None of us are at our best.

Issues and Challenges

- Lack of access to PPE and testing
- Inconsistency in guidelines, policies, procedures; Communication of this
- High volume of patients, and surge in care demands
- Risk of exposure and infection – impact on us, our colleagues, our family, our patients
- Redeployment, and associated uncertainty about knowledge and capabilities
- Ethical issues
- Support by organization – if develop COVID19, childcare, financial implications
- Psychological stress

What's Ahead?



Stress is normal

- Stress is a normal and natural physiological and psychological response
- Does not mean you cannot do your job, or that you are weak
- Stress can be useful – can help you keep going or maintain a sense of purpose
- What's important is how you *manage* stress

What is Distress?

- When you cannot go about your usual routine
- Signs and Symptoms:
 - Anxiety, worry
 - Unable to relax, insomnia
 - Muscle tension, aches, pains
 - Irritability, negativity, problems with relationships
 - Difficulty concentration, poor work performance
 - Easily fatigued
- Feel demoralized, hopeless, sad

Grief

- Sense of loss as the world has changed
- Multiple Losses: normalcy, safety, touch, connection, choice and control, economic and financial...
- Stages of Grief: Denial-Anger-Bargaining-Acceptance-Integration (Kubler-Ross)
- Sixth stage: Meaning (David Kessler)
- Allow and acknowledge it.

Burnout

A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, chronic overstress
(Maslach)

- Distinct work-related syndrome – demands exceed individual resources
- Most likely to occur in jobs that require extensive care of others
- Common among practicing physicians
- Not a psychiatric diagnosis, but can lead to serious consequences

Stages of Burnout

Three stages of burnout:

1. Emotional exhaustion
2. Depersonalization
3. Reduced personal accomplishment

Even the healthiest and strongest of us
can become unhealthy in an
unhealthy environment.

5 Steps to Leading in a Crisis

1. Practice compassionate leadership.

- Show empathy and Act with compassion
 - being visible and available
 - actively walking around and/or send out texts or emails to colleagues, acknowledging the difficult work and the associated stress
 - asking “How can I support you right now?”
 - listening to understand, not to respond
 - offering encouragement, expressing appreciation, and proactively asking how people are doing.
 - ensuring you have the capacity to allow fellow physicians to get the rest they need
 - being kind, even if you suffer from the H.A.L.T syndrome (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired). Even though your patience might be challenged, people are concerned or anxious.
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2. **Communication:** Be honest and consistent. Provide regular, quality, updated information on COVID-19: eg. screening, testing, closures, changes as they arise
3. **Advocacy:** Physicians need resources to do the job properly and safely, such as PPE, regularly updated policies and protocols, and staff support.
4. **Logistical personal support:** Ensure physicians have access to practical resources, such as childcare while kids are out of school, grocery shopping, walking pets, so they can be at work or recover from work.
5. **Emotional support and counselling:** Organize multiple sources of support for physicians, including: access to online mindfulness, yoga and CBD sessions; Buddy systems, Peer support programs and groups; access to family physicians for self-care; psychology and psychiatry for assessment, counselling, and medical treatment.

Requests to HealthCare Leaders

1. Hear Me – listen to act and address our concerns
 2. Protect Me – reduce risk of acquiring and/or passing on infection
 3. Prepare Me – provide me with knowledge, training and support
 4. Support Me – acknowledge human limitations re. hours, uncertainty, stress
 5. Care for Me – holistic support for me and my family if needed
 6. Honor Me – overarching need for expression of gratitude and compassion
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THE FIVE C's of RESILIENCE



1. Control and Confidence

Consider and identify what you:

1. Cannot control:

eg. Knowledge of disease, Resource allocation, coordination, what your neighbor is doing

2. Can control:

eg. What you can do to promote your health and that of your coworkers; how much you read/social media about this, and from which sources

2. Commitment

- Remember the Why – Why did I choose this profession?
- What initially drew me to this work?
- Values clarification exercise
- Reflection and Journaling – How is my work meaningful to me?
- Appreciative Inquiry

The Meaning of our Work

- Our work is a privilege – to have people share stories with us and allow us to help
- Can bring meaning, spiritual satisfaction
- Humbling to be able to make a difference
- In the midst of the stress and crises, we can feel hope and joy.
- You cannot give what you do not have.
- Connect to your purpose.

The Five Balls

1. Work
2. Home and Family
3. Relationships
4. Friends
5. Self Care



3. Caring Connections

- We often feel alone and lonely, with our workload and responsibilities
- Holding Environment – how would you create and maintain this?
- Social distancing is not social isolation
- Stay connected to others

Relationships in the Workplace

- Create a sense of community – personal touch
- Use peers and colleagues as a network for support
- Buddy System, regular check-ins
- Share your stories

Personal Relationships

- Stay connected with family and friends
- Phone, text, emails, video
- Laugh together
- You will miss them; you don't have to worry about them

4. Calmness

- Feeling upset and anxious is common
- When under pressure, we can exhibit negative attitude and behaviors, blame and criticize, be irritable and unpleasant
- Recognize when you are not calm
- Learn skills to manage during that time

Strategies for Calmness: The ABC's

Allow feelings: Vent Buddy

Journaling – acknowledge and let go

Four-letter technique – write at least 4 letters; do NOT send

Burn it off: Exercise – long run, hard workout, punching bag

Calm down: Deep Breathing
Gratitude, Forgiveness

Spirituality

Yoga

Relaxation Exercises – Visualization, active & passive

Mindfulness Meditation

5. Care for Self

- Take care of yourself first
- Make time for yourself – Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.
- Get your own family doctor
- Laugh
- Ensure the basics: Exercise, Nutrition, Sleep
- Take regular breaks

Self Compassion

- Take regular note of how you are coping.
- Notice when your coping skills are diminished or depleted.
- You are not to blame; it will happen to all of us at some point
- Offer yourself compassion, and care.
- Reach out for help.
- Be kind.