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To emerge as one of the premier pharmacy colleges in the country and produce pharmacy professional of global standards.

MISSION

- To deliver quality academic programs in Pharmacy and empower the students to meet industrial standards.
- To build student community with high ethical standards to undertake R&D in thrust areas of national and international standards.
- To extend viable outreach programs for the health care need of the society.
- To develop industry institute interaction and foster entrepreneurial spirit among the graduates

The Impact of COVID-19 on Health Care System

Dr Arya Alocious



Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has created an economic crisis alongside a health care crisis. During the 2 weeks ending on March 28, nearly 10 million people filed for unemployment insurance, dwarfing any previous monthly numbers. The COVID-19 virus has created not only a healthcare crisis but also an economic one and a COVID-19 recession is now a reality.

Healthcare has generally been immune to recessions in the past. Demand for medical care has been a constant since people get sick, whether times are good or bad. Also, those with health insurance have their out-of-pocket costs taken care of and are still able to afford to get quality care.

But the COVID-19 recession is different. Since people are being asked to practice physical distancing and minimize outside activities, many people who would otherwise be using healthcare are now choosing to stay home. Also, the goal has been to keep medical offices clear so as to reduce the risk of disease spread. People are postponing care that is not urgent. This includes imaging procedures, surgeries, visits to fill prescriptions, etc.



While healthcare workers are busy dealing with COVID-19 patients, healthcare offices are still suffering from the decline in other patients. Some primary care practices have reported reductions in the use of healthcare services of up to 70%. Salaries of clinical staff are being reduced or frozen, and some staffs are being furloughed. There has been an increase in unemployment insurance claims from healthcare businesses as well.

Despite relief assistance from governments, the question still remains: how will the COVID-19 recession affect the healthcare economy? It was initially believed that the COVID-10 recession would be short, but that does not seem to be the case anymore. As long as there is community spread of the disease, it will not be safe for people to re-engage. There are both formal restrictions in place and a general hesitancy of people to expose themselves to risk. It is unlikely that the healthcare economy will stabilize until the COVID-19 crisis is addressed.

The longer the recession lasts, the greater will be the economic harm.

- Most businesses can handle short-time shutdowns, but sustained shutdowns might be more difficult to manage.
- Relief funds will not last forever, and small businesses, including medical offices, will have to make difficult decisions.
- Jobs will decline, which means fewer people will get paid, and those who are working may have to face wage declines. This will result in reduced spending, and the cycle will continue.



There is one silver lining, however. Medical care that is being deferred today will eventually be sought out later. Postponed visits and surgeries will be rescheduled for later, and medical staff may be able to catch up on billings. This may be true for healthcare, but other industries like entertainment and restaurants may not have such a swift recovery.

Nevertheless, a recession still poses a challenge to healthcare workers and healthcare institutions. It all depends on how long the COVID-19 disease spread continues and how long it takes for life to go back to normal.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown it triggered is clearly visible in financial markets. But there is still no clarity on the deeper impact that it is having across businesses and industrial sectors. Based on assessments made by different analysts and industry body Ficci, here is an impact analysis in healthcare sector.

The healthcare sector is at the epicentre of this unprecedented global pandemic challenge, and the private sector has risen to the occasion, by offering to the government all the support it needs, be it testing support, preparing isolation beds for the treatment of Covid-19 positive patients or deploying equipment and staff in identified nodal hospitals.

While the private healthcare sector is fully prepared for every eventuality, it is also a reality that, unlike other sectors, the sector is facing a twin-burden:

- Investing additional manpower, equipment, consumables and other resources to ensure 100 per cent preparedness for safety in the hospital(s) and eventual treatment of patients, if needed.
- Experiencing a sharp drop in OP footfalls, elective surgeries and international patients.

The industry has been witnessing loss of business and this trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future (at least 3-6 months), and the fact that the sector's costs are predominantly (around 80 per cent) fixed, it is expected that there will be losses and severe impact on cash flows

It is likely that whenever the government announces any fiscal stimulus, this industry will be looked at favourably. The industry is also likely to benefit from increase awareness about healthcare and the more government focus that this endemic is likely to result in.

What is the impact on India's medical devices industry?

As the COVID-19 pandemic rages across the country, it has brought unprecedented strain on hospitals and clinics, from a shortage of testing and medical supplies to issues in access among rural and underserved populations. The disease has put a spotlight on some of these inequities, while also revealing holes in the healthcare delivery system that can have lasting side effects on patients and providers.

The medical devices industry has also taken a hit. The country imports consumables, disposables and capital equipment including orthopaedic implants, gloves, syringes, bandages, computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging devices from China. Due to the current crisis in China, the medical device manufacturers across India are finding it difficult to source important raw materials and electronic components from Chinese factories.

Even though some of the factories in China have restored operation, shortage of some critical electronic parts and raw material still exists. This is adversely affecting the margins and profitability of Indian companies importing medical devices and small components to manufacture finished products. This can also put upward pressure on prices of medical devices in the short term.

The survey indicates that almost all respondents were concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on company performance, including supply and demand failures. The COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in stock market turbulence, strict border controls and country-wide lockdowns, all taking their toll on the pharmaceutical sector and leading industry and governments to rethink [drug supply chains](#).

While most pharmaceutical factories in China resumed their production lines, the pharma industry's concerns are heightened by countries such as India restricting the export of dozens of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and the medicines made from them, the UK banning the parallel export of more than 80 drugs to protect supplies during the coronavirus outbreak and the US and the EU looking into bringing manufacturing back to their soils.

The Indian pharmaceutical industry is facing major challenges in transporting ancillary supplies such as bottles and caps since they don't fall under the essential services category exempted from the ongoing nationwide lockdown, industry experts said. National chemists and druggists association and industry lobby groups have urged the government to put all ancillary goods required for medicine production in the essential services category as they fear major supply disruptions in the days to come. What do you do without the bottles or caps? These goods are as important as the medicines if the ancillary supplies logistics issues are not sorted, parts of the country will start facing medical supply disruptions very soon.

At first glance, the life-giving pharma industry and slaughterhouses seem to have very little in common. But they do. Drug makers rely on animal bones or hide for gelatin – a clear substance used in outer casings of the orally taken capsules.

So, why there is a sudden shortage of gelatin? The lockdown is to blame for this shortage, which highlights the delicate and intricate linkages in the manufacturing value chain. Travel curbs for cattle movement and abattoirs have hurt gelatin production.

Sales across sectors have been hit by the lockdown and pharma was no exception as initial numbers suggested that the pharma sector too saw a near 20% decline in sales during April, compared to March numbers.

COVID-19 AND TELEHEALTH

One of the positive outcomes of this is that telehealth has been demystified. Post the lockdown, many governments, hospitals, e-pharmacies and even corporate have adopted to [telemedicine](#) in their employee wellness strategies. The surge in teleconsultations follows the long-pending telemedicine guidelines which were finally issued by the ministry of health and family welfare (MoHFW), in collaboration with NITI Aayog and Board of Governors (BoG) Medical Council of India (MCI). This allows the registered medical practitioners to use teleconsultation and it truly comes handy in the pandemic era where hundreds of doctors have lost their lives due to insecure exposure to the virus.