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Pseudo-protection phenomenon using non-effective personal protective equipment

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Authors

Mohaddeseh Behjati [1*], MD

[1] Echocardiography research center, Rajaei Cardiovascular Medical and Research center, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

Corresponding Author
Address: fellowship of echocardiography, Echocardiography Research Center, Rajaei Cardiovascular Medical and Research Center, Mellat Park, Vali-E-Asr Avenue, Tehran 1996911151 Iran.
Phone: +98 (021) 23922390
Fax: +98 (021) 22663217
dr.mohaddesehbehjati@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Prevention of contamination with Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as an airborne virus requires using preliminary barriers such as face masks [1,2]. Having considered the Maslow hierarchy of needs for prevention of COVID-19, behavioral attitudes seem to construct the baseline. These attitudes would lead to taking protective, non-protective, and pseudo-protective measures. One of these attitudes is applying a repeatedly used face mask unwillingly. As a practitioner working in an underdeveloped country still passing the fifth COVID-19 peak, the first question I always ask patients is "When did you change your face mask?". In many cases, if they are honest, they will refer to a lifespan that is more than what is expected for a mask wearing-off period. While driving, many car drivers have been observed who had hung their masks on the rear mirror or signal lever, and interestingly sometimes the number of overhung masks is more than two. Why are some people unaware of the disadvantages of overusing a face mask? The answer lies in the lack of information about the wearing-off time of a mask. This pseudo protection phenomenon is observed most often in people with low socioeconomic status who cannot afford new masks. In some instances, people even apply their washed surgical masks. This phenomenon has even worsened during lockdown periods owing to the deteriorated financial condition of families. Finally, mass distribution of protective masks and providing people with appropriate information regarding proper usage is a duty of public health providers especially in regions with low socioeconomic status. During the deteriorated living conditions and devastated people, socioeconomic status induced by COVID-19 [3], fulfilling this duty is complicated and its impact on both local and global surging COVID-19 peaks seems disastrous.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The applying face mask as a barrier against COVID-19 infection should be accompanied by some standard protocols in order to prevent the development of pseudo-protection phenomenon. For this purpose, public health providers should facilitate people with high-quality face masks and educate their proper usage of them.

Keywords: COVID-19; Face Mask; Low Socio-Economic Status; Time of Wearing Off; Pseudo-Protection Phenomenon.

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Introduction

Prevention of contamination with Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as an airborne virus requires using preliminary barriers such as face masks [1,2]. Having considered the Maslow hierarchy of needs for prevention of COVID-19, behavioral attitudes seem to construct the baseline. These attitudes would lead to taking protective, non-protective, and pseudo-protective measures. One of these attitudes is applying a repeatedly used face mask unwillingly. As a practitioner working in an underdeveloped country still passing the fifth COVID-19 peak, the first question I always ask patients is "When did you change your face mask?". In many cases, if they are honest, they will refer to a lifespan that is more than what is expected for a mask wearing-off period. While driving, many car drivers have been observed who had hung their masks on the rear mirror or signal lever, and interestingly sometimes the number of overhung masks is more than two. Why are some people unaware of the disadvantages of overusing a face mask? The answer lies in the lack of information about the wearing-off time of a mask. This pseudo protection phenomenon is observed most often in people with low socioeconomic status who cannot afford new masks. In some instances, people even apply their washed surgical masks. This phenomenon has even worsened during lockdown periods owing to the deteriorated financial condition of families. Finally, mass distribution of protective masks and providing people with appropriate information regarding proper usage is a duty of public health providers especially in regions with low socioeconomic status. During the deteriorated living conditions and devastated people, socioeconomic status induced by COVID-19 [3], fulfilling this duty is complicated and its impact on both local and global surging COVID-19 peaks seems disastrous.

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