



Do Public People Need to Use Mask in the Fight Against COVID-19?

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Dear Editor,

The novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) afflicted more than 10,800,000 people and killed more than 500,000 worldwide by July 2, 2020. The main route of COVID-19 spreading is contact with infected persons and their secretions on inanimate surfaces and respiratory droplets coming out of the mouth and nose of patients during coughing, sneezing, and talking (1).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), some patients may transmit the virus one to three days before showing the symptoms of COVID-19 and it is very difficult to identify such patients for this reason, the countries should revise this advice that healthy people do not need to wear the masks. This issue will become more important with the reopening of some jobs in many countries because it is virtually impossible to create a social distance of more than one meter in public areas such as subways, buses, and shops. If this advice is not revised, an increase in the number of infected people and mortality due to the disease, and also a delay in the control of the disease is probable (2). There are a number of reasons given by some organizations and individuals that the general public does not need to use a mask against COVID-19. Below are reasons why this strategy and advice should be revised.

Firstly, it has justified that the use of mask by the public causes a false sense of security and causes them not to consider other necessary measures such as handwashing and social distancing. In one hand, there is no scientific document for this justification, and due to different health cultures prevailing in parts of the world, the same prescription cannot be applied to all. In addition, assuming that this issue is correct, it can be solved through public training.

Secondly, the hypothesis is that use of mask by public may cause them to touch their face and eyes. This hypothe-

sis could not be correct because it is more likely that the infected hands would be contacted with the nose and mouth if there is no mask than when the person is wearing a mask.

Thirdly, it has been mentioned that the use of mask by the public causes unnecessary costs. The mask can play an important role in reducing the spread of the virus in the community, workplaces, and family environment, which have confirmed by some researches (3-5). Therefore, in the current crisis that COVID-19 is spreading rapidly and destroying the global economy, the cost of providing the mask could not be considered unnecessary.

Finally, it has been justified that the use of mask by the public causes a shortage of mask for the medical staff. It should be noted that the type of mask required by the medical staff and public is different. The medical staff need a N95 respirator, while the recommended masks for the public are surgical and cloth masks (6) and the production of these masks does not require advanced technologies and could be produced even by public at home.

In conclusion, in one hand, the pandemic of COVID-19 is paralyzing the global economy and rapidly spreading and killing people around the world. On the other hand, it is very difficult to distinguish some asymptomatic patients from healthy people. Therefore, it is suggested to reconsider the advice about this idea that healthy people do not need to wear mask in the fight against COVID-19.

Footnotes

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