

Ivermectin for Early Treatment and Prophylaxis of COVID-19 When Exposed to Patients: Author's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

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Editorial

The world is currently facing a great challenge of the current COVID-19 pandemic that has swept the world's population and affected all aspects of life including health and economic affairs. This forced many countries to take measures, including preventing popular gatherings and aspects of life in clubs, universities and schools, and closing their borders, in addition to taking physical distancing measures and wearing face masks to prevent the spread of infection [1]. In this regard, we tried to investigate the effect of ivermectin as a prophylaxis in close contacts of confirmed cases of COVID-19. This depended on some previous reports about potentiality of the medication against viruses and our noticing of its effect in treating or reducing infections among patients particularly those in the early stages of the disease. Furthermore, it is previously approved by WHO and US FDA as a safe drug having no serious reported side effects. Moreover, it has been used previously on large scales for mass prophylaxis against some parasitic diseases such as filariasis in epidemic areas.

Then, we have registered the first clinical trial all over the world in this regard by date of May 2020 after taking the institute approval and; thereafter, a consent was provided from the participants whom in close contact of cases after discussing the trial and clarifying that it's the first investigation all over the world [2,3]. Then, more than 65 clinical trials and studies have been

done. Nearly, all of them proved positive results of ivermectin use not only for prophylaxis but also in treatment of COVID-19 disease [4]. Moreover, another meta-analysis study proved efficacy of ivermectin for combating the current pandemic [5,6]. Ivermectin is a safe, non-expensive and available drug. It has been previously approved by US FDA as a well-tolerable safe drug used previously for treatment and even mass prophylaxis of several parasitic drugs. It has been investigated in the current pandemic and proved a high effectiveness for chemoprophylaxis against SARS-CoV-2. Use of ivermectin can provide temporary protection that is not long-term immunity as occurs with a vaccine. Therefore, its use may be repeated. Ivermectin could be one of the hopes for ending the current dilemma of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic if used properly under medical supervision [7,8].

It can be used for mass prophylaxis of the whole population at the same time especially for poor and middle-income countries that do not have the facilities to deliver good effective vaccines. Otherwise, it can be used as an emergency in case of exposure or contact with the patient and even used at the onset of infection. However, it may not be useful in treating severe cases because the virus can cause many organs to fail [9,10]. We recommend further studies to confirm the effectiveness of ivermectin in preventing COVID-19 rather than dismiss it on the basis of insufficient

evidence. Studying is very easy, does not take much time and does not cause economic or health burden. This also does not require special equipment or abilities except for volunteers to join through the investigation.

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