

Eye Care Practice in the Loop of COVID-19

Strategies for a Safe Practice New Normalcy

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In a world evolving rapidly and prone to unpredicted changes, there is a radical need for proactiveness and resilience at the level of management in order to cope with any situation. This highly applies to all kinds of businesses around the world. A good example of such unpredicted changes is the current pandemic of COVID-19; this has reminded all the managerial minds about the importance of thinking outside the box with resilience and wisdom to overcome the circumstances with least negative effects.

Health care system has been always in continuous risk of threatening outbreaks and pandemics (WHO, 2020); therefore, it should always be prepared to manage the situation effectively in cases of such crisis. And among the health sector, Eye Care professionals can be considered among those who are at high risk during COVID-19 as they perform their job at close distances from patients (Danesh-Meyer & McGhee, 2020) with all the possibility to contract or transmit the virus easily if not taking all the precautions needed.

In front of such pandemic, there are two choices for organizations to follow: even they give up to the pandemic and stay at home until one day this reaches an end, with all the negative consequences on economy and sustainability; or they dare to challenge the situation and try to find a smart way to cope with this pandemic wisely and take responsibility by managing their

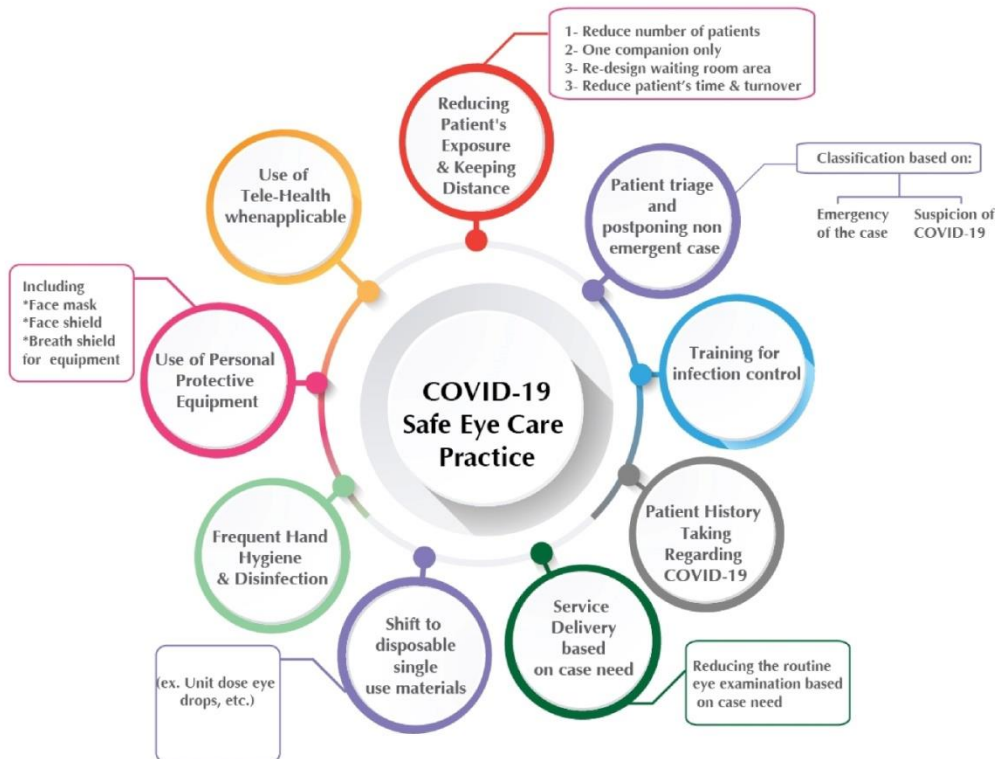
work following “New Normal” of strategies. Second option might not be an easy choice to be tackled, but it is definitely the right destiny to follow if the business industry seeks to maintain a good economic state and stay alive.

The problem today is not just restricted to the complications of COVID-19 alone. The problem is further away. Taking for example the Eye care practice, there are more serious health conditions than COVID-19 by itself; there are variety of ocular diseases affecting the eye with irreversible damages if not treated on time. Look how bad the situation may turn into if patients are not able to get their eye examination as required due to a viral pandemic. This might turn into a disaster with severe sight problems that cannot be treated in the same way anymore.

From here emerged the need to conduct a qualitative research to find the best strategies that should be adopted by Eye Care professionals in order to continue providing Eye care services safely to patients, and avoid the complications resulting from inability to perform eye examination during the pandemic. The research done for the purpose of a master’s degree consisted of an extensive study of the literature review to find a benchmark of the strategies adopted worldwide from different scientific evidence resources and came up with a conceptual framework summarizing the guidelines for a safe Eye care practice during COVID-19. Then a qualitative study has been conducted by a set of interviews with Eye care professionals from different fields of work in Lebanon to assess the applicability of these strategies and to find new practical ones. At the end, a final guidelines framework has resulted identifying 9 themes recommended as “New Normalcy” for a safe Eye care practice during the COVID-19 pandemic, listed below:

1. Use of personal protective equipment

2. Frequent hand hygiene and disinfection
3. Shift to disposable single use materials
4. Service delivery based on case need
5. Patient history taking regarding COVID-19
6. Training for infection control
7. Patient triage and postponing non emergent cases
8. Reducing patient's exposure and keeping distance
9. Use of Tele-health when applicable



Ajab, L. (2021) Guidelines Framework for a Safe Eye Care Practice during COVID-19

The above guidelines framework reflects the innovative mind of Eye Care professionals and managers in the health field to cope with the emergent outbreak by setting a balance between the urgency of continuing delivering health services (such as eye examinations)

during a health threatening condition (COVID-19 pandemic). This is the case where new managerial practices and strategies are required in a highly challenging environment. Here is the need for new business models and innovative critical thinking of the surrounding circumstances in order to build a “New Normal” safe to be followed despite the outside changes in the comfort zone.

No business can sustain if not being able to adjust to the surrounding challenges. Resilience, adaptation, and change management are radical skills for businesses to cope with in crisis such as COVID-19 pandemic. The flexible shift in the management mindset is crucial for all fields including health sectors. This is the only way to survive and keep moving forward.

Keywords: strategies, Safe Eye Care Practice, COVID-19 pandemic, New Normal

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