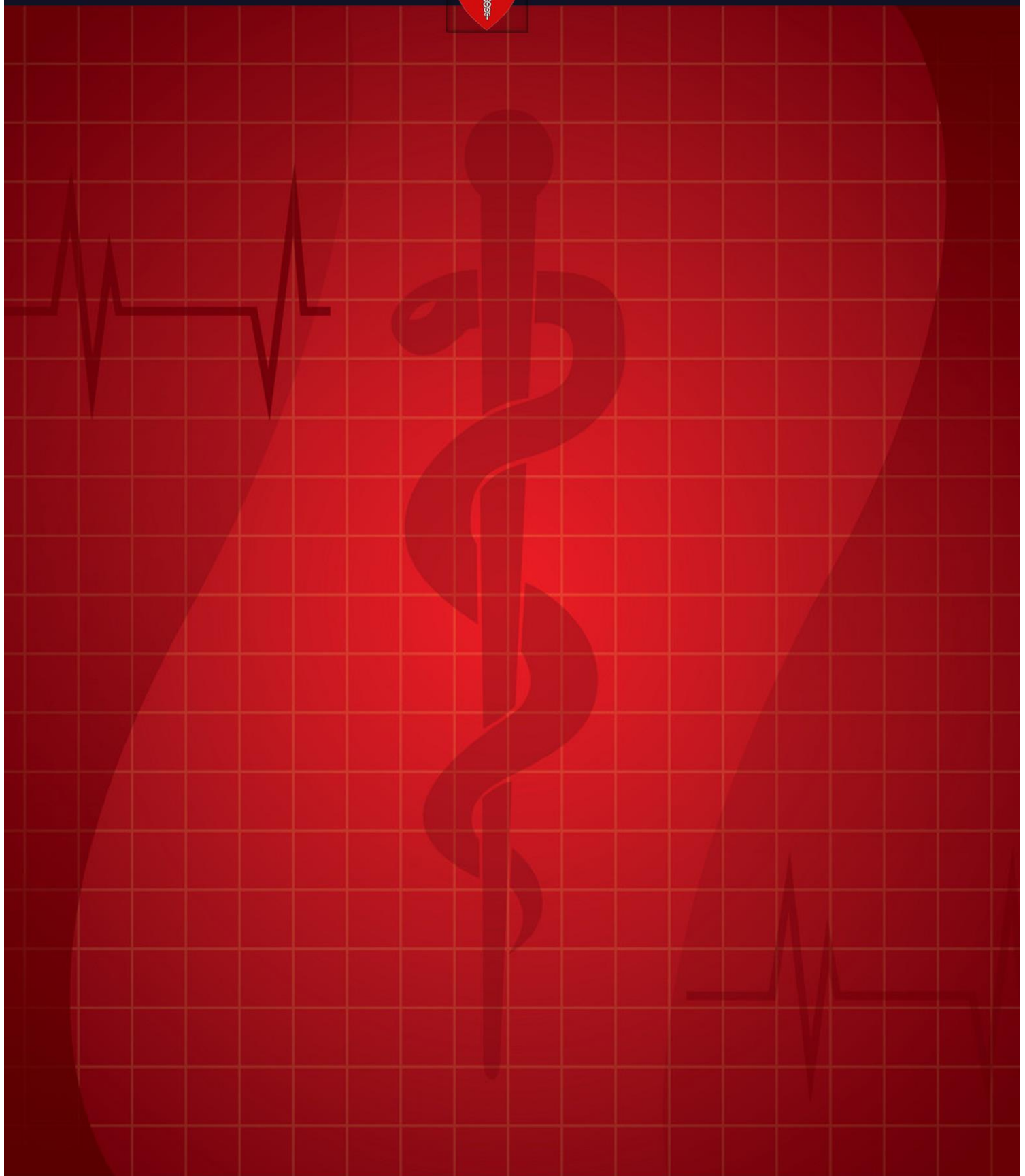


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Preface

We would like to present, with great pleasure, the inaugural volume-8, Issue-10, October 2022, of a scholarly journal, *International Multispeciality Journal of Health*. This journal is part of the AD Publications series *in the field of Medical, Health and Pharmaceutical Research Development*, and is devoted to the gamut of Medical, Health and Pharmaceutical issues, from theoretical aspects to application-dependent studies and the validation of emerging technologies.

This journal was envisioned and founded to represent the growing needs of Medical, Health and Pharmaceutical as an emerging and increasingly vital field, now widely recognized as an integral part of scientific and technical statistics investigations. Its mission is to become a voice of the Medical, Health and Pharmaceutical community, addressing researchers and practitioners in below areas

Clinical Specialty and Super-specialty Medical Science:

It includes articles related to General Medicine, General Surgery, Gynecology & Obstetrics, Pediatrics, Anesthesia, Ophthalmology, Orthopedics, Otorhinolaryngology (ENT), Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Dermatology & Venereology, Psychiatry, Radio Diagnosis, Cardiology Medicine, Cardiothoracic Surgery, Neurology Medicine, Neurosurgery, Pediatric Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Gastroenterology, Gastrointestinal Surgery, Pulmonary Medicine, Immunology & Immunogenetics, Transfusion Medicine (Blood Bank), Hematology, Biomedical Engineering, Biophysics, Biostatistics, Biotechnology, Health Administration, Health Planning and Management, Hospital Management, Nephrology, Urology, Endocrinology, Reproductive Biology, Radiotherapy, Oncology and Geriatric Medicine.

Para-clinical Medical Science:

It includes articles related to Pathology, Microbiology, Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Community Medicine and Pharmacology.

Basic Medical Science:

It includes articles related to Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry.

Spiritual Health Science:

It includes articles related to Yoga, Meditation, Pranayam and Chakra-healing.

Each article in this issue provides an example of a concrete industrial application or a case study of the presented methodology to amplify the impact of the contribution. We are very thankful to everybody within

that community who supported the idea of creating a new Research with *IMJ Health*. We are certain that this issue will be followed by many others, reporting new developments in the Medical, Health and Pharmaceutical Research Science field. This issue would not have been possible without the great support of the Reviewer, Editorial Board members and also with our Advisory Board Members, and we would like to express our sincere thanks to all of them. We would also like to express our gratitude to the editorial staff of AD Publications, who supported us at every stage of the project. It is our hope that this fine collection of articles will be a valuable resource for *IMJ Health* readers and will stimulate further research into the vibrant area of Medical, Health and Pharmaceutical Research.



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Dr. Kusum Gaur (Editor-in-chief)

Dr. Kusum Gaur working as professor Community Medicine and member of Research Review Board of Sawai Man Singh Medical College, Jaipur (Raj) India.

She has awarded with WHO Fellowship for IEC at Bangkok. She has done management course from NIHFWS. She has published and present many research paper in India as well as abroad in the field of community medicine and medical education. She has developed Socio-economic Status Scale (Gaur's SES) and Spiritual Health Assessment Scale (SHAS). She is 1st author of a book entitled " Community Medicine: Practical Guide and Logbook.

Research Area: Community Medicine, Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Health and Hospital Management and Spiritual Health.

Mukesh Arora (Managing Editor)

BE (Electronics & Communication), M.Tech (Digital Communication), currently serving as Assistant Professor in the Department of ECE.

Dr. AMER A. TAQA

Dr. AMER A. TAQA is Professor and Head in Dental Basic Science Mosul University, Mosul, IRAQ. He has been registrar of department of Dental Basic Science Mosul University, Mosul, IRAQ. He has published about 100 of research papers and out of that 50 were of international level. He has awarded many times for scientific researches by Government. He has been member of many examination committees and also is a Member in Iraqi Scientific Staff. He has been working as Editor - reviewer in many journals.

Research Area: Dental Science.

Dr. I.D. Gupta

Dr. I. D. Gupta is Professor Psychiatry and working as additional Principal and Dean of student welfare in SMS Medical College, Jaipur.

He is recipient of Prof. Shiv Gautam oration award by Indian Psychiatric Society. He has done training in YMRS at Monte Carlo and BPRS at Singapore. He has been President Indian Psychiatric Society, Rajasthan State Branch. He is author of "Psycho Somatic Disorder" chapter in 1st edition post graduate text book of Psychiatry by Vyas and Ahuja. He has also worked with National Mental Health Programme and has a lot of publication.

Research Area: Community Mental Health, Psycho somatic and liaison Psychiatry.

Dr. Lokendra Sharma

Dr. Lokendra Sharma is Associate Professor Pharmacology and working as Nodal officer of SMS Medical College, Jaipur.

He is recipient of WHO Fellowship award on Poison Patient Management at Vietnam. He is resource faculty for Experimental Toxicology and Basic Course for Medical Education. He is presented and published a lot of research articles at national and international level.

Research Area: PHARMACOLOGY

Dr. Anuradha Yadav

Dr. Anuradha Yadav is working as Professor Physiology, SMS Medical College, Jaipur (Rajsthan) India. She is a popular medical teacher and research scholar who had many publications in indexed journals.

Research Area: CVS & CNS physiology, Medical Education and Spiritual Health.

Dr. Rajeev Yadav

Dr. Rajeev Yadav is working as Associate Professor Community Medicine, SMS Medical College, Jaipur (Rajsthan) India. He is member of Research Review Board of the Institute.

He has authored a book entitled "Community Medicine: Practcal Guide and Logbook".

Research Area: His area of Interest are Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Spiritual Health.

Prof. Dillip Kumar Parida

Professor and Head in the Department of Oncology, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar.

He has done the Professional Training in Japan (Osaka University, NIBI, AHCC Research Association, Hyogo Ion Beam Center), ESTRO Fellowship in Denmark and India(AIIMS Delhi, BARC Mumbai, SCB Medical College-Cuttak, MKCG Medical College-Berhampur).

Research Area: Brachytherapy, Total Skin Electron Irradiation, Palliative Radiotherapy, Stereotactic & Conformal radiotherapy, Radiation Cell Biology, Cancer Genetics.

Dr. Praveen Mathur

Dr. Praveen Mathur is working as Professor- Pediatric Surgery and is recipient of Commonwealth Fellowship in Pediatric Laparoscopy from Uk and fellowship award in minimal access Surgery (FMAS). He has done Clinical observer ship in the Department of Pediatric Surgery, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA. (2008). He has presented and published a number of research articles at national and international level. He is reviewer of prestigious Journal of Pediatric Surgery (JPS) and World Journal of Gastroenterology, Journal of neonatal Surgery (JNS).

Research Area: Pediatric Surgery & Laparoscopy.

Dr. Lokendra Sharma

Dr. Lokendra Sharma is Associate Professor Pharmacology and working as Nodal officer of SMS Medical College, Jaipur.

He is recipient of WHO Fellowship award on Poison Patient Management at Vietnam. He is resource faculty for Experimental Toxicology and Basic Course for Medical Education. He is presented and published a lot of research articles at national and international level.

Research Area: PHARMACOLOGY.

Dr Rajeev Sharma (MS; FMAS; FIMSA;FCLS)

He is working as Professor, Department of Surgery, Government Medical College, Chandigarh, India. He has done FMAS, FIMSA and FCLS along with MS (Gen Surgery).

He has about 50 international and national publications to his credit. He has held various positions in the Association of Minimal Access Surgeons of India (AMASI) from time to time. He has also acted as instructor of various AMASI skill courses held at different places in India. He has established Surgical Technique learning centre at GMCH Chandigarh for imparting training to the budding surgeons in the field of minimal access surgery. He is also the reviewer in the subject in various journals.

Research Area: Minimal Access Surgery.

Dr Anshu Sharma (MS ANATOMY)

She is Presently working as assistant professor in the department of Anatomy, GMCH, Chandigarh. She has many publications in various national and international journals. She is executive member of Anatomical Society of India (ASI) and North Chapter of ASI. She is also a member of editorial board of Journal of Medical College Chandigarh.

Research Area: Congenital Malformation, Developmental Anatomy.

Dr. Rajeev Yadav

Dr. Rajeev Yadav is working as Associate Professor Community Medicine, SMS Medical College, Jaipur (Rajsthan) India. He is member of Research Review Board of the Institute.

He has authored a book entitled "Community Medicine: Practical Guide and Logbook".

Research Area: His areas of Interest are Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Spiritual Health.

Dr. Dilip Ramlakhyani

Dr. Dilip Ramlakhyani working as Associate professor Pathology and member of IT Committee of Sawai Man Singh Medical College, Jaipur (Raj) India. He has published many articles in indexed journals.

Dr. Virendra Singh

Dr. Virendra Singh worked as Supernatant and head of department of Pulmonary Medicine, SMS Medical College, Jaipur (Rajsthan) India.

He has gone abroad for many training courses and to present research papers. He had been chairman of Research Review Board of SMS Medical College, Jaipur. He is a great research scholar and had published book related to his faculty and had many publications in indexed journals.

Dr. Mahesh Sharma

Dr. Mahesh Sharma is a Principle specialist General Surgery in Rajasthan State Government, India. He has been PMO of district hospitals for more than 15 years. He has gone abroad as observer of many of training related to his speciality. He has published and present many research paper in India as well as abroad.

He has developed Spiritual Health Assessment Scale (SHAS) with Dr. Kusum Gaur.

Research Area: General Surgery, Health and Hospital management and Spiritual Health.

Dr. Ravindra Manohar

Professor Community Medicine, working as head of department of PSM, SMS Medical College, Jaipur (Rajsthan) India.

Previously he has worked in BP Kiorala Institute of Medical Sciences, Nepal. He has visited CDC Atlántica for a Statistical workshop. He has been convener of MBBS and PG exams. He is a research scholar and had many publications in indexed journals.

Dr. Praveen Mathur

Dr. Praveen Mathur is working as Professor- Pediatric Surgery and is recipient of Commonwealth Fellowship in Pediatric Laparoscopy from Uk and fellowship award in minimal access Surgery (FMAS). He has done Clinical observer ship in the Department of Pediatric Surgery, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA. (2008). He has presented and published a number of research articles at national and international level. He is reviewer of prestigious Journal of Pediatric Surgery (JPS) and World Journal of Gastroenterology, Journal of neonatal Surgery (JNS).

Research Area: Pediatric Surgery & Laparoscopy.

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Optimal Timing of Elective Surgery after Covid 19 Infection

Muhammad Alam¹, Dr. Haider Ali^{2*}, Dr. Siddique Ahmad³, Dr. Sarwat Noreen⁴

¹Associate Professor Deptt of General Surgery Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar Pakistan

^{2,3,4}Specialist Registrar Deptt of General Surgery Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar Pakistan

*Corresponding Author

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Abstract—

Introduction: Scheduling surgeries and management of surgical emergencies have been revolutionized by the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The aim of this study was to determine the optimum timing of elective surgery for patients after COVID-19 infection in order to operate the deserving patients and avoid future burden on the health care facility and staff.

Material and Methods: A total of 636 patients were included in this prospective cohort study, which was conducted at General Surgical Department, Hayatabad Medical Complex, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from January to December 2021. The cohort included 162 patients in the pre-COVID-19, 202 patients in the early post COVID-19 and 272 patients in the late post COVID-19 period.

Results: The primary outcome measure was status of post-operative complications and 30-day postoperative mortality in patients stratified over period of post-operative infection. Majority of patients were males (58%) with oncological indicators (16.67%) as the major reasons and Cholecystectomy (17%) was the major surgery. Similarly, diabetes was the major comorbidity (13%) noted in the cohort. The period before surgery significantly affected the outcome and minimum post-operative complications were noted in the late post COVID-19 group. Respiratory system complications, oxygen therapy and pneumonia were significantly more in the peri-COVID-19 group. Consequently, maximum days of hospitalization (7) and 30 days post operative mortality (9.2%) was noted in the peri COVID-19 group.

Conclusion: It is concluded from this study to delay the surgery to more than 7 weeks after COVID-19 infection, where possible.

Keywords— Corona, Pulmonary Disease, Surgery, Transmission, Virus.

I. INTRODUCTION

The first outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) caused by the SARS Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) occurred in Wuhan province, China, in December 2019. The novel virus quickly spread to the other provinces of China as well as rest of the world and on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the new coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a global pandemic, declaring the outbreak an international emergency. The pandemic caused a major disarray of routine hospital services globally which has led to a reduction in the elective surgeries in better interest of the patients and general public; preserving personal protective equipment; reducing in-hospital viral transmission and preserving ward and ICU facilities for the needed patients along with reducing burden on health care providers (1). A large number of patients have been already affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the number is increasing even further day by day. These patients require, either currently or will require elective surgeries in the future. Due to the disease affecting multi-organ system with increased post-operative complications, careful pre-operative evaluation of the patient and optimum timing for elective surgery is required in order to have good post-operative results and improved quality of life. With approximately half of SARS-CoV-2-infected patients undergoing surgery experiencing postoperative pulmonary complications such as pneumonia, respiratory failure, arrhythmias, pulmonary embolism (PE), and deep venous thrombosis (DVT), evidence points to a 19.1% 30-day mortality in elective (planned) surgical patients and a 26.0% 30-day mortality in emergency surgical patients (2, 3). The

National Health Services (NHS) recently published recommendations outlining aftercare for COVID-19 patients due to potential respiratory problems include bronchiectasis, pulmonary vascular disease, fibrotic lung disease, and persistent cough (4). Another study performed in China showed clinical sequelae in 39% patients affected by COVID 19 (5).

Delaying time-sensitive elective surgeries, such as cancer or transplant surgery, may result in unnecessary morbidity and mortality, as well as an increased burden on health-care workers in the future. The initial pandemic surge caused an estimated 28 million procedures to be postponed in just 12 weeks (1). Patients with benign but potentially disabling conditions are likely to be prioritised based on clinical urgency, resulting in delayed care. This will result in a decline in population health, productivity, and a significant society cost (6, 7). Surgery that after SARS-CoV-2 infection should be scheduled based on the severity of the initial infection, the presence of COVID-19 symptoms, co-morbid conditions, functional status, clinical importance, and risk of disease development. Planning surgery while a patient may be contagious is not a good idea for the safety of the personnel, other patients and the public (8).

The goal of our study was to determine the optimal timing of elective surgery for patients with COVID-19 infection who are either asymptomatic or whose symptoms have resolved after infection by measuring morbidity and mortality up to 30 days after surgery, in order to operate upon the deserving patients and avoid future burden on the health care facility and staff.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This prospective cohort study was conducted in General Surgical Department of Hayatabad Medical Complex, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (one of the busiest tertiary care hospital in the province with over 1200 beds) over a period of 1 year from January 2021 to December 2021. A total of 636 patients were included in the study after approval from the ethical committee and taking informed consent from the patients. After receiving patients, detailed history was taken, all the previous record perused, and thorough physical examination was performed. Patients were classified as having pre-operative COVID-19 infection if they met any of the following criteria:

- a) Positive COVID-19 RT-PCR (nasopharyngeal swab);
- b) Positive COVID-19-rapid antigen test;
- c) Before surgery, a chest computed tomography (CT) scan revealed changes consistent with pneumonitis attributable to COVID-19 infection;
- d) Clinical diagnosis made before surgery (with negative RT-PCR swab results).

Time from the diagnosis of COVID-19 infection to day of surgery was collected and divided into 3 categories based upon the information taken from the previous studies (even if patients reports were obtained post operatively), 1–4 weeks (Peri-COVID-19 group); 5-7 weeks (Early post-COVID-19 group) and ≥ 7 weeks (Late post-COVID-19 group).

2.1 Inclusion Criteria

- 1) Patient with positive history of previous COVID-19 infection regardless of their asymptomatic or symptomatic status during infection but whose symptoms have by now resolved.
- 2) Age range 15 and above.
- 3) Both gender.
- 4) Only elective surgeries.
- 5) Patient with previous vaccination (irrespective of completion of vaccinations and time interval of vaccination till surgery).

2.2 Exclusion Criteria

- 1) Patient with current signs and symptoms of COVID-19 infection; positive COVID-19 PCR or Rapid Antigen; Radiological finding on CT Scan supporting COVID-19 infection.
- 2) Patient with COVID-19 infection in post-operative period.
- 3) ASA grade IV and above.
- 4) Emergency, trauma and cancer related surgeries.

2.3 Pre-Operative Patient Work Up

Pre operatively patients were thoroughly assessed by taking complete history and doing physical examination. All necessary baseline laboratory investigations along with Chest X-ray done for all patients; Co-morbid patients (diabetes, hypertension, ischemic heart disease etc.) were further evaluated and consultation with respective specialty done in accordance with the hospital protocol. Peripheral saturation SpO₂ of all patients noted preoperatively and all those patients with underlying chronic lung disease were excluded from the study. For each patient, the following additional information was gathered: age, gender, ASA status, Revised Cardiac Risk Index, type of surgery and any chronic lung disease (Asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).

III. RESULTS

A total of 636 patients meeting the inclusion criteria were operated on elective surgery list. Among these patients, 162 patients (25.47%) were operated within 4 weeks after confirmed COVID 19 infection (Peri-COVID group), 202 patients (31.76%) were operated after 5-7 weeks of COVID-19 infection and 272 patients (42.76%) were operated after more than 7 weeks of COVID-19 infection (Table – 1). Furthermore, 369 patient (58%) were males with age ranging from 22 to 65 years (mean = 43.5 y) and 267 (42%) were female with age ranging from 18 to 66 years (mean = 42.0 y) . Overall, 106 patient (16.67%) were operated for oncological and 530 (83.4%) for benign conditions. Majority of the surgeries were major (549; 86 %) and performed under general anesthesia (515; 80.1%).

The most common surgical procedure performed was cholecystectomy (108; 17%) and hernia (78; 12.3%; Table – 2). Co-morbidities were noted in 189 patients (29.71%) whereas 23 (3.6%) patients were having multiple co-morbidities. The most common single co-morbidity associated was diabetes, noted in 83 (13%) patients, hypertension in 70 (11%) patients and chronic lung disease in 13 (2%) patients (Table – 3).

Among all patients the Peri COVID-19 group had more complications as compared to “Early Post-Covid-19 group” and “Late post Covid-19 groups”. Old age patients were having more complications due to various single/multiple co-morbidities, high ASA (III) and low compliance as compared to younger patients. Overall the respiratory system was affected the most due to the following complications; Respiratory failure(11.2%), Pneumonia (9.2%), overall 17.2% patients in the Peri-Covid 19 group required oxygen therapy with 4.9% of patients developing ARDS and ultimately underwent mechanical ventilation. The 30 days post-operative outcomes for all 3 groups are given in Table – 4.

IV. DISCUSSION

Large number of patients will undergo surgeries in the future having COVID-9 infection, and previous studies have shown an increased 30 days post operative morbidity and mortality for patient who had COVID-19 infection mainly affecting the respiratory system along with other body systems (3, 4, 5, 9). The patients underwent various types of elective surgeries comprising both major and minor surgeries performed for oncological and non-oncological diseases through open and laparoscopic technique. Patients operated close to the time of infection were having more complications mainly affecting the respiratory system including pneumonia, respiratory failure, ARDS and increased oxygen requirement. Patients in the peri-COVID-19 group had an increased risk of post-operative complications, though these complications were less severe than in the early post-COVID-19 group. Least post operative complications were noted in the late post-COVID-19 group. The exact mechanism underlying the increased post operative complications are still under evaluation but a combined effect by tissue damage caused by surgery, anesthesia, mechanical ventilation and covid 19 have devastating effects on patient health and post operative mortality and morbidity¹⁰.

V. CONCLUSION

Late post COVID-19 group were having least post-operative complications as compared to peri- and early post COVID-19 groups. Surgery conducted during or around the time of COVID-19 infection has, thus increased the risk of developing post-operative complications. As a consequence, patients operated during the per-COVID-19 period seemed to have the highest mortality. Based on our findings, we recommend that patients with recent COVID-19 infection who are candidates for elective surgery postpone their surgery for at least 7 weeks.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend further studies with large number of patients, from different specialties and health care facilities. In future nearly all people will be vaccinated against covid-19 which may have profound impact on controlling post-Op complications.

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