

Title: “Passengers, May I Have Your Attention Please...” – The Airport Diaries of Young Covid-19 Warriors

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Contributor Role	Role Definition	Authors					
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Conceptualization	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims.	X	X				
Data Curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse.	X	X				
Formal Analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data.	X	X				
Funding Acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication.	X	X				
Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection.	X	X				
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models	X	X				
Project Administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.	X	X				

Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools.	X	X
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components.	X	X
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team.	X	X
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs.	X	X
Visualization	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/data presentation.	X	X
Writing – Original Draft Preparation	Creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation).	X	X
Writing Review & Editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or post publication stages.	X	X

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Discussion Points:

- Interns posted for Covid duty at CSM International Airport, Mumbai
- Young doctors facing a novel challenge in their initial days
- Importance of team effort in countering pandemics

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1 **ABSTRACT**

2 This article summarizes the novel experiences of a team of medical interns posted at CSI Airport,
3 Mumbai in the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The authors describe the protocols, guidelines, duties
4 and procedures which were to be followed while deputed for screening the incoming international
5 passengers for possible exposure and symptoms of corona virus. For the young healthcare workers in
6 the early days of their internship, being a part of this team was no less than a roller coaster ride. From
7 anxiety and excitement to fatigue and crippling exhaustion, the authors narrate their ordeal as young
8 Covid warriors on duty.
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10 **Key Words:** covid-19, airport, screening, quarantine, internship
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1 EXPERIENCE

2
3 *"Passengers, May I Have Your Attention Please..."* even in the wildest of our imaginations, we never would have
4 guessed this to be our first announcement as healthcare workers. After a gruesome final year of M.B.B.S., we
5 were now ready to enter our hospital premises as doctors. While some may find it hard to equate interns with
6 doctors, in our minds were no less than integral pillars of the healthcare system. It was the time to don that
7 prestigious white coat and apply, in practice, the five years of rigorous training we had endured. However, little
8 did we know that along with our clinical internship, this was also the beginning of a new global event - The
9 COVID – 19 pandemic, something which would alter anything and everything we thought we knew.

10 It was as early as our third day in the hospital when our batch of 15 interns was summoned by the Dean.
11 We were informed that our team was to be a part of the delegation to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj
12 International Airport, Mumbai for screening the incoming passengers in view of the ongoing pandemic. We
13 immediately departed for the APHO (Airport Health Organization). There was a surge of mixed feelings amongst
14 us - the thrill of doing something important for the nation and excitement of a novel experience as a medical
15 professional alongside the fear of fighting an unknown threat. On the way, we were briefed about the safety
16 guidelines, signs and symptoms and management protocols used by foreign countries then, as India had only
17 2-3 cases by that day. At that time, we had very less data on all these aspects of SARS Cov-2 virus. However,
18 we decided to face the challenge head-on with the guidance of our mentors. We reported to the APHO and
19 were handed our airport staff ID cards. We were then briefed on the screening protocols and management at
20 the arrival terminal of the airport.

21 Our work profile included screening all the international passengers, the crew and then giving
22 clearance to the airlines after all people on-board the flight were screened completely. There were multiple
23 counters set at the terminal for screening the passengers ensuring 1-meter distancing between them and the
24 MO (Medical Officers). Passengers were given in-flight self-health declaration forms by the respective airlines.
25 They were asked to fill the forms during the journey and then submit the same at the screening counter. A copy
26 of the form was to be kept by the MO for records and the original was given back to the passenger with the
27 APHO stamp on clearing the screening procedure. All passengers were required to produce the APHO stamped
28 health forms at the immigration counter, failing which, immigration would not be processed. The screening
29 procedure consisted of recording the temperature using a thermo-gun (infrared thermometers), looking for basic
30 symptoms of ILI (Influenza like illness), making a note of any co-morbidities and history of visit to Wuhan (the
31 city in China that recorded the first case of SARS CoV-2) within last 14 days, as that was known to be the
32 incubation period for coronavirus. Those passengers who were at a higher risk (positive travel history or
33 belonging to the geriatric age group i.e. greater than 60 years of age) or would show any symptoms of the same
34 were directly transferred to the nearest hospital for further work-up. By that time India, had banned all the flights
35 from China to avoid any possible contact with the virus. However, we were very apprehensive about the lack of
36 information and studies on the infectivity and communicability of the new variants. Also, constant news of the
37 exponential spread of the virus across the world and failure of even the developed countries to contain the same
38 was demoralizing. Assuring our worried and concerned families amidst this catastrophe was another herculean
39 task. It was like fighting a mysterious evil. Little did we know that this was no less than a forest fire. Almost every
40 alternate day the list of red countries (to check for the travel history for risk of exposure to COVID 19) kept on
41 increasing. After China, many European countries were added to the list. Gradually issuance of new visas got
42 suspended and those with old visas had to carry a negative COVID test report which was to be conducted within
43 48 hours of the commencement of air travel. And then, on 11th March 2020, the World Health Organization
44 declared COVID 19 a pandemic.

45 With the escalating situation of pandemic and increasing mortalities, we were also trying our
46 best to adapt to the new protocols and guidelines. Initially we used the health declaration forms and thermoguns
47 for screening the possible suspects. Healthy international passengers who would clear the screening were
48 stamped on the dorsum of hand indicating that they were to mandatorily quarantine themselves. The stamp
49 read 'HOME QUARANTINED' along with the date until which the person was to be quarantined. They were
50 generally asked to be quarantined for 14 days at their home, if possible, or at the government facility.

51 The last week of airport duty, the week before the lockdown was the busiest of all. The
52 government of India had declared Pan-India lockdown from 24th March 2020 – this resulted in huge number of
53 Indian citizens abroad making last minute reservations to return home. By then, we had started quarantining all

1 the passengers aged more than 60 and those with any existing co-morbidity for 24-48 hours at the nearest
2 government facility, to keep under observation. All such passengers underwent Rapid Antigen Test or RT-PCR
3 as indicated and were kept under observation until the negative report. If positive they were isolated and treated
4 accordingly. This helped reduce the mortality to a greater extent as many cases were detected in this screening
5 process amongst the co-morbid patients, facilitating early intervention and recovery.

6 The 12 hour night shift of 22nd - 23rd March was the last shift of our duty at the CSI Airport. It was
7 a Sunday and India was already following weekend curfew then. The streets were deserted, a rare sight for the
8 usually chaotic city. On arrival, a long queue of the passengers awaited us. The queue seemed to be infinitely
9 long - all the flights were arriving at maximum capacity as it was the last day for entry into India before the
10 international borders were to be sealed. That night proved to be the most hectic duty as we screened a
11 humongous number of passengers.

12 8 am next morning was the end of this riveting journey at CSI airport Mumbai and end of phase 1
13 of our internship or should I say "The COVID Internship"! While returning, something felt off, as if someone had
14 stopped time. It was something we will never forget - the only vehicle running on the roads of the busiest city
15 was our bus! The city of dreams, known for its speed was as calm as the adjoining sea. The police check posts
16 in between ensured enforcement of the lockdown. As fascinating as the experience was, I would never wish to
17 relive it. Hopefully, we won't experience such a disaster again. And even if such a time comes, let's hope that
18 we would have learnt from our mistakes and mitigated accordingly.
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44 **FIGURES AND TABLES.**
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Fig 1: Our team of doctors at work at the international arrival terminal of CSI Airport, Mumbai



सत्यमेव जयते
भारत सरकार

विमान -पत्तन स्वास्थ्य संगठन

स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय,
स्वास्थ्य सेवा महानिदेशालय
Government of India

AIRPORT HEALTH ORGANISATION

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Directorate General of Health Services
Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Approach Road,
Next to Ambassador Sky Chef, Sahar, Mumbai- 400 099.

Telephone & Fax No.: 022-28392429
Email: mumbaiapho@gmail.com

No. APHO/M G15-11383

Date : 15 OCT 2020

To,
Dr. Alhad Mulkalwar, Intern,
Seth GSMC and KEM Hospital,
Acharya Donde Marg, Parel,
Mumbai- 400 012.

Subject: Letter of appreciation for performance of screening activities for COVID-19 at C.S.M. International Airport, Mumbai.

Sir,

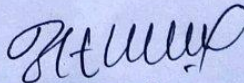
We are writing this letter to express our gratitude for your sincere work and support to APHO Mumbai as a Medical Graduate in the International passengers screening activities at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai from **6th March 2020 to 22nd March 2020**, during the **COVID-19** Pandemic. We appreciate your professional etiquettes and responsible nature and great support to our office in National cause.

We also thank your institute Seth G.S. Medical College and K.E.M. Hospital, Mumbai for dispensing personnel for the same in an expedite manner.

We convey our best wishes for your future prospects and hope to have your continued support and encouragement ahead as well.

Thank You,




(Dr. A.R.Pasi),
Airport Health Officer,
APHO Mumbai.

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3 **Fig 2:** Appreciation letter received from the Airport Health Authority, Mumbai