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Battling the virus within and building resilience to handle the one out there

While the world is threatened by the onset of a not-so-new disease spread, misinformation is wreaking havoc more than the virus itself. What should you know, and what should you do? Coach AB is here to help you!



Battling the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) (Pic: EdexLive Desk)

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Published on: 08 Jan 2025, 8:43 am



Hello everyone, I am s
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News headlines have been quick to paint alarming pictures, social media is flooded with half-baked truths, and anxiety levels are surging exponentially. But as we navigate this storm, it's essential to pause, reflect, and ask ourselves — are we responding with rationality or succumbing to fear-mongering?

But fret not! This week, I've decided to ensure that I put your mind at ease and explore how we can educate ourselves, cope with anxiety, and build emotional resilience amidst such crises while learning to separate fact from fiction in an era where misinformation spreads faster than any virus.

1. The virus within: Fear!

Fear is the virus troubling you! (Pic: EdexLive Desk)

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In my opinion, the virus we need to combat is fear. It's more dangerous because it spreads through whispers, headlines, and unverified forwards, infecting minds and paralysing rational thought. The antidote for this lies in awareness, resilience, and working together as a



community. Together, we can face any challenge with strength and clarity. Hence, let me begin by administering the antidote by illustrating some facts.

2. The fact

Hear the truth! (Pic: EdexLive Desk)

HMPV is not new. It was first identified in 2001 and belongs to the same family as the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

Symptoms range from mild, cold-like effects to more severe respiratory issues, particularly in vulnerable groups such as young children, the elderly, and those with compromised immunity. While this is definitely concerning, we also need to understand that HMPV is manageable with timely medical intervention and precautions.

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3. The other new age virus: Media! (Ironic, I know)

New age virus: Media (Pic: EdexLive Desk)

The media's portrayal of HMPV has been, to say the least, dramatic.

Sensationalised headlines, alarming statistics, and worst-case-scenario reporting can create a climate of fear and anxiety. This kind of reporting can have serious consequences on our mental health, relationships, and overall well-being.

The best antidote: Media literacy!

In a world of clickbait and algorithm-driven content, learning to discern credible information is a crucial survival skill in the new age. Media literacy equips us to follow this three-step process.

1. Identify reliable sources: For updates, follow reports from established organisations like the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), or other reputed healthcare institutions.

2. Question sensationalism: Headlines that evoke panic are rarely complete. Read beyond the title. "Cases have doubled". But how many? Question it.

3. Verify before sharing: Every forwarded message amplifies its impact. Pause, verify, and then decide whether you would like to share — only after you're sure that the source is genuine.

4. Save yourself from the excesses

Shun the excess! (Pic: EdexLive Desk)

Research has shown that excessive exposure to alarming health news can lead to a variety of issues.

1. Increased anxiety and stress: The constant bombardment of frightening news can activate our body's stress response, leading to anxiety, insomnia, and other mental health concerns.



2. Misinformation, misconceptions, and stigma: The media's emphasis on fear can create stigma around HMPV, leading to social isolation, discrimination, and decreased reporting of cases. This not only makes people feel like "outcasts" but also may lead to risky situations and even loss of life.

5. So how do we go about it?

How to cope with the unknown? (Pic: EdexLive Desk)

The best, in times like these, is a two-pronged approach, which we'll need to work on simultaneously. First, coping, and the other, building reliance.

A. Coping with anxiety during global health crises like these

Health crises trigger significant anxiety and Here's how we need to manage it effectively:

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1. Stay informed, not obsessed

Set boundaries for news consumption. Allocate specific time for updates, and avoid constant scrolling through social media feeds. The more we see, the more we tend to freak out.

2. Focus on what you can control

Adopt preventive measures like washing hands, wearing masks in crowded places, and maintaining hygiene. Taking actionable steps empowers you to feel in control, and what isn't in your control, ignore!

3. Practice mindfulness

Anxiety thrives on uncertainty. Techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or journaling can help ground your thoughts and reduce stress. Resort to simpler activities such as playing with your pet or something similar.

4. Seek professional help if needed

If anxiety becomes unmanageable, don't hesitate to consult a therapist. Mental health is as important as physical health, especially during crises, and for all you know, just venting out may give you a big relief, and help you recalibrate yourself.

B. Building emotional resilience in uncertain times

Resilience isn't about avoiding challenges — it's about adapting and thriving despite them. Here are the best ways you can build it:

1. Cultivate optimism

While staying realistic, focus on the positives. Remind yourself of past challenges you've overcome. Big or small, focus on those you've overcome.

2. Strengthen connections

Lean on your support system. Sharing fears with trusted friends or family can lighten the burden. The more we suppress, the more we are sitting on an emotional ticking time bomb.

3. Upskill yourself

Utilise this time to work on yourself. Be it in any area. It'll not only be a much-needed distraction but also make you feel good about yourself, better equipped, and better prepared for your life ahead based on what area you decide to focus on.

Last but not least, use this time to engage in activities that bring you joy. Make time for hobbies, creative pursuits, or other activities that bring you happiness and fulfillment and which shall help you break away from this cycle of constant panic and uncertainty. We need to be happy at the end of the day now, don't we? Nothing else matters!

6. My appeal and request to you all during times like these: Turn awareness into action!



Turn awareness into action! (Pic: EdexLive Desk)

Times like these are the testing times for all of us. Especially when we don't have the right information, support, and awareness. Instead of succumbing to fear, channel your energy into action that will not only make you better equipped but also help others around you.

1. Educate yourself

Learn about HMPV from credible sources. Understanding the virus reduces fear, and equips you to respond effectively.

2. Educate others

Share verified information within your circle. Help combat misinformation by being a source of truth.

3. Advocate for health literacy

Encourage your neighbourhood, community, workplaces, and even local leaders and representatives to promote health education. An informed society is a resilient society, and do your best to make it the most resilient.



As I wind up our conversation this week and whilst navigating the rise in HMPV cases, I'd like to reiterate that it's essential to approach the situation with a balanced perspective, separating fact from fear. By seeking credible sources, building emotional resilience, and promoting media literacy, we can reduce anxiety, cope with uncertainty, and make informed decisions about our health and well-being.

So, my dearies! As you all step into another week, remember that knowledge is your shield, resilience is your armour, and optimism is your guiding star. The world may throw challenges our way, but with the right mindset, we can weather any storm.

Let's beat the virus — not just the one in the air, but also the one in our minds.

Stay informed. Stay resilient. Stay fearless.

With regards,
Adarsh Benakappa Basavaraj
Your anti-virus for troubling viruses within!

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