



## Perspectives of the Frontline Health Workers Regarding Personal Safety Measures

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The Government Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) has recently stated that community transmission of COVID-19 has started in Bangladesh but within a handful of clusters. Some health experts fear that the extent of the transmission is far greater given the paucity of testing across the country. There has also been anecdotal evidence of patients who have not been forthcoming about their recent foreign travel history or their association with persons coming from COVID-19 affected countries. Added to this is the woeful supply of appropriate personal protective equipment for medical personnel to attend to COVID-19 suspected or confirmed patients. As a result, several medical staff members from doctors to nurses in different hospitals have become

COVID-19 positive. Media reports indicate that absenteeism of medical staff have increased while patients with respiratory symptoms are being denied treatment due to the general fear amongst the medical community of getting infected.

Given the above worrying scenario, it is imperative that the frontline health workers comprising of doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, supporting staff and so forth in emergency, out-patient, and in-patient departments be equipped with all necessary amenities and personal protective equipment in order for them to tend to the prevailing medical system. Failure to do may lead to further weakening of an already fragile health system.

A quick survey is being undertaken to better understand the ground realities and gauge the morale and motivations levels of health care professionals in this situation. It is hoped that the information will help in evidence-based advocacy with the government and relevant stakeholders.