

Guidelines for Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers: What to Do in COVID19 Pandemic



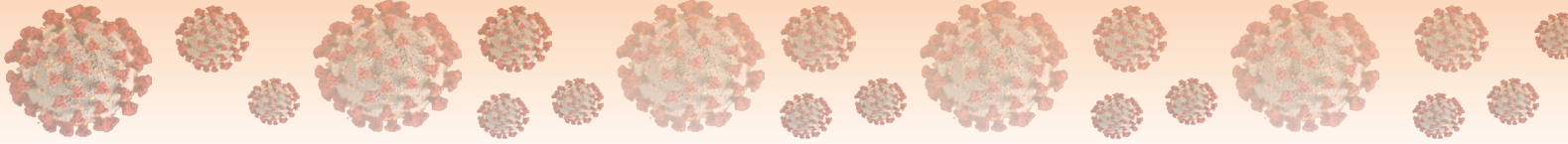
Addiction Management and Integrated Care (AMIC)
Health Sector, Dhaka Ahsania Mission
House 152, Block Ka, Road 6, PC Culture Housing Society
Shyamoli, Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh
Phone: +88 02 58151114, +88017812618661
Email: info@amic.org.bd, amic.dam@gmail.com
Website: www.amic.org.bd





Addiction Management and Integrated Care (AMIC) of Dhaka Ahsania Mission has been contributing to the treatment and rehabilitation of the drug dependents in Bangladesh since 1990. In the current scenario of COVID19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) pandemic, AMIC has taken the steps to develop this guideline reflecting the instructions collected from renowned journals, CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), WHO (World Health Organization), NAADAC (National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors), IEDCR (Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research) and from the experiences gathered from working in the field of drug addiction in Bangladesh.

In case of any query and clarification, please contact with Mr Iqbal Masud, Director of Health Sector, Dhaka Ahsania Mission; and President, SANJOG (a network of drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers) through mobile (+8801714088968) and email (iqbalmasud@amic.org.bd). Dr Tasnuva Humaira, Technical Officer of DAM Health Sector provided the technical supports in developing this guideline.



Patient Admission Criteria

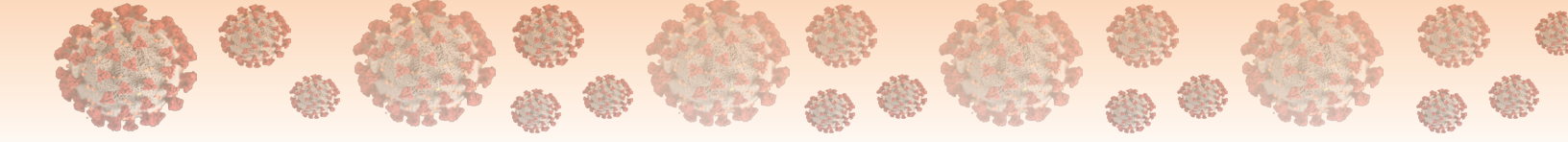
- Patients with high risk conditions, such as experiencing fever, cough, sneezing, throat pain or any other COVID19 symptoms must be referred to dedicated health centers
- Thorough medical examination of the patient should be done by experienced and trained medical staff during admission
- Contact and travel history regarding COVID19 should be taken with due importance for each patient
- Physical distance of at least 3 feet should be maintained while discussing with the guardians of every patient
- Every staff must take protective measures and use mask, gloves, apron, goggles, cap, shoe covers and hand sanitizers while admitting new patient
- Staffs should wash their hands properly after handling money
- Upon admission, patients should be asked to change their clothes as early as possible. The discarded clothes should be given back to the accompanying guardians or should be washed properly with bleach solution/detergent solution as soon as possible
- Medical records should be taken for every patient with detailed history of contact, exposure or risks of Coronavirus transmission
- Written consent should be taken from accompanying guardians that if any symptom of COVID19 arises, the patient will be referred to designated healthcare facilities from the rehabilitation center and the center's decision regarding this will be considered as the ultimate treatment option

In-house Preparedness of the Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers

- **Drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers are considered as healthcare centers**
 - These centers admit the patients who are vulnerable in both physical and mental state. So the centers must follow the rules of cleanliness and hygiene protocol just like other health centers
 - All personnel working in the centers will be considered as healthcare workers (HCW) and they must follow the rules of HCW cleanliness and hygiene
 - The guidelines for HCWs can be found in the weblink – <https://www.amic.org.bd/updated-information-on-covid-19/> (https://www.amic.org.bd/Information/AMIC_Guideline_for_Staff_Management_COVID19.pdf)



- **Prepare the workforce**
 - Provide adequate orientation/training to the center staffs regarding COVID19 symptoms, disease patterns and prevention
 - Ensure the supply of equipment necessary for the HCWs. Send the HCWs that are ill to home. Encourage all center tasks to be done with the participation of in-house employees and in-house patients

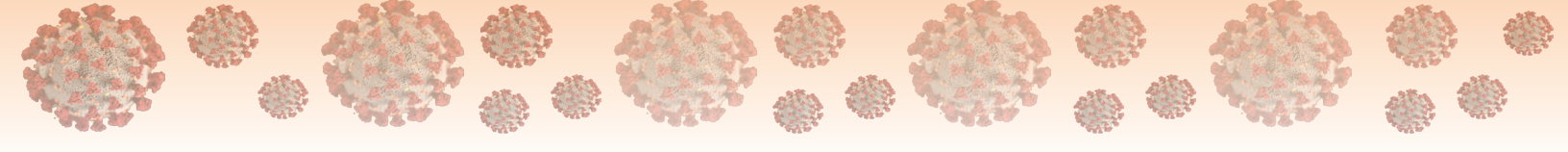
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- Ensure the immune status of the workers at the center. Update the vaccination of the center staffs (ie. Hepatitis A and B). Ask the center staffs to take nutritious food to boost their immunity
 - Collect sanitizers, disinfectants and other hand washing equipment in collaboration with local pharmacies
 - Encourage the staffs to wash hands frequently and to maintain cough etiquette
 - Limit the program access for visitors
 - Limit the mandatory presence of staffs during dope tests and follow up clinical examinations unless it is absolutely necessary. If needed, provide adequate protective equipment for the staff require to be present during the dope test

- **Maintain in-house cleanliness**

- Sanitize the places that are frequently used, regularly
- Service stations (ie. counseling rooms, medical officer's room, medicine preparation rooms) should be disinfected following the protocols before and after use
- Alcohol-based solution or bleach solution can be used to clean the places. If these are not available, detergent powder (4 Tsp) dissolved in clean water (1.5 Liter) can be used for cleaning purpose
- Clean the grocery bags, medicine packets and food packages before bringing them inside the center
- Kitchen counters, shelves, reading places, prayer room, sinks, door knobs, doors and other frequently touched surfaces must be cleaned regularly with the mentioned solutions

- **Ensure the supply of food, medicines and other necessities**

- Prepare an inventory of the stock items reserved in store
- Update the inventory of emergency medicines, food, supply of drinking water, medical equipment such as injections, light bulbs, fans, bed linens, pillow cases and other day-to-day stuff regularly
- Ensure proper cleaning of the clothe items used in the center
- Discuss and plan about the supply of daily and emergency requirements for the center



- **Plan ahead about the programs and services**
 - Update the list of regular services
 - Prioritize the services which are mandatory and limit or stop the services which are not
- **Keep yourself updated about the correct information and management protocols**
 - Follow the local authority's websites and news media for any update on the situation
 - Inform the Health Services in case of suspected contact
 - Do not spread rumors
 - Do not panic
- **Plan for staff absence**
 - Develop a proper plan on how to conduct center activities in case of staff absence due to COVID19 pandemic
 - Ensure leave for staffs suffering with flu-like symptoms
 - Ensure services through telephone, mobile phone, video conferences and other web-based applications
 - Prepare a written protocol on what to do in case the situation worsens



- **Ensure the supply of medicines**

- We have to keep in mind that the supply of regular medicines might be compromised in COVID19 situation
- Prepare an emergency protocol for the medical services of the center after consulting with the medical officer
- Ensure the stock of medicines for patients with long-term illness such as HIV/AIDS, mental health conditions and other physical ailments



- **Ensure the cleanliness of the center staffs**

- Make sure that the staffs wash their hands frequently and especially after visiting each patient every single time
- Hand washing should be done under running water, using a soap, for at least 20 seconds
- Hand sanitizers and alcohol rubs can be used, if necessary
- Make sure that the staffs who commute to the center every day, change their traveling clothes and shoes before entering the premises. They should also wash their hands following the ideal procedure (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PmVJQUcm4E&t=6s>)
- Practice cough etiquette (using tissues/handkerchiefs during coughing/sneezing, coughing/sneezing into the folds of elbow if tissues are unavailable, discarding the tissues after use, washing the handkerchief daily, and washing hands with soap and water afterwards)
- Masks should be used if there is any chance of contamination

Continuing Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Center Programs

Follow up and fellowship are integral parts of recovery process for a person battling with drug addiction. Social distancing due to the COVID19 has made this process even more challenging.

- Limit the mandatory in-person visits for the time-being
- Limit the mandatory follow up for a while
- Hold off personal visits at the moment
- Continue counseling services through telephone/mobile phones, if possible
- Stop support group and NA meetings
- Ensure the services as much as possible through mobile phone, telephone, video calls, and SMS
- Counseling should be continued keeping in mind that a person may relapse under the stress caused by quarantine and isolation. A treatment plan should be prepared after discussing with skilled mental health professionals regarding this issue
- Injectable drug users may have lung diseases, cirrhosis and HIV, which are all high risk conditions for COVID19
- Encourage the patients on recovery to quit smoking
- Remind the patients in recovery about the risks of needle sharing
- Patients should be reminded to maintain personal hygiene and proper cleanliness before taking any medicine
- Remind the patients to wash their hands frequently
- Train the patients to follow cough etiquette (using tissues/handkerchiefs during coughing/sneezing, coughing/sneezing into the folds of elbow if tissues are unavailable, discarding the tissues after use, washing the handkerchief daily, and washing hands with soap and water afterwards)
- Encourage the patients to practice social distancing
- Ask the patient to consult a registered physician in any kind of physical illness
- Do not discuss any disastrous or panic-causing information with the patients
- Try to reassure the patients if they ask for health condition of any family member
- Always follow the protocols following the scientific guidance from World Health Organization and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Ensuring Mental Health in Crisis Situation

COVID19 pandemic has caused a global crisis creating immense mental stress in everyone. Those who are involved in the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addiction, need to be even more aware of their mental health safety.

- It is very normal to feel sad, depressed, anxious, confused, scared and even angry at crisis situation
- Communicate (through telephone) with friends, colleagues and family members to overcome this
- Practice healthy lifestyle. Ensure nutritious and timely diet, regular exercise, adequate sleep and healthy entertainment
- Avoid smoking, alcohol intake and use of other recreational drugs. These do not help in the long run
- Seek help from a professional if needed
- Keep yourself updated on the correct information
- Do not spread rumors
- Try to practice skills and hobbies that have helped you to manage adversities in the past
- Do not make hasty decisions
- Social distancing does not mean being unsocial. Use social networks, telephone, mobile phone and internet communication to keep in touch with close ones
- Do not spend too much time on COVID19

References

<https://harmreduction.org/miscellaneous/covid-19-guidance-for-people-who-use-drugs-and-harm-reduction-programs/>

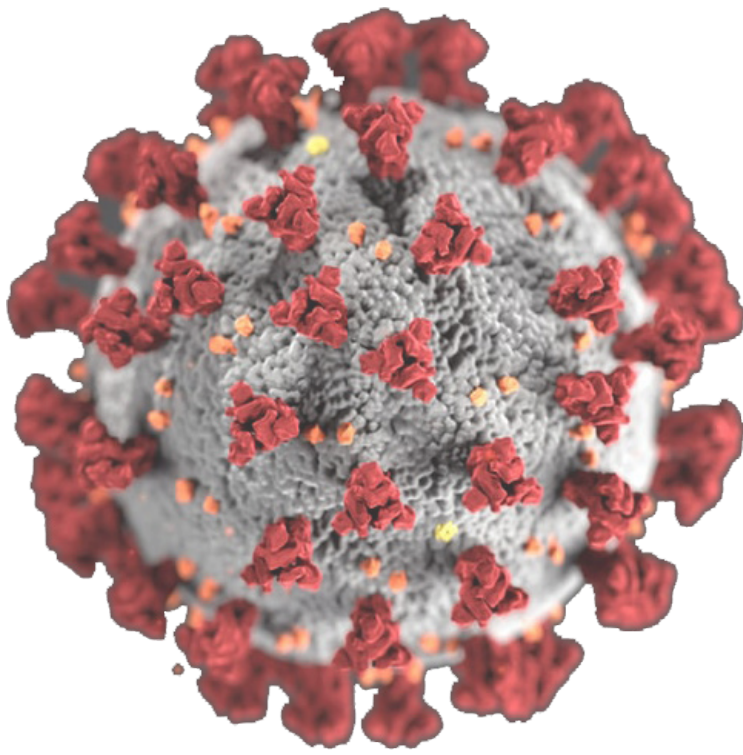
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<https://www.naadac.org/covid-19-resources>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>



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