

Till we win

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Till We Win, authored by renowned experts in Public Health/Public Policy (Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya), Virology (Dr. Gagandeep Kang), and Pulmonology and Administration (Dr. Randeep Guleria), is a nice chronicle of India's fight against the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic that not only documents our big fight against the virus and answers many of the common questions in minds of public and policymakers but goes on to suggest the improvements in the health sector that is needed not only to augment our epidemic preparedness but also help us realize our goal of Universal Health Coverage and ultimately a healthy and wealthy nation.

This 320-page treatise is divided into four sections. The first section helps the readers understand the challenge: Basic info about microbes, viruses, infections, and the inevitability of outbreaks/epidemics/pandemics followed by specifics of the COVID-19 pandemic. The second section beautifully describes our response to the challenge right from the first case that was reported in our country to lockdown to phased "unlocking," the success stories, and the lessons learned. The third section is devoted to our fight to search for effective treatment modalities and vaccines against the virus. The last section deals with getting future ready: Guidance for policymakers for much-needed strengthening of the health sector and guidance for the common man regarding adapting to the "new normal" that is likely to continue for some more time. Simple language, crisp, and practical messages are very appealing. Numerous "boxes" (Fig. 1) throughout the book and FAQs at end of many chapters further add to the ease of navigation and utility of the book.

We also liked the idea of giving references as a footnote of the respective pages. However, it is next to impossible to copy long links from the book if a reader wants to access the given reference; an example is given in Fig. 2. It would have been more reader-friendly if a "short link" or even a QR code was used.

The beauty of this book is that there is something for everyone: Whether the reader is a layman or a physician or a program manager or a policymaker who wants to read about and learn something about the pandemic. However, its flip side is that the needs of readers from these diverse backgrounds are different that makes some sections of the book less interesting for each category of the reader. For example, at some point, the authors have explained the basic structure of a virus which would be interesting for a layman, but at some other point, terms such as "cytokine storm" and "disease modeling" have been used without much explanation that would be needed for a layman.

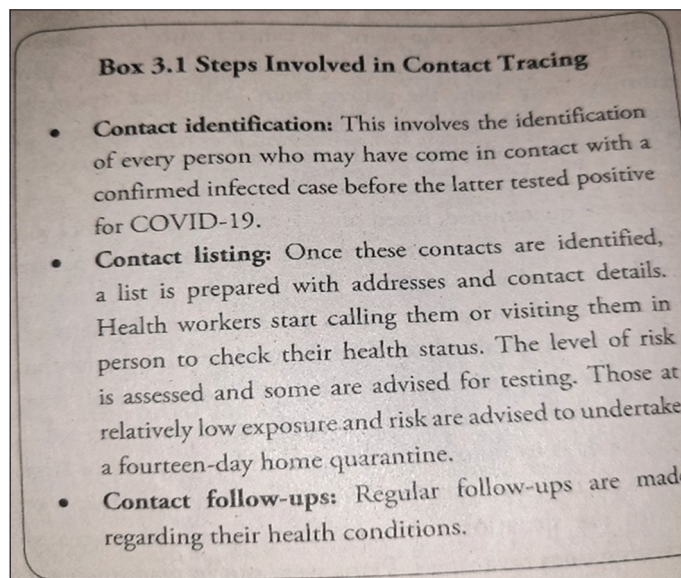


Figure 1: Example of clear information given in a "box"

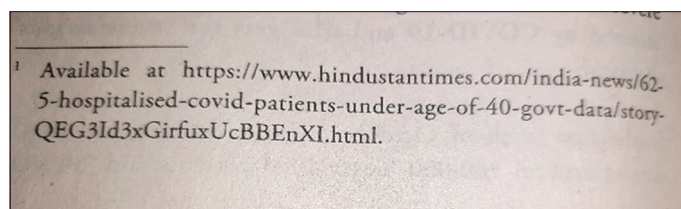



Figure 2: Example of a reference given as a footnote

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Like that everything related to this virus and the pandemic, the questions and debates are changing at rocket speed. The book was published just a few months back and it could not have answered the questions that are being hotly debated today: About various aspects of COVID vaccine roll-out, adverse event following immunization, and precautions/contraindications, future surges, role of variants, future of SARS-CoV-2, durability of vaccine immunity, need of boosters, etc...for these questions, we would wait for the sequel of this book!

We feel that this book is like gold...its value is going to increase as time passes and would be so interesting to read when we look back at the fight, we all participated in.

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