



**A BOOKLET OF QUOTES ON COVID-19**

**BY**

**PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERT**

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

*The quotes are excerpts taken from COVID-19 Ask the Experts  
webinar series organized by DBT-THSTI, DBT/Wellcome Trust India  
Alliance, IAVI and Nature India.*



**IndiaAlliance**  
**DBT wellcome**

"Vaccines take a long time to develop. You need to have a proof-of-concept, usually developed in model systems moving from cells to small animals and sometimes in large animals and only then into humans."

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"In terms of timeline, the Ebola vaccine was already tested in humans in Phase I study before the Ebola outbreak of 2014. With a global effort of five years, it was licensed only in 2019. With respect to coronavirus, we are hoping we will be able to shorten this timeline."

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"The genome sequences of SARS-CoV2 are obtained from credible virologists worldwide. They have found no evidence that this is an engineered virus or a bioweapon."

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"To build a mathematical model for a country, we need to know the population, the age structure, occupation, interactions within the population, nutrition profiling and many other criteria."

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"Given that this is a viral infection, you don't expect it to behave differently in different populations. In India, we lack data with respect to social mixing to develop a transmission model."

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"Virus does not behave differently in different age groups, it is the response of the host or the ability of the infected person to handle the virus which determines the severity of the infection."

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"When you cannot wash your hands frequently due to shortage of water, wash them and then be careful about what you're touching."

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD



"Lockdown is necessary to prevent people to people contact. This feels really long, but we need to remember that this is temporary and essential right now."

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"More testing at the community level will give us an idea about the trajectory of the infection spread. This will better inform models and allow us to make predictions about where we need to be emphasizing stronger responses."

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"RT-PCR detects the nucleic acid of the virus, whereas an antibody test detects the host's immune response to the virus. RT-PCR becomes positive two days before the person becomes symptomatic and stays positive for about two weeks in total. It is very specific with no false negative. On the other hand, it is unlikely for an antibody test to give positive test in the early stages as hardly any antibodies are formed in the first 10 days of infection."

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"Community participation is the key to help slow the spread of the coronavirus and not overwhelm our healthcare system. It is the only way to protect the vulnerable section of our society."

**DR. GAGANDEEP KANG**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"When healthcare system gets overwhelmed with acute cases, people with chronic conditions will get short stripped. In such a scenario, measures must be taken by immunocompromised or people with chronic illness to protect themselves from getting infected."

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"If protective immune response is enhanced by ChAdox I vaccine as we will learn in coming months, we will be fast in the race of vaccine development."

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"Asymptomatic infection cases can only be traced through contact testing. It is estimated that large proportion of cases tested positive now have acquired it from asymptomatic individuals."

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"Repurposing of drugs is crucial and the fastest way of finding a treatment. It is done by running screens with licensed and known compounds to see if they have anti-viral properties."

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD



"There is recognition of the illness as well as science informing the understanding of the disease and the potential interventions. The clinical picture is changing rapidly with the advancement of the pandemic."

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"The question 'At what point do you want to give someone plasma?' needs more discussion before decision on compassionate use authorisation of Convalescent Plasma Therapy."

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THSTI, FARIDABAD

"Challenge in research in public health amidst pandemic is the lack of data systems. The ability to access the information to know the scale of the problem is necessary."

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