

What does having the Corona Virus feel like?

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*This is the experience of **Rohit Kashwani, IPS** who is CSP Jabalpur and was in our team when we got hold of a Corona Positive prisoner (he was the one who pelted stones on doctors in Indore). He and my driver tested Positive and here is what he had to say when he had finally recovered and back on field.*

"Thank you friends for your kind wishes.

I have always felt that there is power in sharing and did not want my experience to go waste. Keeping the thought that it can help someone, somewhere , I continue my story.

Fear, anxiety , worry, guilt were the feelings that surrounded me as soon as as I heard that I was tested Covid Positive on 24th April.This got intensified with the numerous calls I received from friends, seniors , doctors and other officials.

A few days back, a Covid Positive patient (prisoner) had escaped and I was involved in the investigation of the case that had led to an unfortunate series of events.

Two days after that incident , I felt bit uneasy and had cold (running nose) . I isolated my self at my home and went for the Covid test on 22nd of April as a safety measure in advance.

The result of the same came on 24th, that has been the source of these feelings. So, despite taking every reasonable measure and precaution , here I was, nervous and restive.

There was a fear of unknown. Though I had been to such kind of fear during my training at NPA while doing bungee jumping, or horse riding. But, there was something different this time. There was an anxiety about my health and life. Whether I will be alright . What kind of treatment I will get . Tonnes of negative thoughts had filled my mind. That had increased my body temperature as well.

Then ,there was a concern for my family. I was living away from my home in Rajasthan. My wife was at a distance of about 600 km, serving in another district. I was tensed about their feelings and reactions. I called my wife , and asked her not to tell anybody in the family. She was literally numb and could not sleep throughout the night. Yet, she is very brave and strong that she did not reveal the truth to my family.

But, nothing can remain secret in this digitized and super connected world. So, my family got to know about my condition and they were extremely distressed. I talked over video call and could sense that from their face and voice. Over a period of time, my wife helped them control their emotions.

Then , I reached the hospital and started settling down. I met the doctors and the staff. They gave me symptomatic medicines of cold and fever. They were very kind and generous.

At the same time, my phone was filled with calls and messages. I tried my best to reply to some, while could not reply to others due to erratic network, poor health and negative thoughts.

Some of the calls from wife , family and seniors were particularly encouraging, while others were providing multiple suggestions, that was only adding up to my worry.

Slowly , when I settled down there, other thoughts came to my mind.

There was a kind of doubt about my health. Am I getting some kind of throat pain ,or any breath problem or chest issue. Later, I realized that these were only creations of my mind and nothing sort of that happened.

Then, as I focused on my thoughts, I had one particular apprehension about the health of my seniors , colleagues, and supportive staff from police and other departments. Though I had ensured proper protocols and precautions, but I was feeling guilty that they may also come positive due to any kind of unintended and unknown, direct / indirect contact with me.

Also, I was concerned about my staff, viz helping staff, driver, gunman etc. For us ,these are only staff members. But, they are everything for their families. Perhaps, the only earning member of the family for some.

Sometimes, we tend to forget that fact. But I was lucky in the sense, my wife again and again reminded me that I had an ethical and moral responsibility to take care of my staff. I tried to help them as far as I could. I prayed to the God that they should not come positive and thanks to the almighty that majority of them were tested negative.

Another thing that I witnessed, experienced and felt was, Discrimination. The patients of Corona are being stigmatized and ostracized due to several rumours spreading over social media. If a positive patient is discovered in a locality, people are not ready to accommodate and allow the patient and the family members of the patient to live in the locality, despite the fact that Corona virus is very heavy and won't spread if one remains in home isolation. If the administration decides to procure a particular building as Corona Quarantine Center in an area, people surrounding are objecting to it, despite knowing the fact that Covid patient won't come out of the isolation. Some people are not even ready to volunteer to give food to Covid patient , even when it comes to keeping food as far as at a distance of 20 m. Even , when a person is tested for Corona is negative, and his quarantine and observation period is over, still he/ she faces such discriminatory practices. I would like to emphasize that a Corona patient is already physically exhausted and mentally stressed, she / he deserves an empathy instead of discrimination.

What worked for me?

As a result of encouraging and positive talks with my wife, family, seniors and friends, I had realized that the fight can only be won, by being strong ;both physically and mentally.

I decided two things. First, I would distract myself from the negative thoughts of Corona and will always remain positive and strong. Second, I will engage myself in the things that make me happy.

For that , I binge watched web-series and movies over the phone. I began reading books. Further, playing ludo with my family became our daily ritual. By and large,I tried to preoccupy myself always. Still ,whenever any negative feeling about Corona crept in , I talked to my wife and family to vent that out . We used to talk about happy things and moments from the past. Further, talks about training, school, college and other crazy or embarrassing moments of the past

with friends helped me to laugh and remain positive. Whenever, there was a gloomy feeling, I used to think about my friends , seniors , colleague and every Jawan fighting Corona on field and that definitely gave me a lot of inspiration. Also, there were chats and conversations with other fellow patients, particular policemen, to support each other that we will be discharged together soon. Also, the quarantine gave me an ample opportunity to have a self talk and introspection regarding my career and personal life.

Further, to ensure a smooth recovery, I followed a lot of things. I used to do Pranayam and other breathing exercises regularly twice a day. I took symptomatic medicines and adhered to doctors' advice religiously. Paracetamol for fever and medicines for cold were there. Then, I had a 5-day course of HCQ . I used to take Vitamin tablets and drink lots of fluid .I kept a tab over my body temperature and pulse , at least thrice a day and sent the readings to my sister-in-law (who is a doctor), for her response. I used to check whether I had proper taste of food , as tastelessness is also one of the symptoms. My seniors helped a lot as they used to send homemade Kada and Haldi milk , twice a day. I had normal food, fresh fruits. Then, I had steam and warm drinking water to prevent any kind of cough. Overall, this helped in increasing my immunity and ensured a quick recovery.

After 19 days, I was tested negative twice and was discharged along with other 6 policemen.

That day, as soon as we exited from the hospital, the doctors and supporting staff cheered and clapped for us. Then, there was a grand welcome by the Police Family for us. The past 3 weeks have been a roller-coaster ride to say the least; but that's how unpredictable life can be. So,we must learn to savour every little moment from now.

Thank you once again for your calls,blessings and wishes. As a result of your prayers, I believe that the God has been kind to me .Specially, thanks to all my benign seniors who along with their families kept me as well as my family enlivened throughout the time."

Jai Hind.

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