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COVID-19 – facts and recommendations

Although the corona virus has caused massive suffering throughout the world, millions of people in Africa have suffered more, simply because of high levels of poverty. COVID, with the lockdown restrictions, has intensified that poverty. It will never be known how many people have died through hunger, or simply because they could not get to hospital to have an otherwise treatable disease seen to.

In some countries COVID is worse than in others. We must all take care, and we should be well informed. In Zimbabwe, even senior government officials have died of COVID-19.

Prevention

- Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables. Minerals and vitamins strengthen the immune system.
- Clean your hands often. Use soap and water.
- Maintain a safe distance (more than 2 metres) from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Wear a mask when physical distancing is not possible.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your nose and mouth with your bent elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Stay at home if you feel unwell.
- Take fever, coughs and difficulty in breathing seriously.

Signs and symptoms according to the World Health Organisation:

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are

- Fever
- Dry cough
- Fatigue

Other symptoms that are less common and may affect some patients include:

- Loss of taste or smell
- A stuffed nose
- Conjunctivitis (also known as red eyes)
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Muscle or joint pain
- Different types of skin rash
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Chills or dizziness

Symptoms of severe COVID-19 disease include:

- Shortness of breath
- Loss of appetite
- Confusion
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- High temperature (above 38 °C)

Further useful information:

The time from exposure to COVID-19 to the moment when symptoms begin is, on average, 5-6 days and can range from 1-14 days. It is estimated that 20% of people who become infected develop no symptoms. Of those who develop symptoms, most (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing hospital treatment. About 15% become seriously ill and require oxygen and 5% become critically ill and need intensive care.

Feedback from partners in Africa on treating the symptoms of COVID-19:

Dr Cleve McIntosh, South Africa: “*Artemisia annua* is very popular, I can’t keep up with the demand. My patients are astonished how mild the symptoms are when they take it.”



Lippia javanica



Stachytarpheta jamaicensis



Artemisia annua

Joachim Nyamande, Zimbabwe: “We have developed the Makomo Natural Tonic Solution. This tincture is made from several local herbs, the most important of which is *Artemisia annua*. Since March 2019, we have given the tonic to almost 200 patients. They all recovered. 25 of them were COVID-19 positive confirmed cases. 100 had not been tested but suffered COVID-19 related signs and symptoms. Others were just suffering from ordinary respiratory conditions. We have had some people on their deathbed who have recovered, to the amazement of their relatives.”

“Apart from Makomo Tonic Solution, people are using home remedies like garlic, ginger, onion, *Lippia javanica* (known locally as zumbani), mango, guava and lemon tree leaves, administered as tea and as an inhalation.”

For respiratory problems, “steaming”, i.e. inhalation of steam, at best with eucalyptus, is extremely helpful.

Nelson Moyo, Malawi: “Eucalyptus, *Lippia javanica*, *Artemisia annua* and *afra*, and pine needles.”

George Zokli, Ghana: “*Artemisia annua*, neem, ginger, moringa and mushrooms.”

Rehema Namyalo, Uganda: “Tea of *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis* (rat tail) is very effective.” Others in Uganda: *Artemisia annua*, ginger tincture, lemon, garlic and *Warburgia ugandensis*.

Artemisia annua is very obviously a very valuable plant in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. Its use for this purpose is now the subject of research at a major research institute in Germany. *Artemisia afra* may be just as good.

COVID survivors in Zimbabwe also emphasise the importance of healthy eating (even when one has no appetite), having a positive attitude, good family support and prayer.

With my best wishes, stay well and continue to teach your community!

Keith Lindsey