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Press Release

Impending disaster - Ill timed relaxation of Covid 19 restrictions

With the delta variant being commonly detected, the number of patients and more disturbingly exponential rise in the number of oxygen dependent patients, our capacity to accommodate them has virtually reached its tipping point.

With the increasing demand for oxygen, it will be a matter of few days to exceed the supply and hence resultant deaths due to lack of oxygen or more importantly due to the lack of oxygen delivery mechanism to the patient's bedside. This crisis will be equally applicable to both public and private sectors.

In this backdrop, further relaxation of Covid restrictions in our opinion be adding "fuel to the fire". With such relaxations reaching the general public, who are already complacent in obeying guidelines, will invariably start behaving like "free birds" aggravating the crisis further.

We, as a professional body feel it is our prime responsibility to alert and warn the decision makers of the current grim situation. In our opinion, relaxation should have commenced once we've achieved vaccination targets along with declining number of Covid 19 daily cases, may be in four to eight weeks from now.

With declining economic performance indicators, we are quite aware of the urgency the government has in getting the economy back on track. However, impatient and hurried decisions to open the country up will invariably delay any expected economic growth due to surging Covid 19 related mortality and morbidity. As medical specialists, we strongly believe that economists and others have to be alive in the first place to develop the economy and no tourist will come to our country unless and until we are a reasonably safe place with regards to current pandemic.

We are quite disappointed and saddened by the silence of professionals who act in advisory and advocacy capacity for lack of courage to inform the decision makers of the TRUTH and REALITIES of the ground situation. We are almost certain that these advisors are very well aware of the current grim situation in the health sector.

Therefore, we are compelled to request the government to revisit their Covid-19 restriction protocols in the wake of surging numbers, specially with this deadly delta variant.

As scientific, practical and pragmatic professionals, we strongly believe that we have to have an intact nation to revive the economy.

We certainly understand the importance of livelihoods provided the lives are saved. We wish to conclude with a well-known medical quote- "It is better to have a living problem than a dead certainty".

Thank you.

Dr LakKumar Fernando
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