



Response to COVID-19 Outbreak in a Spine-Specialty Korean Medicine Training Hospital: A Short Report

Me-riong Kim¹, Young Suk Yoon¹, Hye Jin Seo¹, Alka Gupta² and Ji Yun Shin^{1*}

¹Jaseng Medical Academy, Jaseng Hospital of Korean Medicine, Seoul, Seoul, South Korea

²Integrative Health and Wellbeing, Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, New York, United States of America

Abstract

Objective: The purpose of this paper is to report the potential challenges posed during the coronavirus pandemic in a Korean medicine hospital and reports its response strategy to prevent and lower the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Methods: This paper reports the main features of the response to COVID-19 implemented at a Korean medicine hospital located in the Gangnam district of metropolitan Seoul, South Korea.

Results: This paper provides information on how an integrative Korean medicine hospital handled the challenges it faced during the COVID-19 pandemic; including the mitigation of COVID-19 without reducing the number of treatments and admission, holding wide implications for other medical specialties of comparable circumstances in use of traditional medicine and manual medicine.

Conclusion: In this report, challenges posed during the COVID-19 pandemic at a Korean medicine hospital in the Gangnam district of metropolitan Seoul, South Korea, are reported. The response strategy to prevent and lower the risk of spreading COVID-19 whilst maintaining steady provision of treatments and patient admissions is included. This report may be beneficial for other medical institutions as a reference in implementing mitigation procedures during COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19; Korean medicine; Spine-Specialty; Hospital; Outbreak

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global health crisis since its first appearance in Wuhan, China in late 2019 (1). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 (2). The WHO reported that as of 11 March 2020, there were 820,372 confirmed cases and 47,900 deaths worldwide (3).

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***Corresponding author:** Ji Yun Shin, Jaseng Medical Academy, 536 Gangnam-daero, Gangnam-gu, Seoul, Korea, Tel: +821080221000; Fax: +8227501558; E-mail: jasengliaison@gmail.com

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Figure 2: Flowchart of a Korean medicine hospital hospitalization process updated for COVID-19.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global health crisis, with over 7.8 million cases and 210,000 deaths reported worldwide as of September 2021. In Korea, the first case was reported in January 2020, and the country experienced a significant outbreak in early 2021. The Korean government implemented strict measures to control the spread of the virus, including mandatory mask-wearing, social distancing, and a rigorous testing and quarantine system. The healthcare system, including traditional Korean medicine hospitals, has adapted to these challenges by updating their hospitalization processes to ensure patient safety and effective care for COVID-19 patients.

Discussion & Conclusion

The updated hospitalization process for COVID-19 in a Korean medicine hospital involves several key steps: initial screening, admission, treatment, and discharge. The screening process is particularly critical, involving a dedicated screening center where patients are assessed for symptoms and tested for COVID-19. Once admitted, patients are managed in a designated ward, with traditional Korean medicine integrated into their treatment plan alongside modern medical interventions. The discharge process is also updated to ensure that patients are safely released and followed up, minimizing the risk of further transmission. This comprehensive approach highlights the adaptability of Korean medicine hospitals in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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