

The Besrouer Centre for Global Family Medicine
Dr. Patrick Chege Memorial Research Award Poster Presentation

**Social distancing at Endocrinology Outpatient Department's waiting area at Tikur
Anbessa Hospital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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Background: COVID19 (Coronavirus disease 19) is a current pandemic that is threatening the globe currently. The virus has no proven cure so far. Preventative measures like social distancing are an important option and infection prevention strategy. The spread of COVID19 is related to overcrowding situations. It is not unusual to see overcrowding in hospital settings including outpatient department. To prevent transmission the WHO (World Health Organization) recommends social distancing of about 2 meters. And this was proven to be beneficial in reducing the spread of COVID19 both in hospital and in community settings.

Statement of the problem: It was observed that the Endocrinology clients at Black Lion Specialized Hospital (BLSH) are not adhering to social distancing and hence over crowded, which predisposes them to increased risk of contracting the virus and complications.

Objective: At BLSH endocrinology OPD (Out Patient Department), ≥80% of patients and attendants will be able to adhere to social distancing protocol per the WHO guideline during July 1st-30th, 2020.

Method: Cross-sectional interventional study design was used.

Interventions: Social distancing posters were posted and social distancing markings were placed on the floor. Education regarding social distancing (practical simulation provided by nurses) was undergone at the waiting area. Telemedicine was used to see eligible patients and the number of patients entering waiting areas at one time was limited.

Results: Pre-intervention data: On average 50 patients visit BLSH Endocrinology OPD per day. And 797 patients total visited the clinic in June 2020 of which only 10% of them applied social distancing protocols.

Post-intervention Data: Among a total of 560 patients who come at endocrinology OPD during the month of July, 403 of them (72%) fulfil the criteria of inter-individual distance per WHO guideline. The post intervention data shows significant improvement in social distancing from 5% to 72% which we believe the continuous health education & the intervention brought it among other factors.

Conclusion: The finding suggests that it is possible to maintain social distancing in settings of overcrowded hospitals by increasing awareness through education and by making feasible adjustments.

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