

PERSPECTIVE

Meet and greet and then treat" is no fun: is it time to reinvent no-touch greetings for contact precautions?

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Take One: Movie Contagion released in the year 2011 [1] scared the hell out when it projected the premises of contagious outbreak of fictional meningo-encephalitis virus-1 to pandemic proportions by killing estimated 26 million people globally by Day 29. The scariest part for this purportedly fictional epidemiological nightmare was the climatic Day 1 when just holding hands with a chef, whose bare-handed escapade with infected carcass was unknown but possibly not unexpected, turned the main character of the movie into Patient Zero for Contagion.

Take Two: Silverberg et al publication in the year 2013 [2] prompted the re-exploration into "the hygiene hypothesis" [3-5] and publication of thought processes about living in an imperfect world wherein chemical agents replacing biological agents [6] may be only acting as deterrents from clearly understanding complicated human pathophysiological processes wherein pathogens might be getting displaced by allergens and/or immunogens secondary to societal evolution/necessity for waterless hand-rinsing to name one of the many potentially immunogenic factors.

Somewhere between these Two Takes, there may lie an answer so obvious and clear at get-go that it must have been unwarrantedly ignored. Cleanliness in general and in healthcare settings in particular as advocated by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with hand-hygiene standards-

guidelines [7] bring forth the importance of culprit hands and how to take care of them. Moreover, it cannot be stressed enough that culprit hands do not have to only directly contaminate else's intact mucosa or breached wounds but human nature of touching their own faces with their hands at the rate of 16 instances per hour [8] exposes themselves to their own culprit-contaminated hands' risqué.

Therefore what does this all entail for the general population (in-the-hospital or out-in-the-society) as hand-hygiene practices are percolating fast into our psyche even though with erratically non-homogeneous frequencies wherein some-places they are non-adhered and exposing people to pathogens while at other-places they are overtly-adhered thus exposing to allergens/immunogens. There is an unexplored (and potentially overlooked) arena/avenue wherein neither you can strictly/religiously adhere to hand-hygiene (often given amiss by our natural prude psyche) nor you can avoid thinking about it despite human being a social animal (how to else-greet without having to self-treat).

Henceforth, directly coming to the point of writing this letter (for general population because healthcare personnel belong to general population too): Not only should oneself not waste time in prolonged civilities or greetings as advocated [9] but also one should not allow those greetings lingering

on to them through the exchanged visible or invisible fluids therein. What does this all may mean is that for example, hand-shaking may be easily replaced with hand-waving so that your mind does not immediately race to hand-washing; and hugging may be easily replaced with bowing so that you are not bowing to the contracted illnesses due to the contacted bodies. Finally what to say about kissing that may be avoided altogether when greeting strangers or may be limited for only those people whom you love so much that you are ready to get sick with them. Questioning your practices is never an easy task but the times one lives in always instigate for-or-against the prevalent ways of the lives because constant exposures and risks of pandemics can never be overstated in present times of exploding human populations.

In summary, general population with societal assent can re-invent No-Touch Greetings for contact precautions in regular livelihoods because meeting and greeting and then rushing for treating self is never fun.

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