
The Impact of Covid-19 on the Comorian Health System

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic was officially declared in Comoros in April 2020 by the Head of State, His Excellency Azali Assoumani. It has deeply affected the Comorian health system including the private sector. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the hospitals of Samba, Bambao Mtsanga and Fomboni are considered by patients and their families as death establishments. They even prefer to keep the sick at home. Self-medication and the use of traditional medicine are gaining ground. We have met patients who refuse to go to the hospital for fear of being sent to Samba or to other institutions dedicated to the care of COVID 19 patients.

In the media like Facebook but also in public places, people are calling the pandemic CORONA BUSINESS. Some hospital services are afraid to receive patients for fear of being contaminated because they say that they have not been given the necessary means to protect themselves.

Consequently, the sum of all these elements has a serious impact on the treatment and follow-up of patients with other pathologies such as HIV/AIDS, hypertension and diabetes, among others. To cope with the rejection of the hospital by the Comorian and the influx of patients who self-medicate, the medical offices have experienced in turn a significant desertion.

Keywords: COVID 19; Pathology; Comoros; health system

INTRODUCTION

In a rather difficult context for the management of the pandemic, international aid should not be perceived as a miracle solution to COVID-19. In order to instill barrier measures in the minds of the Comorian people, the authorities must take into account the local context.

What if we involve civil society in the response to the pandemic?

This crisis of unprecedented dimensions has caused significant collateral damage in the short and medium term in terms of health in general, living conditions of the population and especially poor medical monitoring or lack of treatment.

Among the consequences of the pandemic, we also observe these effects on social inequalities and household poverty. The genetic transformation of the pandemic could have quite clear socio-economic and legal consequences. The fundamental freedoms once defended by the texts in force risk being flouted by the executive without going through parliament. The emergency obliges it according to some and a constraint according to others.

It is without appeal that instead of employing measures copy-pasted from the West, it would be desirable to sensitize the application of the measures barriers through religious preaching, social organization hierarchical and in Koranic schools, primary, secondary and university. Focus groups are not negligible.

Method

The data provided in this study was done through a survey conducted among the staff of public hospitals and private clinics. We did not exclude responses from patients and their families. These data allowed us to share with our readers the danger that could happen if we do not act quickly in order to understand the evolution of mentalities in the face of the genetic mutation of the pandemic.

Results

In the course of our investigation, we discovered a dramatic drop in the activities of private clinics. We cannot provide exact figures but our interlocutors tell us that their activities have dropped by 40 to 60% from the beginning of the pandemic until the end of 2020. At the same time, from March 2021, medical clinics as well as public hospitals register a slight increase in activities of about 16% than in 2020. The activities of specialists are more impacted than those of general practitioners. We also found that pediatric care is less impacted than the others. Unfortunately, in Comoros, teleworking and teleconsultation are non-existent.

The new variants of the virus are frightening, as no one has mastered these genetic mutations:

The variant of a virus is a virus that presents one or more genetic mutations compared to its original form. The appearance of variants over time is a natural process in the history of viruses, linked to the way these microorganisms replicate. The genetic material of the virus consists of an

assembly of molecules, the nucleotides, aligned with each other in a very precise sequence. When it infects the cell, a virus must copy its genetic material faithfully to produce new virus particles. To do this, it has proteins (enzymes) that assemble the nucleotides in the same sequence as the original genetic material.

The Covid-19 pandemic variant is having devastating psychosocial effects on the population and our institutions. It is widening the gap in social inequality between men and women. Many women are losing their jobs or are technically unemployed, forgetting how much society needs to rely on women, whether at home or elsewhere. At the same time, this crisis has created structural inequalities in all areas such as health, education, economy, legislation and especially the obstacles to the free movement of people.

In times of crisis, when resources are weakening and the institutions do not have the capacity to offer an adequate response to the population, it would be wise to direct our IEC CC through local associations and not through actions carried out by law enforcement.

They are confronted with the excessive impacts of the pandemic in a fragile situation of inflation and high living costs due to the impacts of Covid 19 and the chaotic management of the health crisis.

The gains made in terms of women's rights are largely insufficient in Comoros and are also under threat. The response to the pandemic is not limited to the use of masks, vaccines and social distancing measures, it is also about building a resilient world where women are not the main victims of the pandemic. Although we do not have exact figures, women are more likely to be declared positive than men because they are the ones who take care of the elderly, children and risky jobs like cleaning.

Diseases such as malaria and pathologies that accompany old age are slightly neglected. The renunciation of health care, especially for the elderly, could be detrimental to individuals and to the nation. This problem worries public authorities, patients and their families, and medical staff.

Faced with all this, the implementation of actions aimed at encouraging patients to take care of themselves in time and improve the care of the sick is necessary. It is time to sensitize all actors and eliminate all phobias about the pandemic and its variants.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a disruption of the health system in the Union of the Comoros, as it has everywhere in the world. In a country where the population practices mass health immigration, only Tanzania receives patients who could not go to other countries such as Madagascar, India, Mauritius among others for care.

Those who have not had the chance to be treated abroad risk self-medication for some and others only go to the hospital when the situation is critical. In recent months, there has been a rapid increase in the number of deaths at home and in the number of cases of complications for patients with chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and others.

We call for the promotion of teleconsultation and tele-expertise to reduce the effects of the pandemic on the Comorian health system.