



## CLOTHING AND FASHION CHOICES POST COVID -19

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**ABSTRACT** Covid-19, a global pandemic, has led to create awareness about the usage of face mask among the masses. During the lockdown period, many brands have emerged with different styles and fabric of masks. As the numbers of cases are increasing Doctors and Health Institutions are promoting more and more use of surgical mask. Cotton masks are prohibited by many health institutions. Since the standards of the face shields and face masks used by doctors and staff members or health institutions are fixed for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) but the standards of the face shields and face masks used by common masses are not fixed. This review paper is based on usage of face mask by common masses. A community-driven approach was used for identifying key studies for this literature review to create a narrative review of the effectiveness of public mask wearing as source control. Earlier usage of mask was mainly confined to some selected diseases such as Tuberculosis. Scarves and handkerchiefs are usually used as facemasks. These are the face masks which fulfill the legal requirements but not the medical requirements. An ideal face mask is one which satisfies both medical and legal requirements. It is also important for health authorities to provide clear guidelines for the production, use and sanitization or re-use of face masks and consider their distribution as shortage allows.

**KEYWORDS :** Personal Protective Equipment, Face Shield, Face Mask, Covid-19.

#### INTRODUCTION

The highly-infectious COVID-19 virus was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020. Although its exact origins are unknown, the COVID-19 pandemic is believed to have emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The severity of the virus differs between individuals, ranging from mild symptoms of fever, coughing, and shortness of breath to severe respiratory problems in critical cases. A notable number of cases have resulted in hospitalization and even death. On 3 March, it was estimated that the global mortality rate of COVID-19 was approximately 3.4 percent (WHO 2020). COVID-19 mortality has been more common in older adults and those with pre-existing health conditions (Zhou et al. 2020a).

The virus of SARS-COV.2 spread mainly through air or by infected person as they cough, sneeze so to prevent the virus highly recommended the use of precautionary measures like social distancing, hand washing, air filtering, covering mouth when coughing or sneeze for this face mask are exhorted in public.

Fashion has always drawn attention from what's going on in the world, and what new can be added to fashion choices. It is the dynamicity of fashion that each and every year there is something new which is to be added to fashion choices but the year 2020 has an edge over the last several years in the sense that it did not only add something new to fashion choices but also add something new to the apparel basket of both: males and females. This new thing is nothing else but Face Mask. The threat of covid-19 has blocked the stigma of public mask wearing. Right now, protective masks are no longer medical instrument but key parts of our cultural outlook and fashion.

Face mask are advised as a functional way to stop the spread of covid-19. But as this mask become part of one's look, deliberating one's personality and angle on lite fashion must be impacted in them. Initially wearing of face mask was made mandatory for all people in public places and patients as well as non patients in hospitals as a preventive measure after the occurrence of Covid-19. General people had to make adjustment with this new apparel in their clothing. Gradually it became the part and parcel of fashion choices and apparel basket. Now some designers like unorthodox fashion designers have included a new accessory in their collections: the face mask. Besides this, some brands have introduced their own face mask. This trend has established in itself and fashion enthusiasts are wearing face mask more than ever to appear a bit trendier while the use of these fashionable face masks is not advised as a preventative measure. This chapter entitled Clothing and Fashion Choices Post Covid-19

addresses only fashion choices related to face masks while focusing on essentiality of a face mask, which it must satisfy, with a view to draw the attention of the fashion enthusiasts that they must not put their life at stake by wearing face mask which fails to satisfy: legal, medical, material and filtration requirements. This chapter makes an attempt to answer about the standard which a face mask must meet while being a fashionable face mask.

#### Legal And Medical Requirements

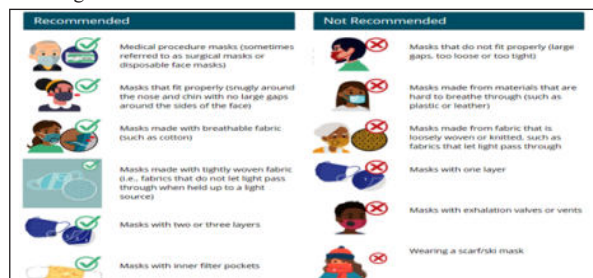
When the lockdown was over, the country was set to unlock with certain restrictions like maintaining social distancing, no touching the face, disinfecting hands by washing at regular interval, wearing gloves, face and nose masks. Asking the general public to wear facemasks was simply not a viable option but people accepted it as a part of their apparel with the passage of time. The type of facemask a person wears can also express how serious he or she is about the facemask issue. There are facemasks which fulfill the legal requirements but may or may not fulfill the medical requirements. For instances, facemasks made out of other transparent facemasks. The argument for transparent masks is also to see people's facial expressions, a real problem with face masks. **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved that, The Transparent Surgical Face Mask is popular for use in healthcare settings, such as in surgery centers, or in other medical procedures such as dental, isolation and veterinary procedures during which a face mask is required to protect both patient and healthcare personnel from transfer of body fluids, microorganisms, and particulate material. The mask wear allows for full view of the face and facial expressions, particularly the nose and mouth areas. The mask is indicated for over-the-counter use. The mask is disposable and is indicated for single use. The device is not provided sterile. Scarves and handkerchiefs are also usually used as facemasks. These are the face masks which fulfill the legal requirements but not the medical requirements. An ideal face mask is one which satisfies both medical as well as legal requirements.**

#### Designs And Materials Requirements:

The material varies as well while healthcare agencies recommend cotton fabric which is to be washed frequently. Plexiglas and other plastic face shields are frequently worn by employees who wear it eight or more hours a day, this style makes it easier to breath but general public find themselves uncomfortable with this face masks at public places, offices and universities etc and it does not constitute a part of fashion. Hence the study excludes it from the discussion.

As the fabric stores were closed, the material of choice for DIY masks was dish washing towels made from cotton or linen. After supply

chained caught up followed commercial face masks for individual use. Commercial consumer masks offered a variety of styles and design to match the face shape and size as well as the aesthetic preferences of the wearers. The selfies of celebrities with face masks also set a trend and soon fashion brands like Adidas and Chanel entered the market. The face mask became the must-have fashion accessory of the corona crisis. Fashion signals identity and can also make a political statement especially during corona times. Amazon has offered over 50,000 masks of all shapes, styles, materials, sizes and designs. Some other methods are available for making mask like several online guides and videos to provide instruction to people wishing to make a DIY face covering.



### Filtering Capability Of Face Masks:

Masks can be made of different materials and designs which influence their filtering capability. There are rigorous standards evaluating masks used in healthcare settings but these focus on personal protective equipment (PPE) efficacy, that is, the ability of the mask to protect the wearer from infectious particles coming from outside. Masks can also be used for source control, which refers to blocking droplets ejected by the wearer. Tuberculosis is an example of an illness where masks are used as source control. Although both of these are considered to be important but the study focuses on source control face mask. If everyone is wearing masks to decrease the chance that they themselves are unknowingly infecting someone, everyone ends up being more protected. Multiple studies show the filtration effects of cloth masks relative to surgical masks. Particle sizes for speech are on the order of 1  $\mu\text{m}$  while typical definitions of droplet size are 5  $\mu\text{m}$ -10  $\mu\text{m}$ . Generally available household materials had 49 percent to 86 percent filtration rate for 0.02  $\mu\text{m}$  exhaled particles whereas surgical masks filtered 89 percent of those particles. In a laboratory setting, household materials had 3 percent to 60 percent filtration rate for particles in the relevant size range, finding them comparable to some surgical masks. In another laboratory setup, a tea cloth mask was found to filter 60 percent of particles between 0.02  $\mu\text{m}$  to 1  $\mu\text{m}$ , whereas surgical masks filtered 75 percent for the same. Dato, et. al. note that quality commercial masks are not always accessible. They designed and tested a mask made from heavyweight T-shirts, finding that it offered substantial protection from the challenge aerosol and showed good fit with minimal leakage. Many studies have recommended that cloth mask designs should also include a layer of paper towel or coffee filter, which could increase filter effectiveness for PPE, but it does not appear to be necessary for blocking droplet emission. An article entitled evaluating the benefits and harms of cloth masks by **MacIntyre et. al.** has been widely cited whose findings have been misinterpreted, and therefore detailed discussion is required here.

The authors caution against the use of cloth masks for healthcare professionals rather than the use of surgical masks for regular procedures, based on an analysis of transmission at hospitals in Hanoi focusing on health workers using masks to protect themselves against infection. The study compared a "surgical mask" group which received 2 new masks per day, to a "cloth mask" group that received 5 masks for the entire 4 week period and were required to wear the masks all day, to a "control group" which used masks in compliance with existing hospital protocols, which the authors describe as a "very high level of mask use". It is important to note that the authors did not have a "no mask" control group because it was deemed "unethical to ask participants to not wear a mask." The study does not inform policy pertaining to public mask wearing as compared to the absence of masks in a community setting, since there was not a "no mask" group. The results of the study show that the group with a regular supply of new surgical masks each day had significantly lower infection of rhinovirus than the group that wore a limited supply of cloth masks. This study lends support to the use of clean, surgical masks by medical staff in hospital settings to avoid rhinovirus infection by the wearer, and is consistent with other studies that show surgical masks provide

poor filtration for rhinovirus, compared to seasonal corona viruses (NL63, OC43, 229E and HKU1). It does not inform the effect of using cloth masks versus not using masks in a community setting for source control of SARS-CoV-2.

It can be concluded from the above discussion that an ideal face mask is one which does not only block the emission of droplets from the wearer but also protect the wearer from inhaling the infectious particles. This would be an ideal face mask from filtering point of view. This must be kept in mind by public while wearing fashionable face masks. Being trendier is not bad but being riskier is bad not only for one self but also for others.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Our review of the literature offers evidence in favor of widespread mask use as source control to reduce community transmission: non-medical masks use materials that obstruct droplets of the necessary size. UNESCO states that when human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions should be taken to avoid or diminish that harm. This is known as the precautionary principle. The loss of life and economic destruction that has been seen already from COVID-19 is a morally unacceptable harm. The positive impact of public mask wearing on this is scientifically plausible but uncertain. The action of ensuring widespread use of masks in the community should be taken, based on this principle. Models suggest that public mask wearing even fashionable is most effective at reducing spread of the virus when compliance is high. We suggest that mask use requirements are implemented by governments, or when governments do not, by organizations that provide public-facing services, such as transit service providers or stores, as "no mask, no service" rules. Such mandates must be accompanied by measures to ensure access to masks, possibly including distribution and rationing mechanisms so that they do not become discriminatory, but remain focused on the public health benefit. Given the value of the source control principle, especially for pre symptomatic people, it is not good enough for only employees to wear masks; customers must wear masks as well. It is also important for health authorities to provide clear guidelines for the production, use and sanitization or re-use of face masks, and consider their distribution as shortages allow.

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