



When the first COVID-19 suspected cases came into the ICU, we were a little scared. But we are well protected. Later when the result was positive, I had a few doubts – could I have been more careful? If I knew it was positive, could I have taken any other steps? But we are trained for this and are following the correct protocols. So there is no need for fear. *K. Mahalakshmi*



AMMA, HOW ARE YOUR PATIENTS TODAY?

I studied in CMC and work as a critical care technician in the Medical ICU. My home is only 10 minutes away from CMC Hospital but these days I come at least half an hour early. Wearing PPE, handing over from the previous shift – this takes extra time. We technicians are present at the side of the patient whenever any procedure is done. We deal with critically ill patients, and where it involves the risk of aerosol spray infection, we are always cautious.

Patients are also very scared. One kept asking us, *"Do I have COVID-19? Why are you all wearing so much protection? Even the doctors in the wards are dressed like you. Did I get the infection?"* We reassured him but till his test result came negative, he was under so much unnecessary stress.

We have a new ECMO (Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation) machine in our ICU. For cases of severe lung failure, the patient's blood is pumped through the machine and oxygenated outside the body. Usually the perfusionist does these procedures, but now we have been trained to manage these very sick patients on ECMO.

If the patient is conscious, we take their permission before drawing blood or doing a procedure. It is a little harder while wearing a hazmat suit but we communicate through eye-to-eye contact. There is a lot of bio-medical waste. We are learning to segregate it correctly. The cleaning teams have a very big job because of this.

I am an asthmatic, so I take extra precautions. I have two children under the age of five years. Every day, my daughter asks me "Amma, how are your Corona patients today?" I tell her they are getting better.