



## WHEN A CHILD IS BORN

For an obstetrician, work never stops, even during a pandemic. Pregnant mothers and their much awaited babies are always in need of care. Sadly, reaching CMC during lockdown has been difficult for our patients, who can't afford cars or bikes, or even an ambulance. We also receive patients in the 'high risk pregnancy category' who have been referred here by other hospitals. At the joyous occasion of birth, the number of family members with a new mother is restricted. The family is upset when we cannot bring out the newborn baby for them to see.

**120 years ago, Dr. Ida Scudder started CMC for mothers and babies. Today, our aim is the same. I want to reassure our patients, we will not turn away anyone who needs care.**

*Dr. Reeta*



Often, while awaiting COVID-19 test results, patients go into labour. The Labour Room is a big hall where both high risk and low risk mothers can be monitored. But now, each mother is isolated in a separate cubicle to prevent cross infection. It is hard for a mother to be alone and for us to monitor patients this way. Each day, we have 3-4 surgeries for COVID-19 suspected patients. In the height of the Indian summer, donning PPE is not an easy task. We work 8-12 hour shifts, we get dehydrated and exhausted. At the same time, we feel safe and protected.

We set up a core committee to plan our department's pandemic strategy. All new protocols and government regulations are disseminated to our team. CMC supports us in so many ways, giving extra leave, adequate PPE and providing infrastructure requirements etc. Our main workforce is our young post-graduate doctors and many of their doubts were cleared in our problem-solving meetings.

Even as a senior, I too had fears. My parents-in-law are over 90 years old. Will I take the infection home? After seeing 60-70 patients every day, my throat gets sore and I wonder - am I infected? Will I be in the media headlines tomorrow? I am extra careful. I carry minimal personal belongings between home and hospital. I follow all precautions and this routine has become normal.

While we stay physically strong, we also need mental and spiritual strength in a crisis. Prayer has become more meaningful, giving insight and comfort. We are blessed that we can continue to care for our patients, even in difficult times. Small encouragements can brighten the day of a healthcare worker. A smile, a "Hello, how are you?" lets us know you care. It boosts our commitment of serving our patients as we normally do.