

# Suvarna Alladi

## *COVID-19 and Dementia: Challenges and opportunities for reframing care*

With over 55 million people living with dementia around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus, risk factors for progression of dementia and the need for new and innovative approaches to support management. Considerable global evidence has emerged highlighting the crucial role for functional rehabilitation and social isolation on cognition and behaviour, as well as the challenges experienced by persons with dementia and their caregivers during the pandemic. Persons with Frontotemporal dementia were particularly vulnerable due to their unique behavioural profiles. While countries adopted multiple measures to contain pandemic spread and protect vulnerable populations, measures such as nationwide lockdowns, inadvertently impacted the management of care for persons with dementia. Disruption in functional activities and reduced access to services as a result of these measures were recognized to possibly underlie the deterioration in well-being observed in persons with dementia. Interruptions in daily routines placed significant stress on caregivers as well, having to balance several responsibilities with reduced access to support. While research continues to emerge on the impact of the pandemic on persons with dementia in high and some low-and middle-income countries, simultaneously evidence on ways to support effective care management of persons with dementia during the pandemic has also been surfacing. Overall, I will provide an overview of the impact of the pandemic on persons with dementia, with specific focus on Frontotemporal dementia, by sharing experiences from India and will further discuss the need to reframe existing models of dementia care services.

