

A patient's 'self-help manual' goes viral

Zhou Anna

AN article titled "A Self-Help Manual for Shanghai Residents with Positive Nucleic Acid Test Results" recently went viral on WeChat. The author, Wang Hai (pseudonym), was found to be asymptomatic, and is currently isolating at home after being discharged from hospital.

Wang was able to better understand the pandemic as a result of his quarantine. He shared his experience in the hope that it would be useful to others.

Wang emphasizes "self-help" because, given how busy the doctors are, the patients can solve many problems on their own.

The following is his account:

I received a phone call from the city's Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on March 10. One of my colleagues was diagnosed as an asymptomatic case, and as a close contact, I was required to undergo centralized quarantine at a hotel for 14 days.

The next evening, I was taken to the hotel in an ambulance and had a nucleic acid test done early on March 12. The test result was "suspicious." I was transferred to the Public Health Clinical Center in Jinshan District for treatment. I must admit I was a little worried when I arrived at the hospital because I had no idea what was in store for me.

Our bedsteads had a QR code with a sticker that read: "Contact the doctor if you have any questions. They will respond via WeChat."

With thousands of patients there, it would have been almost impossible for the doctors to check on every patient. Despite this, they said we could leave a message and they'd get back as soon as possible.

At first, I was skeptical, but I still took a chance, leaving a message one day saying that I had a sleep disorder after being moved to an unfamiliar environment.

The doctor responded soon, prescribing me some sleeping pills the following day, and I managed to get some sleep.

My symptoms were mild, similar to a cold. The doctor prescribed me some medicine for cold and checked on me daily. Patients with more serious symptoms, such as fever or sore throat, must also seek medical attention.

My wife, who was infected as well, was taken to the same hospital. We were lucky to be assigned to the same quarantine facility. I frequently went to the hospital canteen to get her some snacks, and we would watch movies on our phones together.

During my hospitalization, time became hazy. I did not realize I'd been in the hospital for more than 10 days until I looked at my phone on March 23. There wasn't much work to be done here, so all I could do was rest and recover as soon as possible.

On March 24, I finally got a call from the doctor, who told me that my nucleic acid test results were normal and that I could be discharged the next day. My wife had received the same note the day before, allowing us to leave the hospital together.

Before we left, we had to complete a form indicating our preference for home or hotel isolation. My wife and I opted for the former and returned to our home in Hongkou District on March 25.

The next issue we had to deal with is the lockdown in the Puxi area, scheduled to start on April 1. Since we could not leave home and it was difficult to purchase food online, we were concerned about running out of supplies.

However, what moved me was that many relatives and friends sent us eggs, fresh vegetables, meat, and other food after learning about our predicament. They dropped off the food at the neighborhood entrance, and then volunteers delivered them to my door.

With this experience, I felt that the greatest joy is being able to stay at home healthily.

A few days ago, a friend informed me that one of his relatives had tested positive during nucleic acid screening and had to be quarantined. He was nervous and had no idea what preparations he needed to make.

I suddenly realized that I could write down my experience and help other

patients and families who are going through the same thing.

Key information of the manual

I want to emphasize that the majority of patients currently are mild cases with symptoms similar to common cold. So don't panic!

If you are a close contact, the CDC will contact you first, at which point you can begin preparing for the quarantine. Remember to wear a mask and isolate yourself as much as possible even at home. You will have plenty of time to prepare for the quarantine supplies.

However, it is not advisable to bring too many belongings with you, as this will be inconvenient even if you are being transferred temporarily. Three sets of clothing is sufficient, and don't forget to bring slippers, masks, water cups, tissues, emergency medicines, a charger, and some gadgets for entertainment equipment.

Maintain a positive attitude if you are transferred to a medical facility for quarantine and treatment. Light cases can usually recover on their own. Adequate rest and a well-balanced diet can also help with recovery.

On recovery, the next step is to prepare for discharge. The doctor will give you the option of continuing your isolation at home or in a hotel, with the latter being at your own expense.

If you have Shanghai medical insurance, the entire treatment is free; otherwise, you will incur some out-of-pocket expenses.

After that, you must wait for the district where you live to pick you up in a bus. Get in touch with your subdistrict or neighborhood committee to arrange for a person to meet you at the neighborhood entrance. Only after this person has signed for you can the CDC staff leave.

I would advise anyone who has tested positive not to be overly stressed. From my experience, people are generally tolerant when someone close to them becomes infected.

At this moment, we must learn to look on the bright side of things. Even if we are in the dark now, with patience and perseverance, we will all soon see the light.

