



Was It Wise to Open Industries and Mines during the COVID-19 Peak?

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Dear Editor,

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a great negative impact on the economies and industries of many countries [1]. The short-term economic impact of COVID-19 on the mining industry has already been huge [2]. Inadequate working conditions, combined with the high density of employees, have made industries and mines one of the most significant locations for the transmission of this disease [3]. Measures such as wearing a proper mask, keeping social distance while working or commuting, washing hands regularly, and ventilating can help prevent illness. Additionally, screening and early identification of patients, followed by mandatory leave and quarantine at home, is one of the most important prevention policies, which helps prevent the transmission of disease and reduce mortality [4]. Quarantine should be considered a crucial step in controlling disease transmission. Statistics have shown that in countries with a rapid response to patient isolation and quarantine, the number of deaths has

decreased tenfold, and the number of cases has decreased significantly [5]. In Japan, measures such as closing certain work centers, providing subsidies, allowing remote work, and offering healthcare have been effective in controlling the COVID-19 epidemic [6]. The results of a study in Italy showed that contact with contaminated surfaces, objects, and work equipment, as well as infected colleagues, causes disease transmission in the workplace. However, paying attention to preventive measures, such as reducing working hours and using surgical masks, helps control the disease [7]. Another study in China found that going to work was associated with fear, stress, anxiety, and depression, which in turn can weaken the immune system and increase the chances of people developing COVID-19 [8]. In the workplace, especially in industry, workers are more susceptible to the coronavirus due to exposure to dust, gases, vapors, allergens, and irritants. [9]. In this regard, observing the principles of prevention and reducing the duration of employees' presence can help control this disease [10].

This pandemic has successfully led to a global shutdown of various activities [11], including industries worldwide. But, unfortunately, this has not been done well in Iran, even in cities with a red status and high prevalence. Although these centers are a gathering place for a large number of people in the community. Most world governments have allowed mining to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic, with some limited restrictions for COVID-19 control [12]. This highly dense population, sometimes accompanied by limited ventilation, along with the use of common transportation services, the difficulty of maintaining social distance, a lack of hygiene, and the failure to use proper masks, can facilitate disease transmission among employees. Temporary closure of these industries and mines due to the high number of employees can help break the chain of transmission both at work and at the family and community level, and planners need to pay attention to the fact that in some cases the benefit of temporary work closing is more than the disadvantage of being active.

Discontinuation and control of the disease is successful if all means of transmission and prevention of COVID-19, including health education, vaccination, use of masks, regular hand washing, use of disinfectant solutions, social distancing, separation of patients, quarantine, screening and diagnostic tests, temporary closure of common places, and legal actions are done together.

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