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Unlocking ... the new normal.

The pandemic has entered its third year. Countries around the world witnessed the third wave, characterized by a rapid rise in number of cases and a dramatic fall in those numbers as well. As the history of any pandemic goes, one would expect further reduction in severity and mortality worldwide.

One striking feature of this Covid 19 pandemic has been the quick development of vaccines and its largescale deployment in most countries of the world. Keeping the initial hesitancy and availability issues aside, there is ample evidence that the vaccines have altered the course of the pandemic which otherwise would have seen worse outcomes.

The world has realized that it is futile to expect a completely covid free world. Many have accepted the reality that humanity will coexist in future with the virus and its various mutations. The strict lockdowns and restrictions imposed in the earlier days have lost their significance particularly in the post vaccine world. As a result, the process of unlocking has already started in a few countries and probably would be the norm very soon in others.

It's certainly a relief for certain sections of society. The now empty school corridors would again witness kids resuming uninterrupted schooling and other activities along with their peers. Patients with other life threatening diseases, including cancer would continue getting treated and operated without having to worry about interruption in care or best practices. Travel would become easier with fewer restrictions. It would be possible to expect a life reasonably similar to pre-covid world in a few months. The medical fraternity has garnered enough experience and is geared to adapt, evolve and manage challenging situations. It would continue to do so until any unforeseen catastrophic event throws the world out of gear again.

The patient care, peer interactions, research and publication in the various specialities hopefully should be back on track very soon. Unlocking, hopefully, would be the new normal this year.

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