**Interviewer:** So, as I explained earlier on, our aim is to hear views from health workers working at the hospital regarding how the hospital prepared itself in controlling the Covid pandemic

So first of all you can maybe explain to me about the type of your work, your responsibility and also what kind of work do you do at the hospital everyday?

**PF:** So, we come in the morning, and when we are working in the wards, our work mostly involves taking care of places where patients sleep

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** But I also care for equipment that has been used here

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** and also cleaning of the treatment room where staff work

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** If there are patients who have wounds, we also clean those wounds

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** when we are in the recovery ward and the patient is coming out of the theatre we monitor the vital signs, to make sure the patient is fully conscious and move them to the wards, that’s what I can briefly say

**Interviewer:** Aah okay alright

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** And the work that you have been doing especially during the recent past…for how long have you been doing this work here at the hospital?

**PM:** I think I have worked here at Queens for 15 if not 16 years

**Interviewer:** 16?

**PF:** eeh

**Interviewer:** You have really worked {laughing} you have worked

**PF:** Sure

**Interviewer:** So during the period of Covid-19, how has Covid-19 pandemic affected your work, have you worked for Covid?

**PF:** Since this department was given to the Covid ward

**Interviewer:** Yah

**PF:** we can say that we are just working here and we operate as a clinic

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** but then we never took part in caring for Covid patients in our section, but because it happened that our section had such cases

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** we just participated in other things like equipment which they use

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** Its like we surrendered other things to them, like some of the equipment which is here

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** so we still feel that we were at risk because even the people who were working in the Covid ward had protective wear, but we did not have and because we were like their neighbors, right

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** So, we feel we were at risk because we could see ourselves working without protective wear, we are just working as we had been doing daily in the absence of Covid

**Interviewer:** Okay, when you say you work at the clinic, do you mean at that place?

**PF:** When patients arrive during clinic

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** they go to the clinic first so that they should assess the patient before being admitted in the ward

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PM:** so we just run the clinic

**Interviewer:** Is the clinic in the same building?

**PF:** It was in this building

**Interviewer:** Was the Covid ward also located here?

**PF:** Eeh

Yes

**Interviewer:** So, what type of protective wear do you mean when you say you didn’t have protective wear?

**PF:** we can compare with how people who deal with Covid wear, like gum boots

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** whether it is their working suits which they wear

**Interviewer:** Mmh

**PF:** we do not have

**Interviewer:** What was your protective wear?

**PF:** we were just putting on simple aprons as we usually do

**Interviewer:** And a mask?

**PF:** yes, and a mask

**Interviewer:** Okay alright

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** I do not know if you are able to explain, if you know, even though you haven’t worked directly with Covid patients

**PF:** Mmmh

**Interviewer:** But then, I would like to know if you know the pathway for every Covid patient when he arrives at the hospital and what are the stages he passes through, starting from diagnosis or the time of arrival at the hospital until the time the patient dies or is discharged?

**PF:** Okay, in the first place when one arrives at the hospital, and explains about what they are feeling

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** if a doctor or health worker suspects that the person might be suffering from Covid-19 or the symptoms relate to Covid-19, we refer them to the tents

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** so that they should be tested

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** and when they are tested, and found positive, they assess that person to see if the condition is severe

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** or not, and whether or not he is supposed to be admitted to hospital

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** patients are admitted to the ward when they see that the condition is severe, if the condition is not severe they are told to go home and isolate themselves, and they are given advice when they get home

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** they are not supposed to interact with other household members, they must be separated and isolated by giving them their own room

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** so they will be given their own utensils to use, and other things that would help them in their lives like maybe on the part of medicine

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** To see how monitoring is going on, and they are also given phone numbers so that they should follow up on progress

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** if things are not good its when they return to the hospital so that they should assess whether they need to be admitted to hospital or not, whilst those that are admitted to hospital are the ones whose conditions have worsened, maybe they have difficulty in breathing, they are breathless

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** it means they should be put on Oxygen or maybe we also hear that covid is associated with diabetes, that maybe the sugar level is high, they just feel that things are like that

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** Okay, when you say you refer them to the gate for assessment, isn’t it at the gate where people are screened upon entry?

**PF:** When they were being assessed and asked questions at the gate to say “where are you going?” they didn’t pay much attention to them and maybe you find that they were coming straight here

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** Upon seeing how the person is presenting himself, it looks like this could be a sign of Covid

**Interviewer:** mmm

**PF:** so we send them back to the gate so that they should be tested for Covid-9

**Interviewer:** Okay alright, the explanation you have given about the whole pathway from testing patients at the gate or sending them home, taking other patients to the ward, basing on your experience during the past months, which things do you feel were supposed to be done or improved at a certain stage or how would you improve on them?

**PF:** I feel the area that needs to be improved

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** they would have set a special place like the one at the gate, things are okay there

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** and set it there, they would find the people there so if they set a special place like the one at Kameza so that it becomes a special place for people who have Covid-19

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** because bringing them inside here

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** since we share boundaries with Mercy James, and according to what we hear about how the disease spreads, it is like putting other patients at risk

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** so, I feel like the hospital setting would have been done with an isolation centre far from here and that the hospital must depend on its own covid isolation centre, everything should be done there, because you can see that they just borrowed that ward

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** in the end the ward was taken back by the owners, so if for example Covid resurfaces, what are they going to do?

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** because there is Oxygen here that is distributed through pipes

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** whilst other wards have no Oxygen, so they are supposed to prepare for these things like it was done there, and when we do that, we are also preventing the spread of the disease

**Interviewer:** So do you feel it is good that the hospital should have its own site far away from other patients?

**PF:** yes, it should have its own special site elsewhere which will be recognized as a special place for Covid. When we look back, on how LEPRA was operating, they also had their special site for leprosy patients

**Interviewer:** Do you mean it should be a site of their own like the one at Kameza?

**PF:** Yes, like the one at Kameza, it was a good site, they should just renovate it inorder that it should become a good place which for example if Covid is gone, and there is another pandemic, what would they do, does it mean that they will chase people from the ward again saying “go out, go out”? after they took over the ENT ward, it meant the patients at the ENT ward also suffered for they had nowhere to go, since there was a theatre here, it was like a ward. And patients at the theatre who were supposed to undergo surgery would suffer, those that required to receive treatment and needed to be admitted at this hospital were suffering because we had surrendered the ward to be used for Covid

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** So, they were supposed to consider the patients who were using that ward on how they could be assisted. Instead of saying “how are we going to help these people,” they have to find a permanent site where they should be doing their work pertaining to Covid-19

**Interviewer:** How did your work change because of the coming in of Covid, how did it change?

**PF:** this is how my work changed;

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** at first we had patients when we were working in the theatre

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** Later on things changed, the theatre stopped operating and we were coming to work, just attending to out patients and assisting them to receive treatment

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** But our attendance was also on and off, you would come to work this week and the following week you would not come to work. And in so doing, you forget other things

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** that you would do inorder to improve on your work, it took lives of patients backwards as well as the lives of health workers

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** Alright, were you in that team which went for training, I understand different training sessions were conducted where health workers participated at the beginning of Covid, did you participate in those trainings?

**PF:** We participated just recently when the figures have gone down

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** It was two weeks ago

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** Ever since?

**PF:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Is this the only training that you attended?

**PF:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Was it your first training?

**PF:** Yes

**Interviewer:** What was it about and what did the training focus on?

**PF:** its focus and what we were told there

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** the things were related with Covid but then it was different from the previous training according to the people who attended, when they went for the first time, they were told to say; when a Covid patient passed on

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** they would disinfect the dead body by spraying it, wrap it in a black bag and bury it. But when we went there this time things had changed, they conducted some research, when a person with covid dies, the body must be bathed thoroughly, wipe it properly because the dead body does not produce bad fluids

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** but then the people handling the dead body should be careful because your are at risk when you come into contact with the body, you have to take care

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** So, instead of going straight to the graveyard, they are now given the opportunity to take the dead body home, they can view the dead body but the graveyard should be near and not very far

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** yes

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** the other thing is care of instruments; at first we were using things like chlorine

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** so during the training we were told that we should first see if it is necessary to use chlorine or not

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** because they were saying that soap is now being used

**Interviewer:** Soap?

**PF:** yes, they said we should start with soap because equipment is sterilized, germs die after equipemt has been sterilized, so we should first of all see if it is necessary to use chlorine or not, meaning chlorine has become less effective now with Covid, and that soap is now more effective than chlorine

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** These are the things which I feel have changed

**Interviewer:** things have changed

**PF:** Yes, at the start of Covid, at the workshop which members of staff attended

**Interviewer:** And why didn’t you attend that workshop, I thought this was the important time to attend?

**PF:** iih [sighs] I would say they went there only once, I think it was only once and since we are many at this hospital

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** then we did not ask why we were not included, we just realized that this was the case

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** we just saw how people were doing things, they told us what we were supposed to be doing, so we just followed likewise

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** yes

**Interviewer:** Initially when Covid started, did you see or were you informed about procedures or guidelines that you were supposed to follow during management or during the Covid pandemic, did they provide these things?

**PF:** yes, when Covid-19 started, we were given guidelines that we were supposed to follow, we had to wear PPEs and they demonstrated to us how a person should wear the PPEs, taking care of the place where you are staying, frequent washing of hands s

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** we need to have sanitizer, we were informed about all these things

**Interviewer:** Were you informed or you were given that…was it possible to see that these are the guidelines?

**PF:** They told us told but we were not given guidelines, we had no guidelines

**Interviewer:** Uh huh, were you just told verbally?

**PF:** yes, we were just told that we needed to do abcd, but for the guidelines…we were just seeing posters the posters that were pasted

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** to say ooh things are supposed to be done like this, right, this is what we saw and not given to say; read this this, no, we could only find the posters pasted whether at the pharmacy, or you would find them pasted at the antenatal clinic

**Interviewer:** Oho, so you just follow the same

**PF:** yes

**Interviewer:** Oho alright, in your daily work routine is there anyone, who supports you, like putting in place senior support, management team that visits you to see if people were doing their work accordingly during the period of Covid, that they were wearing protective clothes, they were following proper procedures, are there any people who visit the hospital?

**PF:** Noone has visited this place ever since

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** they have never visited us to-date when it now looks like covid cases have started going down, I have never seen anyone coming here for supervision and telling us; do it like this, do it like this

**Interviewer:** okay

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** Okay, maybe supervisors in your department, do they sometimes come to see if you are really following proper procedures when discharging your duties during this period of Covid?

**PF:** none, we just do it on our own, depending on the situation you just see to it that you should protect yourself

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Okay, are you aware that the hospital put in place a committee to oversee all Covid operations at Queen’s hospital, have you ever heard about this?

**PF:** aah, I have never heard that there is a committee, what I know is that they deployed staff who are working on covid, but I haven’t heard anything about a committee being put in place

**Interviewer:** Like health workers

**PF:** yes, health workers to work in the ward-

**Interviewer:** But not leading as a committee or leading team?

**PF:** No, I have never heard about it

**Interviewer:** okay,

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** Alright, do you feel that the training which you attended helped you to know much about Covid or you think it was the same stuff that you heard before?

**PF:** I feel it has helped us because you just hear other things but you do not know what to ask, but then during the training we had the time to ask questions about issues that we were not sure of and our questions were answered

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** so, I feel it has helped me, and we also learnt other things that we never knew, and that we will now have a good idea of how to prevent the disease

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** alright, you had just started talking about PPEs at the beginning

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** if you look at the work starting from the beginning when figures were going up, later on dropping until now when figures have gone down

**PF:** Mmmh

**Interviewer:** What was the availability of PPE like at this hospital?

**PF:** Aah in my view I feel that PPEs were available only at the Covid ward

**Interviewer:** were they found only there?

**PF:** eeh, but then we were using self improvised PPE in departments which are not affected with Covid, it was like you would find a gown and put it on

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** then we just wondered whether it was Wellcome Trust that was distributing gowns

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** But the gowns were distributed in a few departments

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** I thought maybe the gowns were delivered at the underfive clinic, and here also where there was covid but no gowns were distributed in our department

**Interviewer:** At the clinic?

**PF:** eeh, there wasn’t any gown here

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** So, on our part we feel the hospital was not prepared enough, the PPEs that were available were only masks

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** Gloves and these simple aprons only

**Interviewer:** Okay, so in your view, do you feel you were also supposed to be wearing that full gear?

**PF:** I feel it was supposed to be like that because we cannot know whether the patient we are assisting has Covid or not

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** even ourselves we do not know whether we have Covid and can transmit it to the patient or we do not have Covid

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** So, everyone needs to protect themselves because a person who is assisting another one do not know who has the disease

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** so we need to protect ourselves

**Interviewer:** uh huh alright

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** Okay alright. Now we often say that guidelines or prcedures are put in place, right?

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** for staff to follow

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** But in your view, even if you were taught or you are aware of the procedure to follow inorder to protect yourself, how to put on PPEs, washing of hands, or how you can dispose off used equipment, cleaning, you know all this but I would like you to differentiate between knowing the procedures and practicing them, when you look at your colleagues who work at this hospital, do they follow the methods or procedures they need to follow during this period of Covid or when caring for Covid patients?

**PF:** but we are mostly very negligent

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** when we look closely, the procedures are mostly followed by those people working in the covid ward, but it is difficult for the rest of us to follow the procedures

**Interviewer:** It is difficult

**PF:** it is difficult, but talking about the method that were supposed to be followed and because there were no PPEs, so we just felt that it was better to do things using shortcut methods, but then we really are supposed to follow procedures inorder to produce good quality work

**Interviewer:** Uh huh, can you give an example of the thing which you are saying wasn’t available to assist you in following the procedure?

**PF:** I can give an example

**Interviewer:** Yes

**PF:** As I mentioned about PPEs in the first place

**Interviewer:** Yes

**PF:** A complete gear was available at the Covid ward, but they were failing to provide for in the other wards that were not affected by Covid

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** This shows that it was difficult for staff who work in the Covid ward to find PPEs. And because of that, it looks like you are being negligent, we feel we are not doing well as things were sopped to be due to lack of some equipment

**Interviewer:** Okay alright. So, what do you think is a big challenge to the hospital, according to how it prepared to fight Covid?

**PF:** The first challenge was space, space to work on Covid

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** the second challenge was equipment

**Interviewer:** Eeh

**PF:** Another challenge for staff was PPEs, many members of staff were not receiving PPEs, only those who were doing preparations in the Covid ward were receiving PPEs

**Interviewer:** Those who were working in the Covid ward?

**PF:** yes, and we can say the biggest challenge was insufficient equipment

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** they were not adequate

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** so, if they could make available enough equipment so that everyone should have them even though they do not work in the Covid ward

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** as I mentioned about space earlier on, they should have enough space because the cases should not be transferred to another place, and later to another place, then you will find that the whole hospital will be infected by-

**Interviewer:** [will be infected

**PF:** Will be infected

**Interviewer:** if it happened that Covid cases increased, like what we were hearing from other countries

**PF:** Mmmh

**Interviewer:** maybe here in Malawi people were expecting that there would be more cases

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** but then the cases were not many

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** And when you look at our hospital setting, if there were more cases like they were in foreign countries, in reality what do you think would have happened, if you can just imagine, how would things be like?

**PF:** Things would be very difficult

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** because one, there was limited space

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** the way things were and also our performance at work

**Interviewer:** Eeh

**PF:** looks like..our friends are committed but with us, our commitment is limited, so that would have also been a challenge

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** also on the part of equipment inorder for the work to be of high quality, they should increase equipment

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** Had it been that the disease really reached its peak as you say

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** I believe that maybe we would have the whole hospital occupied with covid patients, because the preparation was limited, it wasn’t adequate

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** it was like we were just taken by surprise with Covid-19

**Interviewer:** uh huh

**PF:** sure

**Interviewer:** If figures went up, what kind of procedure do you think this hospital would use to make sure that everyone was receiving treatment despite the challenges being there?

**PF:** it means the process was going to be the same as the first one

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** In seeing that; I think in this department, patients come are maybe found once in a while

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** shifting the patients and improvising the ward inorder that it should be used for Covid patients

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** they should find enough space for the Covid patients. But then on the other hand, they should also consider other patients that were previously there

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** Do you think the best way would be to move patients from the wards so that these wards should be occupied by Covid patients?

**PF:** Yeah, while they consider finding a better site for those patients, as I said earlier on that they should be well prepared just in case it happens that there is another pandemic in future

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** they should definitely have a hospital especially for this because the world is changing and things are not the same as they were in the beginning

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** And we also need to change our way of doing things

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** mmm, because when we look at our neighboring countries or even here in Africa, in other countries their patients are placed far away and perhaps not in the hospital

**Interviewer:** uh huh

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** In other countries, when cases rise like that, they do what they call reverse triage. Patients who are recovering are assessed quickly, they are instantly discharged so that they should create space to other patients. Do you feel this can work in hospitals, like in our hospital?

**PF:** zimenezozo zitha kuyenda mu chipatala mwathu muno

this can be effective in our hospital

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** And also the status of things here in Malawi and the way we talk about Covid

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** ma patient amene akumatumizidwa m’makomo vuto ndi m’makomo mwathu patients who are usually sent home, the problem is our households

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** In our households 14 or 12 people live in one house but maybe the house has two bedrooms

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** So, isolation would be difficult. But as I explained earlier on, it could happen that patients can be put on isolation like that, then it means they should be closely monitored because without close monitoring nothing good can happen

**Interviewer:** What type of close monitoring is this?

**PF:** as you are saying it’s like assessing the patients and if they are feeling a little bit better, discharge them

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** it means the work has to be done fast so that people should not do things slowly, people should really be fast

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** Patients should be assessed frequently to see how they are feeling

**Interviewer:** Okay alright, the other thing that was happening during this period is about what we call VIP, they never went to Mwaiwathu or Adventist, they were all coming to this hospital. What are your views regarding how the hospital can manage people with high social status, VIPs in society

**PF:** [sighs] the hospital

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** because basing on our integrity

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** the VIPs have to be there, it means that the hospital needs to have a private paying wing for the VIPS so that they should admit the VIPs into those wards, they should be paying so that the money realized should help the poor, and that money should also assist in buying resources for Covid-19 to ease up things

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** those are my views, other than just giving treatment to the VIPs for free

**Interviewer:** you want them to be paying? {laughing}

**PF:** they should be paying so that the money can be used for buying hospital equipment

**Interviewer:** But if there is no private wing for VIPs as you say, what are your views, do you think VIPs should be given special attention and special treatment when they visit the hospital?

**PF:** I think “no” because everyone is a human being and equal to one another, its just us who consider them to be VIPs

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** but everybody is important for in the life of another

**Interviewer:** UIh huh

**PF:** so, everybody should receive equal treatment, whether they are not VIP but they need oxygen, or they are VIP and they need Oxygen, everyone must receive oxygen

**Interviewer:** okay

**PF:** yeah, because this is a hospital

**Interviewer:** okay

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** Alright, the last part of my interview. When you look at how the hospital prepared itself in the control of Covis-19 pandemic, and also how you protected yourself from Covid-19 pandemic, what are your views, do you think your life was at risk or not?

**PF:** my life was very much at risk because whenever we are coming to the hospital, we know we are going to face patients directly at the hospital

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** while outside you are courageous because you do not know who you are going to meet

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** so, you are afraid when coming here, when you think that you are going to the hospital

**Interviewr:** mmmh

**PF:** and this is where we find people who are infected by Covid, forgetting that there are also patients out there

**Interviewer:** aliko

**PF:** So, we still have doubts about the hospital where Covid patients are found, we remain fearful, fear increases when we are here but fear decreases when we are out there yet people who are suffering from Covid come from the same place

**Interviewer:** Kunja komweko?

Out there?

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** Okay, but when you enter the ward to perform your daily duties, equipment that you to use, do you feel that you are protected, are you adequately protected from Covid?

**PF:** no

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** We are not protected because the things we are using now are the same things that we were using before Covid-19, maybe the special thing is what we will be wearing, because you do not know whether the patient you are in contact with has Covid or not

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** we are just working like we were doing in the past. Whether we wear an apron, if you are lucky, you find something to wear on top of your clothes

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** you wear the same shoes, you come here and return home wearing the same shoes

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** We do not wear gum boots or anything of that kind, so it looks like we are still living our lives the same way as we were doing before the coming in of Covid

**Interviewer:** alright

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** Okay, but when you look back at the time when Covid was starting and now, do you feel the risk is increasing or decreasing, are your fears increasing or decreasing?

**PM:** the fear is now decreasing, I thnk we are just used to the pandemic, that it is amongst us

**Interviewer:** we should honestly say that the fear is now decreasing

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** we even live normal life, there isnt anything like keeping distance of 1 meter apart, or whatever

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** It’s just like

**Interviewer:** You just don’t care

**PF:** we just do not care, if we talk of masks then we only mask up when we see that iih here we must wear masks

**Interviewer:** eeh

**PF:** iih here we should do it this way, but to say that we are complying as per requirement, then we are not following any measures

**Interviewer:** people do not comply with those things

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** uh huh okay

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** What do you think has made people change like this?

**PF:** I feel it is because of the figures which are being mentioned to say they are dropping and what people were saying that Covid spreads more in winter

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** so, here in Malawi we are now in hot season

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** these are some of the factors which I feel which make people say that Covid is gone. Some people say “Covid is gone, this and that” it looks like people have just accepted the way things are

**Interviewer:** there is no Covid

**PF:** it is also time when many things seem to have opened up, like schools and other things

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PF:** so people have just seen that it is-

**Interviewer:** [it is finished

**PMF:** eeh

**Interviewer:** Okay, where you stay, your relatives or friends know that you… they know that you are working, but do they know that you work close to or you work in a Covid ward, are they aware of this? What I want know is; how do people feel about you as a person who works at the hospital?

**PF:** others are still afraid

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** others even say “you work at the hospital, you are going transmit covid to us.”

**Interviewer:** some sort of stigma

**PF:** they do not want us to come close to them

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** they still say; you work at the hospital, you are going to transmit Covid to us

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** they say this and that, and those kind of things, so you just tell them that I do not have Covid, you are the onse who has Covid-19. There is still an attitude of saying aah this person went to the hospital, and now she is coming here, we have to isolate this person

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** Was there a time where you raised your concerns to your supervisors, or management regarding issues of Covid, if so, what was it, and how were you assisted?

**PF:** yes, we raised a concern on gowns which I mentioned earlier on saying “aah we see our colleagues wearing gowns, but we do not have them, didn’t you ask for them? We were supposed to have protective clothes.” They just said “aah we shall look into that, but the gowns are distributed in the wards, so are you working in the wards, I thought you are just running a clinic.” Then we replied and said that it was necessary to have them because people who are running the clinic are also at risk, we do not know whether they have covid or we have it. And it looked like that point was not taken on board but we did raise a concern to say it was necessary for us to have at least some kind of PPE to protect ourselves when discharging our duties

**Intervievwer:** Oho

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** and there was this issue of allowances recently, I know that risk allowance was paid to all staff

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** and there is another one which was paid to people who were working directly with Covid patients

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** What are your views on the issue of risk allowance?

**PF:** the issue of risk allowance

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** risk allowance was supposed to be paid to everyone

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** because one, people know that at the hospital, we risk our lives are at risk

**Interviewer:** mmh

**PF:** And when we are going out there, because the people we help come from there

**Ingterviewer:** yah

**PF:** we do not know the kind of people we meet out there

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** so I still feel the issue of risk allowances is a good one because I feel that our life is also at risk because we come here not knowing the health status of the person we are assisting, and how my own health status is

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** because we just talk about risk allowances but at the same time we are transmitting the disease to that person

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** but then you feel it is a necessity, what you are saying is that your life is at risk

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** Does it mean that your risk decreases when you receive the risk allowance?

**PF:** [sighs and laughs] no, the risk does not decrease, it is just a way of showing sympathy to us because we are performing a duty that is posing a risk to our lives

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** and figures of covid cases are now going down but that does not mean that Covid is decreasing but I just wanted us to get encouraged inorder to work hard and not to go backwards saying “aah I will end up getting this because of the work that I am doing. So, I would say it gives us courage to be committed to our work because of allowances. But it doesn’t mean that the risk decreases, it remains the same

**Interviewer:** If allowances were not given to staff, do you think many people working at the hospital wouldn’t be commit themselves to work for Covid?

**PF:** they would have committed themselves because we know that this is the job that we applied for

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** we are going to come across different kinds of diseases

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** so we would have done the job… but we are supposed to do the job even if there are is no risk allowance

**Interviewer:** Okay

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** Alright, I don’t know if you already tested for Covid or interacted with Covid patients who were being tested using nasal swabs or throat swabs, what was their experience?

**PF:** aah I have never interacted with a Covid patient or being tested for Covid, so it will be be difficult for me to answer those questions

**Interviewer:** They will be difficult to answer, right?

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** Okay alright. My last question, if you were given an opportunity, like hospital management, right?

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** to give them your views or advice, on how you work or how we prepared for the fight against Covid for us to improve, priority should be given to this, this, this, or you should do this this as priority. Priority recommendations for the hospital, what would you advise them incase there is an outbreak of another pandemic or figures going up?

**PF:** mmm

**Interviewer:** What do they need to prioritize in preparation for Covid pandemic, maybe two or three things that you feel are of importance?

**PF:** I think the first priority would be, because this pandemic has given us a certain lesson, they first need to have a special site

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** they should equip the site with equipment that is mostly required

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** they should source equipment like monitors, Oxygen cylinders for people to use those things

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** which is hard to find instantly, they must start buying them now. And also equipment for staff to use as you can see how Covid has hit us, protective equipment for staff

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** what quantity should it be, how should we do it. So I am encouraging them to say Covid has given us a certain picture, they should not keep quiet because they are using other wards for Covid

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** they must find a special site for this, they shouldn’t not be disorganized in future. They should definitely find a place, that place must be ready for anything

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** that is what I encourage them to do. But not grabbing some people’s places like it is, because the setting of the ward is good then we would like to have for other things

**Interviewer:** Mmm

**PM:** because whenever they are doing this, other patients’ assistance in the ward they previously took would be stopped

**Interviewer:** Uh huh

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:**  Alright, do you have any comment of question that I did not ask but there is something that you would like to say?

**PF:** No, the point we have reached shows that maybe after what you have done

**Interviewer:** Mmmh

**PF:** maybe the research study is going to help on things that were insufficient, things that were lacking, be it knowledge or advice that was lacking, if you put them together you will see that it looks the point has been discussed very much

**Interviewer:** mmmh

**PF:** Inorder for this to work, after a few days have passed we will see that things have changed at our hospital, things are fine

**Interviewer:** Yah

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** alright, thank you very much for your time, as I have said that our aim was just to hear views of hospital staff

**PF:** mmmh

**Interviewer:** and how can the hospital improve, right?

**PF:** Mmm

**Interviewer:** what you are doing in preparation for the fight against Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, thank you very much for giving us very important views

**PF:** thank you, we are also thankful

**Interviewer:** alright

**PF:** thank you