

## RESPONSE OF MEDICAL JOURNALS TO COVID-19

Wasim Ahmad<sup>1</sup>, Alam Zeb<sup>2</sup>, Mushtaq Ahmed<sup>3</sup>, Rahmat Ali Khan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Allied Health Sciences, School of Health Sciences Peshawar

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Therapy, School of Health Sciences, Peshawar

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Biotechnology, University of Science and Technology Bannu

---

This editorial may be cited as: Ahmad W, Zeb A, Ahmed M, Khan RA. Response of medical journals to COVID-19. *Ann Allied Health Sci.* 2020;6(2):31-32.

---

The new corona virus that started as a handful of infections in central China has speedily become a worldwide outbreak, shutting down entire cities, threatening the health of thousands and testing the strength of the global economy. Corona virus is a large family of viruses, named for their crown like spikes. 1960s was the decade when corona virus was discovered for the first time. The virus is known to cause deadly disease in mammals including cats, dogs, bats and mice etc. This family comprises of fatal strains of virus.<sup>1</sup> Coronavirus possess a single stranded RNA genome consisted of 26-32 kilobases.<sup>2</sup> Serious type of RTIs are reported to be caused by coronaviruses. These RTI infections might be of acute type causing death as well. Infectious bronchitis virus was the ever first member of coronaviruses that was found in poultry. Later, two other viruses from human suffering from common cold were discovered. These were HCoV OC43 & HCoV 229E.<sup>3</sup> In 2003, one more member belonging to this family was identified by the researchers. This was SARS-CoV (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). In 2004, HCoV NL63, HKU1 in the year 2005, MERS-CoV (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) in 2012 and recently in December 2019, 2019-nCoV were discovered that were stood responsible for the spread of serious and deadly RTIs. The destructive effects of the SARS-CoV were seen in November 2002 in southern Chinese province Guangdong with 8000 victims and around 770 deaths.<sup>4, 5</sup> It was 2012 when MERS-CoV was reported for the first time in Saudi Arabia.<sup>6</sup> The virus caused 2494 persons infected with around 850 deaths.<sup>7</sup> Last year in December 2019, a few cases of

pneumonia having unknown aetiology have been reported in Wuhan, China.<sup>8,9</sup>

The subjects infected from the virus were found to worked at or had a residence near Huanan seafood marketplace. Deaths reported as a result of this pneumonia. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of China recognized a novel coronavirus and it was named as 2019-nCoV by World Health Organization.<sup>10</sup> Next generation sequencing was used to identify the name 2019-nCoV.

COVID-19 changed the entire scenario of the world. The pattern of education, trade, business, medical industry changed from its normal. The pattern of publication industry has also altered many folds during the disease. Several international journals have urged authors to publish data on the disease by giving many facilities including open access to readers, expeditious peer review process and a considerable waiver in publication fee. This is the reason that the issues of the journals published during this disease has no matches in the past. In the developing countries, several journals were affected because they were not prepared to handle the situation. For a limited time period, the process of publication was remained stopped or delayed because of limited crew and financial funds.<sup>11-13</sup>

In Pakistan, Journal of College of Physicians and Surgeons was the one that coped the crisis very well and contributed significant papers through special supplement issue on the disease.<sup>14</sup> A second supplement is also published with many reviews, case reports, editorial, letter to the editor and commentaries.

At the end, we would say that the researchers are not exempted from the competition in publishing a research or to register a patent. But in the battle to resolve the disease issue, the researchers around the globe are working together. The publication industry is also playing its role carefully and enthusiastically. We present tribute to all those who are playing their role in eradication of the disease by their day and night efforts.

## REFERENCES

1. Ismail MM, Tang Y, Saif YM. Pathogenicity of turkey coronavirus in turkeys and chickens. *Avian diseases*. 2003; 47:515-22.
2. Su S, Wong G, Shi W, Liu J, Lai AC, Zhou J, Liu W, Bi Y, Gao GF. Epidemiology, genetic recombination, and pathogenesis of coronaviruses. *Trends in microbiol*. 2016; 24: 490-502.
3. Geller C, Varbanov M, Duval RE. Human coronaviruses: insights into environmental resistance and its influence on the development of new antiseptic strategies. *Viruses*. 2012; 4: 3044-68.
4. Peiris JS, Guan Y, Yuen KY. Severe acute respiratory syndrome. *Nature medicine*. 2004; 10: S88-97.
5. Chan-Yeung M, Xu RH. SARS: epidemiology. *Respirology*. 2003; 8: S9-14.
6. Zaki AM, Van Boheemen S, Bestebroer TM, Osterhaus AD, Fouchier RA. Isolation of a novel coronavirus from a man with pneumonia in Saudi Arabia. *New Eng J Med*. 2012; 367: 1814-20.
7. Lee JY, Kim YJ, Chung EH, Kim DW, Jeong I, Kim Y, Yun MR, Kim SS, Kim G, Joh JS. The clinical and virological features of the first imported case causing MERS-CoV outbreak in South Korea, 2015. *BMC infectious diseases*. 2017; 17: 498-508.
8. Hui DS, I Azhar E, Madani TA, Ntoumi F, Kock R, Dar O, Ippolito G, Mchugh TD, Memish ZA, Drosten C, Zumla A. The continuing 2019-nCoV epidemic threat of novel coronaviruses to global health—The latest 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China. *Int J Inf Disease*. 2020; 91: 264-6.
9. Lu H, Stratton CW, Tang YW. Outbreak of Pneumonia of Unknown Etiology in Wuhan China: the Mystery and the Miracle. *J Med Virol*. 92; 4: 401-402.
10. World Health Organization. Clinical management of severe acute respiratory infection when novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) infection is suspected: interim guidance. Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Available from: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
11. Jawaid SA, Jawaid M. Challenges faced by the Medical Editors in Post COVID19 Pandemic era. *Pak J Med Sci* 2020; 36(5):855-6.
12. Panda S. Publishing in the time of pandemic: Editorial policy of a dermatology journal during COVID-19. *Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol* 2020; 86:337-40.
13. Gupta L, Gasparyan AY, Misra DP, Agarwal V, Zimba O, Yessirkepov M. Information and Misinformation on COVID-19: A cross-sectional survey study. *J Korean Med Sci*. 2020; 35(27):e256.
14. Special Supplement 1 on COVID-19. *J Coll Physicians Surg Pak*. Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Available from: <https://jcpsp.pk/archive-detail.php|Volume 30|Year 2020>.