

## **Editorial**

At the writing of this editorial, COVID 19 needs no introduction to readers of the Sri Lankan Journal of Infectious Diseases. Having emerged in late 2019 from Hubei Province, China, it has spread globally to cause disruptions to human lives with consequences more far reaching than the disease itself.

This, being the first pandemic after widespread availability made use of social media the norm, generated a new set of obstacles that the scientific community had to deal with, in addition to dealing with the pandemic itself. Along with the pandemic, there emerged an “infodemic” of false interpretations, mis-representations and emergence of pseudo-science over science. In addition, emotion rather than evidence appeared to be a dominant factor in both individual as well as collective decision making.

Availability of pre-prints and an expedited peer review process led to information being made available to media and the general public “hot off the press”. While there are obvious advantages of this, it also means that the scientific community needs to be updated in almost real time to ensure that myths do not take a firm hold among the general public, ranging from the well-educated to the ‘person on the street’.

Updating of the scientific community ‘real time’ is easier said than done, as those in the forefront of preparing health care settings in infection control and diagnostics are the same group of people who need to engage in myth-busting. However, this is a skill, which when mastered, will be immensely beneficial to the development of the discipline of microbiology.

Regions like Singapore and Hong Kong learnt from SARS. Their lab networks and hospitals have improved capability to offer diagnostics and manage infections with potential to spread within health care settings. Their general public have learnt to follow advice given by the relevant authorities. Their medical curricula have evolved to place emphasis on infection prevention and control. COVID-19 has given us an opportunity to do the same. As professionals and a scientific community engaged with special interests in infectious diseases, we must ensure that this opportunity is made use of for improvement in the education of health professionals from medical school to the practicing clinician.

We hope that you will continue to find the contents of this issue useful and thought provoking. Do let us have your feedback as well as contributions for publication in forthcoming issues. Please visit the journal’s submission and peer review website at <http://www.sljol.info/>. We would also invite you to register as a Reviewer, as the availability of a wide pool of subject specialists for this purpose would assist us in our task of continuously improving the quality of the Journal.

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