



EDİTÖRE MEKTUP / LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Intensification of research activities in the battle against coronavirus pandemic

Koronavirüs salgınına karşı mücadelede araştırma faaliyetlerinin yoğunlaştırılması

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To the Editor,

The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues to remain a public health emergency of international concern and has been a source of disruption in the lives of almost everyone¹. It is worth noting that since the start of the outbreak, a total of 88.7 million cases and 1.9 million deaths have been attributed to the infection, with the American region and the South East Asia region being the most affected. The infection has been reported across 222 nations and territories and the overall case fatality rate of the infection stands at 2.2%¹. Since the detection of the first case of the novel virus infection, significant advancements have been made in the fields of disease prevention, containment and treatment, nevertheless a lot still needs to be uncovered to gain deeper insights into the epidemiology and clinical spectrum of the infection^{2,3}.

The need of the hour is to intensify research and development activities, which in turn will require strengthening of infrastructure and dedicated financial investments through different stakeholders, including international welfare agencies³. The World Health Organization has taken efforts to ensure that scientists from all parts of the world work together to expedite the process of research & development and formulate newer strategies to effectively contain the spread of the infection and improve the healthcare delivery to all those who are suffering from the infection¹⁻³. The ultimate aim of the entire blueprint is to accelerate the developments of diagnostic tools,

vaccines and therapeutic agents for the causative virus. The idea is to improve the overall coordination between public health professionals, healthcare workers and scientists to not only learn from each other, but also help others to improve the global response to the infection^{2,4}. In the COVID-19 era, an unprecedented rise in the number of research articles published on the different aspects of the infection has been reported across different databases and thus efforts have been taken to bring all the publications under single roof, so that all the researchers can learn from the research findings of others (improved mechanisms for information sharing)²⁻⁴. In-fact, the successful strategies can be implemented in other settings and the infection can be contained in different parts of the world³.

At the same time, we have to extend support to those research priorities which will help the policy makers and the international welfare agencies in the better preparedness and containment of similar outbreaks in the future^{4,5}. This is quite essential as we are not ready to afford so much disruption in the lives and the damage caused to the logistics or health care resources. Subsequently, research and development activities are under full-flow to identify rapid diagnostic tools, justify the use of convalescent plasma, use of other alternative / conjugate therapies in the treatment of the infection¹. Further, the WHO has initiated a solidarity trial to fast-track the development of effective therapeutic options for the infection across more than 100 affected nations⁷. In addition, a large number of clinical trials have been

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started to produce an effective candidate vaccine to bring an end to the deadly infection and these trials are under different stages and we all are hoping for the good news soon³⁻⁶.

To conclude, in the absence of dedicated research and development activities targeted against the COVID-19 infection, the disease is expected to hamper the lives of everyone and pose an immense burden on the health sector. It is of utmost importance that all the policy makers prioritize the research area and continue to make progress in the field.

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