

# Mélange

UNITY IN DIVERSITY



**COVID 19/DISTANCE LEARNING SPECIAL EDITION**

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR



**Prof. Hossam Hamdy**  
Chancellor  
Gulf Medical University  
Ajman, United Arab Emirates

My Dear Students

As we are all going through a difficult time fighting against this vicious COVID-19 virus and the major disruption it has created in our lives. I would like to thank you for adjusting to the challenges of distance learning.

The COVID-19 is an “EVENT” which Alain Badiou, a French philosopher describes “An ‘Event’ has the power to rupture standard practices and approved knowledge disclosing heightened ability to think and act”. The COVID-19 pandemic is an “Event” which has and will continue to change the world and brings new innovations in many aspects of our lives. At GMU in two weeks we did what could take years for, transforming the university to become strong in distance learning. We have introduced new technologies, training faculty, training the students and implementing innovative systems of learning, teaching and shortly new assessment are evolving. You have been great in adjusting to this new environment. We appreciate the great constructive feedback we receive from you. It helps us to continue improve and learn how we can do things better.

I want to reassure you; we will never comprise on the quality of education and training. You will complete all your practical skills and clinical training without any delays for your graduation or promotion from one year to the next.

Together we will come out of this situation stronger and better. Gulf Medical University will continue to be one of the best higher education institutions for Health Professions Education.

We are here to continuously provide you with all the support you may need. Looking forward to celebrate together, Inshah Allah the world victory over COVID-19 virus.

Take care of yourself and your families.

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جامعة الخليج الطبية  
**GULF MEDICAL UNIVERSITY**  
ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER



## EDITORIAL MENTOR'S LETTER

Dear readers,

We hope everyone is doing well and staying safe during this time.

Let's admit that we were all looking for a short break from university, but never had we imagined that it might turn out to be this long and are now all secretly missing it!

Things have changed a lot during this short duration of time, and we are slowly coming to terms with this new reality of life. We are gradually getting used to the routine of 'online-learning' and 'social-distancing'. Netflix parties, zoom, google hangouts are some of the 'popular destinations' where we can all be seen hanging out now!

Keeping these recent unexpected changes in mind, the newsletter committee of GMU decided to put together a special COVID-19 edition of Mélange. Here you will find all about coronavirus, its latest treatment developments,

GMU's transition to online learning, and so much more! Read about what our very own Faculty members-experts in the field, have got to say on the issue and some real interesting quarantine stories shared by the students!

This newsletter is just our way of saying that we are all in this together and that we will come out of this stronger inshaAllah!

**Engila Khan (2017bm12, Editorial Mentor)**

**Vaneezeh Khamisani (2018bm15, Editor-In-Chief)**



## CONTRIBUTIONS FROM INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS TO GMU LEARNING

GMU partnered with the University of Arizona and American University of Beirut to produce webinars which bring together experts from around the globe to talk about the prevention measures, ask questions and initiate collaborations around the world.

A list of the webinars:

- 1) Training video for first responders: how to prevent infection during an outbreak
- 2) Covid-19 communication toolkit for parents and teachers
- 3) Covid-19 prevention webinar



# COVID-19

## SITUATION IN THE UAE AND AROUND THE GLOBE

Vaneezeh Khamisani (2018bm15)

Since first being recorded late last year in China, the Covid-19 coronavirus has spread around the world and been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. By early spring, Europe had become the worst-affected region, with Italy and Spain particularly hard hit and since the beginning of April, New York has become one of the worst affected cities in the USA with more than 130,800 cases being reported.

Many countries have opted to take the strictest measures possible to prevent the spread of this coronavirus. Well over 100 countries worldwide had instituted either a full or partial lockdown by the end of March 2020, affecting billions of people. As well as many others who had recommended restricted movement for some or all of their citizens by suspending means of travel, closing down schools or educational institutes and offices being shut down as well.

In the UK all the GCSE and A level exams have been cancelled and in India and Pakistan ,the board exams have been postponed this year while other schools are taking their classes online so the students can study from home and still pass the semester.

Here in the UAE, the schools and universities were the first to take preventive actions by switching to online teaching methods and then slowly the business sector went online too. Mosques, churches and gurdwaras have also been closed down temporarily to encourage people to stay at home and pray. Public transport such as RTA buses and the Dubai metro have also been temporarily suspended to encourage people to practice social distancing and stay at home.

Moreover, since the increase in the number of covid-19 cases since the past month ,Dubai and Abu Dhabi have started the national sterilization program from 6am till 8pm everyday which means all citizens



are to stay at home unless absolutely necessary to obtain food or medical supplies or perform jobs in the vital sector in order to really flatten the curve and contain the virus spreading further.

Amid the self-isolation which many of us have been forced to accept, here are 5 positive things which have come out from this outbreak.

1. Significant decrease in air pollution around the globe as burning of fossil fuels have come to a halt, air quality has improved.
2. Footballers play online games to raise money. It is hoped that £50,000 will be raised for research into COVID-19.
3. Staying with pollution, Venice has been benefiting from the lockdown in Italy. The city's famous canals have never been cleaner according to a few reports.
4. Hotels around the world are being converted into additional hospital space in order to increase bed capacity for the patients.
5. People have got more time to spend with their families, read the books they have been avoiding for months or learning a new skill such as painting or sewing.



# COVID-19

## AND ITS TOLL ON THE EDUCATION SECTOR OF UAE

Fatima Leila (2<sup>nd</sup> year BBMS)



From suspending all air travel to closing schools, the UAE is taking much needed precautionary measures in an attempt to curb the spread of COVID-19 in the country. Educational institutions were amongst the first to take preventive action. Initial closure for a period of four weeks and a preponed spring break was followed by the announcement of closure till the end of the current academic year for schools and universities. This has led to the use of e-learning platforms to convey lessons to students ensuring that their education continues and is a top priority. In order to facilitate digital learning, a few apps that are currently being used are google classroom and Microsoft teams. The former is being used to allocate and grade assignments while the latter is a platform that combines chat, video meetings and storage of files to enable the delivery of virtual classes through live webinars. Moreover, most teachers have undergone online training programs to certify them for remote learning that will establish a smooth transition during this period.



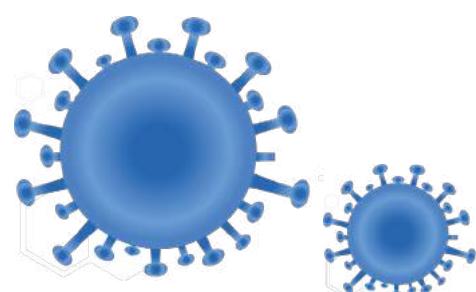
Furthermore, for students of determination who are unable to access distance learning, schools are asked to provide alternate life-skills based programs that can easily be followed at home. These programs will be a combination of subjects such as math and English and will also incorporate key skills like communication and problem solving whilst also encouraging the development of independence through these activities.

However, an essential part of some curricula is the collaborative and community approach of the classroom and this will be lost due to the implementation of the distance learning program. It may also lead to difficulties in motivating students and encouraging them to follow a daily study routine.

In addition, children of younger ages should be exposed to as little screen time as possible, so this is another drawback of the distance learning program that parents will find challenging. Nonetheless, even with minor obstacles faced by the student, the teacher and the parent, the transition to e-learning is definitely made easier by the fact that many of these digital programs have been implemented previously and hence have already been made familiar.



The decision to prolong the distance learning program was made in the best interest of the safety of students and the wider education community at schools and universities. Through unforeseeable circumstances, the education sector of UAE is doing its most to provide a wealth of resources that will guarantee its education system continues to succeed.



# ONLINE LEARNING AT GMU

INTERVIEW WITH MR. SURAJ, E-LEARNING MANAGER & LECTURER, GMU

Engila Khan (2017bm12)



Mr. Suraj. K. Sebastian

At GMU, we are constantly working hard towards an effective and interactive online learning platform. Subject experts are making all the content for their students to ensure that they receive high quality study material and no compromise in learning is observed. Synchronous is also done to achieve real-time teaching experience. The model that we are following, as proposed by the Chancellor and under his guidance is that – first we create different topics into lessons whose objectives are clearly stated. This is followed by synchronous learning (all the videos are recorded and saved for students' use again).

Virtual learning is implemented through the Moodle LMS platform, ensuring that all students- both international and UAE residents can access the content easily. Faculty are making use of excellent 'mygmu' tools and students are evaluated based on their understanding of the objectives of the lesson. Continuous evaluation is done & instructions have been given to faculty to collect descriptive feedback from the students.

Each week an information technology as well as an academic based faculty development webinar is held by the IT support team. A step by step approach was taken to familiarize the faculty with online learning- First, overview to online teaching was given by international academic experts, following which the technology involved was introduced. This was done

to ensure the faculty doesn't feel too overwhelmed. About 485 online lessons have been delivered to students and 29 webinar sessions by GMU support team given in just a period of just 2 weeks (initial).

There is an important tool on Moodle called 'lesson' that faculty members use. Students must complete the task presented to them, to move on to another. This tool allows faculty to monitor the learning progression and plan to make it more interactive. For conducting tests, we are looking at a 'remote proctoring system' on Moodle to enable fair testing. Experiments have been done for virtual OSPE too. We have formed a distance learning committee too, to aid in all these processes; it consists of one faculty member from every college.

My message for the students is that we are doing our very best to provide you with constant support and facilitate an easy transition to e-learning. We have a very good IT support team, so please don't hesitate to contact us in case of any difficulty or problem!



# FACULTY AND STUDENT FEEDBACK ON E-LEARNING



## Distance Education: A Paradigm Shift during COVID Time

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a seismic shift in the way we work, interact, and live our lives. In just two weeks, there was a shift to remote or distance learning while being safe at home. It was indeed a roller coaster ride in the beginning, but with help of experienced seniors, faculty training, we were able to build a strong platform for distance education. It is rightly quoted by Charles Darwin ‘It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It is the one that is most adaptable to change’. Change as they say is inevitable for growth and success. Whenever humanity has been faced with such challenging situations, we have been able to bring about great advancements in the field of science and education. Looking at the bright side, both faculty and students were exposed to new experiences and innovation. I believe that virtual learning is the future of distance education as it increases the bond between teachers and geographically dispersed students while being economical and flexible at the same time. Nevertheless, we finally got a chance to call ourselves ‘tech-savvy’.

**Dr. Pooja Adtani**  
Assistant Professor Oral Pathology



Distance learning is a way to earn an education without necessarily having to sit in classroom. Students and instructor are in widely different geographical locations, often never meeting face-to-face. This level of education is made possible by modern technology, the Internet, with instantaneous communication through text and video. The most important advantage in introducing e learning to the medical and dental fields that it allowed students to proceed with their academic year and study despitely of the emerging situation of COVID 19 pandemic, So we can say that e learning saved the situation. I would like to share with you some of the feedbacks I received from my students-

“Actually, distance learning is a very good way to study. I understood every lecture which has been given on the webinar” said FARAH MOH'D LABIB 2017D050. Also, FAEZEH DEHNO said “the advantage of the distance learning is that it's providing me a peaceful environment so I won't be distracted by other students and I can concentrate during the lectures.” MUJTABA

ABDULHUSSEIN 2017d047 added; “I am writing to you doctor regarding the E-learning that has begun two weeks ago. Throughout the two weeks I feel like I have gotten appropriate support and the strategy implemented has been effective and efficient considering the circumstances”.

However certain drawbacks can be found; especially in clinical courses that need the students to perform clinical procedures on their patients, unfortunately this option cannot be performed via e learning.

Take care of yourself and stay safe

Best Regards

**Dr Ahmed Atef Shon**  
Associate Professor of Prosthodontics  
Head of Restorative Department



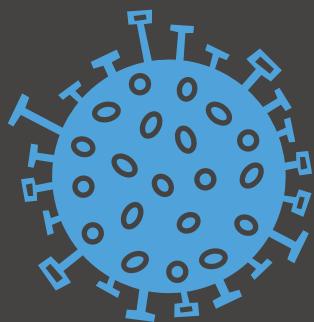
Sometimes we are unable to appreciate the blessings we own except when we lose them. When E-learning was decided to be used as a tool of teaching, I was worried about the trial. After 3 weeks, I can say that it has exposed both faculties and students to a new advanced technology which facilitates communication and interaction giving students an informal flexible chance to determine the convenient time and place to learn. Students were scared and worried at the beginning but they started to carry out the responsibility in a trial to complete

their academic year successfully accommodating the current circumstances. I had a lot of emails and calls from students inquiring about lectures and assignments which reflected the student attention about following up of classes. One of the most crucial things that is missed is the physical presence in class and social interaction.

#### **Dr. Lamis Nader**

Assistant Professor of Forensic Medicine and Clinical Toxicology

## **QUARANTINE STORIES**



### **MY QUARANTINE EXPERIENCE**

**Yasser Ali Zakari**



On the 3rd of March 2020 the government of UAE announced that they will be closing all educational institutions for 4 weeks in order to somewhat curtail the spread of the COVID-19. Sitting in a Starbucks studying for my microbiology test when I got this news, I initially didn't think much of it but then the realization slowly dawned on me that it will completely disrupt our academic year. Shortly after, my parents arranged for me to return back home to Nigeria in fear of the unknown especially because as an international student there is so much uncertainty surrounding these kinds of situations. The college of pharmacy previously instructed us on how the 'distant learning' was going to be carried out and the requirements necessary for it. Within a week the schoolwork had started to pile on. Being back home has been particularly refreshing especially because it was starting to get to that point

in the academic year where we were completely exhausted (granted the reason for being back home is a global pandemic). I, like many others, have been trying to keep up with the numerous quizzes and submissions and assignments so my grades don't slip. One major difficulty I've been facing has been the difference in time zones; because the UAE is 3 hours ahead of Nigeria, I have to be up by 5:30 to attend the first webinar session at 8:30 (UAE time). All in all everyone is learning as they go and doing what they can to keep sane in this time of distress. I would also like to emphasize that we that are in a position of privilege should appreciate everything we have because there are so many others around the world that have either lost their jobs, are homeless, chronically ill or are dependent on their school for meals, accommodation etc.. and that you do whatever you can in whatever capacity to help those in need.





## OUR DORMITORY EXPERIENCE DURING QUARANTINE

Sarah Sanjay Joseph and  
Sumaiya Abdulkadir Saleh

All educational institutes in UAE have been on a temporary suspension since 3rd March for this semester and so we have no choice but to stay at our hostels for the rest of the academic year! Most of the Emirates has been on a lock down with the majority of people working from home, maintaining social distance, etc. The sanitization drive is being extensively implemented across the country. With all this happening, it has been a lot to take in and process for sure! However, on a positive note, one could say that there's much more awareness and consciousness of the significance of washing hands more frequently and maintaining good hygiene.

Our days in quarantine have been fun sometimes and boring at other times. We wake up in the morning around 9 am, freshen up and prepare breakfast for each other. Our routine moves on with some cleaning and then both of us get busy with university work which includes online webinar sessions and voice embedded presentations (which is going to continue until things get back to normal). After this, we cook something interesting together and end our day with a movie/ T-show and enjoy our meal! Oh, and we even started our new Instagram page this quarantine, where we post different tasty recipes that we make together in the hostel. Don't forget to check it out! (<https://www.instagram.com/crazycooks2020/>)



Hey guys! I'm very sure we all have similar routines at this point. Netflix has become a part of me now. It's a bit hard to adjust to online classes because I'm back home in Nigeria and we're 3 hours behind the UAE. Balancing between social life and schoolwork at this point is a task! I hope things get back to normal as soon as possible because truly, I miss the university stress and the social life. Stay home and stay safe guys.

Fatima Aminu (2018bm03)

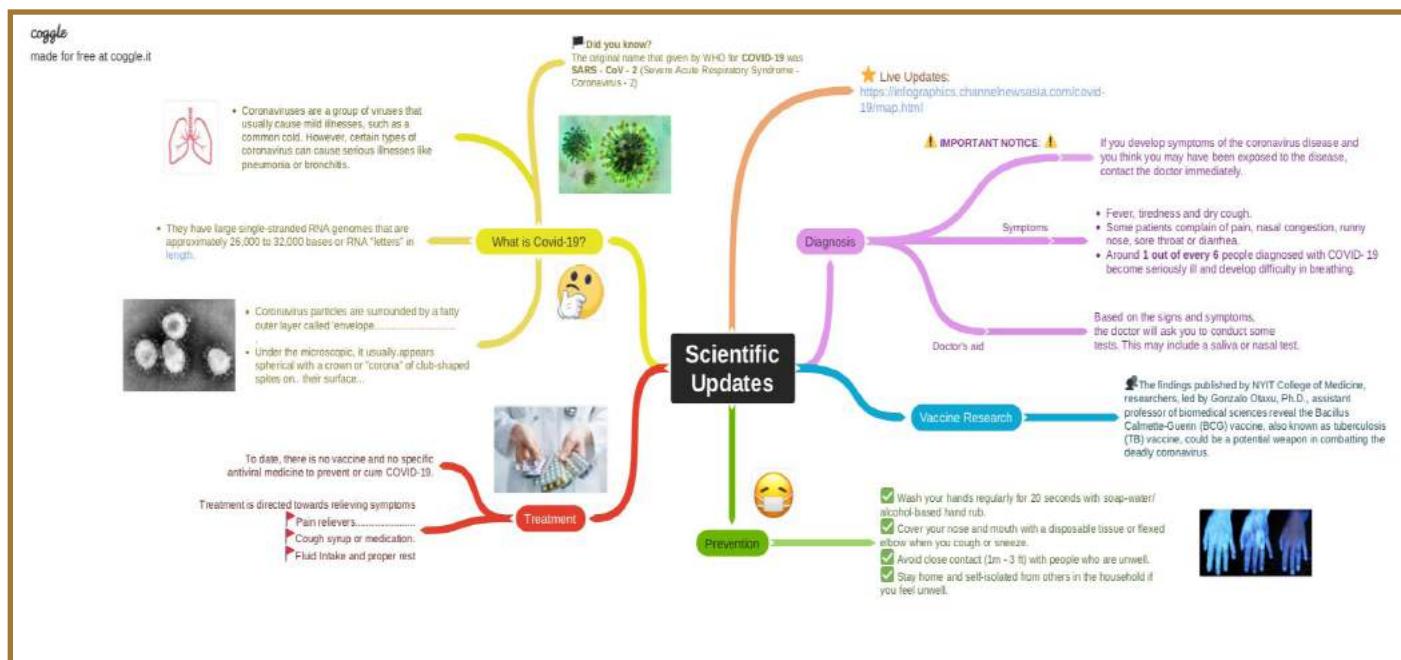
### A LIST OF THINGS THIS ISOLATION HAS TAUGHT ME

1. Why Icarus flew so close to the sun. only for me to have the realisation that my entitlement has blinded me to actual misery.
2. Xenophobia exists for no other reason but people without reason exist.
3. Meaning of hope is the thing with feathers. i find myself constantly asking, does hope wait for us on the other side?
4. Humanity gives birth to kindness in the face of darkness.
5. The no. of people who die martyrs is grossly misrepresented by media that is far more concerned about what Kardashians are doing.
6. Prayer. prayer is powerful. and there are prayers echoing from me and so many for the world that is in pain. and for 4. to stay etched in our memory/on our skin after everything stops burning

Zohra Nizami (2016BM01)



# CORONA VIRUS MINDMAP



## References:

1. Laura Spinney. When will a coronavirus vaccine be ready? | World news | The Guardian. 2020:2-6. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/20/when-will-a-coronavirus-vaccine-be-ready>.
2. World Health Organization. Q&A on coronaviruses (COVID-19). <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses#:~:text=symptoms>
3. Layal Liverpool. Coronavirus| NewScientist. 27th March 2020. <https://www.newscientist.com/term/coronavirus/>

Zavia and Nabah (1st year BBMS students)

## GMU'S VERY OWN SUBJECT EXPERTS TELL US MORE ABOUT THE CORONA VIRUS



RNA viruses are of special concern when it comes to interspecies spread and the probability of them infecting new host species is higher because of their exceptionally shorter generation times and their faster evolutionary rates.

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses and they have the largest genome of all known RNA viruses. Coronaviruses are so named because of their characteristic solar corona (crown-like) appearance when observed under an electron microscope. This family includes viruses such as HCoV- 229E, HCoV- NL63, HCoV- OC43 and HCoV-HKU1 that cause mild respiratory illness in human beings and viruses such as MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV that cause more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Now we have a novel coronavirus (nCoV) SARS-CoV 2 rampaging around the globe causing

Coronavirus Infectious Disease 2019 (CoVID 19). SARS-CoV 2 like all Coronaviruses is an enveloped virus and has a non-segmented, single stranded, positive-sense RNA genome. This RNA serves as a template for both translation and replication. It possesses the genetic information for the synthesis of an RNA-dependent RNA polymerase. This enzyme transcribes the positive RNA strand as well as the complementary negative RNA strands, which arise as intermediate products of genome replication. This maximizes the intracellular growth rate of the virus but RNA viruses experience higher mutation rates.

The virus possesses spike (S) glycoproteins radiating from its lipid envelope which is responsible for both receptor binding and cell fusion. The S protein binds to a metalloprotease, angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE-2) which is present on the surface of pneumocytes, but also on enterocytes and cells of other tissues and organs (heart, kidney, and endothelium) in the human body.

Compiled by: Engila Khan



Presently the human population has no acquired immunity to this new Coronavirus and while most people who contract the virus will experience no or mild symptoms, some people will develop severe or even life-threatening symptoms. The outcome most often is relative to the immune status of the patient as well as presence of underlying comorbidities.

Is it easy to pick up the virus? Close contact with one another and exposure to respiratory droplets definitely put you at risk. So does touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your mouth, nose or even eyes. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to combat this virus and to flatten the curve is by practicing simple measures such as

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

- Or else use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Maintaining good social distance (about 6 feet)
- Use a face mask in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies)

Dear Students, the tide will turn, and we will prevail. Meanwhile stay healthy and safe. My warmest regards to you all.



#### Dr. Janita Pinto

Assistant Professor of Microbiology

Reference: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html>

## SARS-COV MANAGEMENT: WHERE ARE WE NOW?



The outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) has caused increasing attention and public panic all over the world. Currently, there is no specific treatment against it, though many clinical trials on patients, experimental studies, in-vitro studies, etc. are going on globally. Due to the alarming number of deaths and active patients, identifying effective drug therapy to combat the disease is urgently needed.

Based on the clinical data reported so far, newer drugs to treat SARS-CoV are emerging one after another. So far, the drugs that have shown promising results are chloroquine/hydroxychloroquine ± azithromycin, remdesivir, tocilizumab, and convalescent plasma.

Chloroquine, an old drug used in malaria and autoimmune disease, had demonstrated remarkable inhibition in the spread of SARS-CoV.

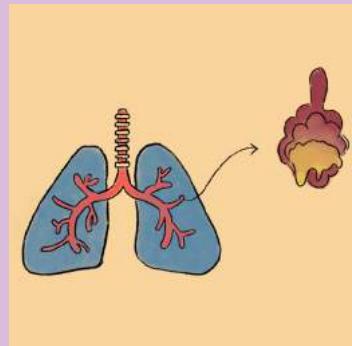
Remdesivir, an adenine analog, is currently under clinical development for the treatment of Ebola virus infection has been shown to be highly effective and safe in the control of 2019-nCoV infection in in-vitro models. For the cytokine storm triggered by the over-activated immune system in COVID-19, IL-6 antagonist tocilizumab has been shown effective. The use of convalescent plasma for treatment of SARS-CoV has received mixed results till now.

Many studies on other newer agents like teicoplanin, umifenovir, sofosbuvir, ribavirin, ACE-2 based peptides, ruxolitinib, baricitinib, etc. are also in pipeline, but we need randomized controlled trials with larger sample size to determine the safety and efficacy of these new drugs.

It still remains a challenging task to fight the COVID19 with the limited treatment and prevention measures available now. Lessons learned from the MERS and SARS outbreaks can provide valuable insight into how to handle the current pandemic. The public health outbreak response strategies such as hand hygiene, wearing masks, isolation, quarantine, social distancing, and community containment are the need of the hour. As the pandemic is still ongoing and expanding, monitoring of any possible gene variation, to avoid another round of outbreak is also required.

Dr. Razia Khanam

Professor of Pharmacology



# Novel corona virus pandemic

## The lesson we learnt

There are many coronaviruses which cause symptoms related to respiratory infection, ranging from common cold to more severe pneumonia. A decade ago, one strain of coronavirus called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) emerged and two decades ago coronavirus infection emerged as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) both affected a few countries in the world. Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus which



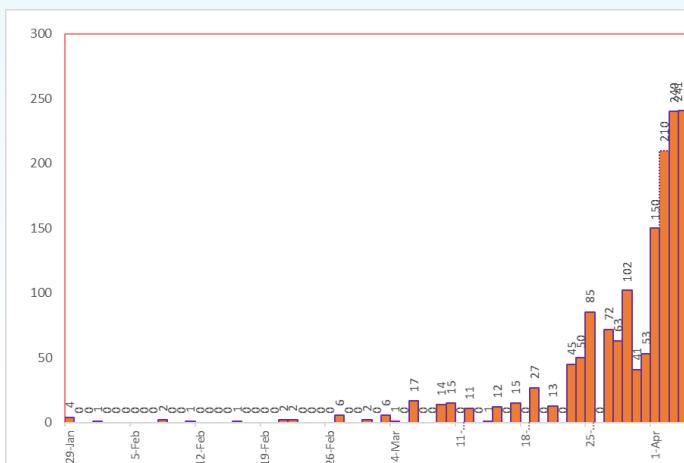
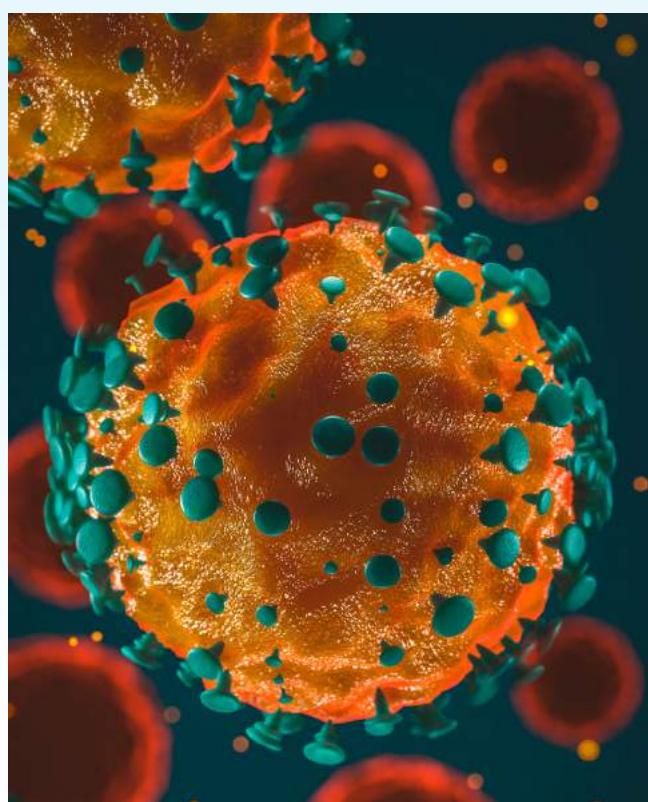
affects the human, the first case identified in Wuhan city of China with pneumonia symptoms which rapidly spread across the world. The data from across the globe, showed that the infectivity of the virus is very high, but the case fatality is not

that high when compared to other coronaviruses such as SARS and MERS. The mortality data from China showed that the fatality is more among old age population and among the patients with other comorbidities. A recent article published in "The Lancet Infectious Diseases" by Verity et al. reported that fatality across the spectrum of COVID-19 disease show a strong age gradient in risk of death.

The epidemic curve of many countries showed, that this public health problem is still not under control. As an example, the cases reported in the UAE, from

January 29 – April 4 (As per the data available from WHO) showed that the number of cases is increasing like an exponential growth (see the figure). Even though the curve is like an exponential curve, the number of cases is very less when compared to many other countries. Also comparing the Case Fatality Rate of UAE with other countries, the rate is very less in UAE which is a good sign. Flattening the curve is an important step which means delaying the spread of the disease with different preventive strategies. UAE has taken many effective strategies in slowing down the spread including precautionary advice, the result of this strategic movement we can see in the coming days.

Many uncertainties are there about the novel coronavirus, but it is clear that the virus is highly infectious. Because of the highly infectious nature of the virus, the hospitals are overloaded with patients. Here the most important aspect is to slow down the spread of infection, so that health systems can manage the situation.



It was the assumption that the developed countries are free from communicable diseases because many developed countries in Europe hasn't had any outbreak in more than five decades and hence the lack of experience in epidemic control and health care system not well equipped to tackle the pandemic situation of COVID-19. Some outbreak control experts in these regions opinioned that lack of experience in epidemic is one of the reasons for the pandemic's catastrophe in European continent even though the health system in European countries is one of the world's best system. In many developed countries, the health systems have

been built around the concept of patient centered care, but in reality, an epidemic situation requires a community centered care.

The lesson is, outbreak is possible in any region and the health care providers as a team, should be ready to implement containment measures in any situation like this.

**Prof. Jayadevan Sreedharan**

Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, College of Medicine



## We are all in this together!

Given these uncertain times, I am sure, like me, most of you must be wondering about the future, anxious about what is to come. Right from the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the world has seen a sudden drastic change, so much so, that it has become very difficult for people to come to terms with it. However, there are a few positives that the COVID-19 crisis has brought about that are worth mentioning (might help us overlook this difficult period!). The earth is healing, we are more careful and conscious of our health, we have more quality time with our family and in some ways we have been granted more time to find the hobbies we enjoyed, which were once lost and buried under the rug.

We have learnt to respect the poor a little more, care for them a little more, as we truly can comprehend their life struggle. This situation has brought empathy, as well as gratitude in us, for those unfortunate people in the world, who might be going through worse situations, for example refugees etc. Social distancing has made us more aware of our loved ones around the world. We have truly come to value them. We can all work together to tackle this situation, by following instructions given by the ministry of health and the authorities. It is going to be hard, hard does not mean impossible. Even though online academic classes may seem a little out of the norm, the key is to focus on our goals, not obstacles. Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean. A new sense of unity has arised amidst this crisis. Once this Covid-19 crisis is over In Sha Allah, we can look back in time, the year 2020 and say to ourselves, "We endured through it all, united, we stood." At this point of time, unity and positive thinking is what counts. Stay alert, not anxious!

**Nabah 2019bm19**



# Gulf Medical University Student Volunteers Join Fight against COVID-19



Total 26 students from the clinical years, from various colleges and programs of GMU, of 12 different nationalities join the frontlines in the battle against the global pandemic

Students of Gulf Medical University (GMU), Ajman, have volunteered their services to support the fight against the global pandemic COVID-19. 26 student volunteers registered for participation, and the volunteers include students from the clinical years of various programs under the College of Medicine, College of Health Sciences and College of Nursing. They represent 12 different nationalities, viz., UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, UK, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Comoros Islands.

Commenting on the student volunteers, Prof. Hossam Hamdy, the Chancellor of GMU said, "We are not surprised by the eagerness of students to volunteer their services, irrespective of the risks involved, as the world battles the pandemic. Commitment to the medical profession is something we imbibe in our students. GMU students volunteer regularly at medical and health camps for the benefit of the general public. Furthermore, for the students, providing support to the medical professionals at the frontlines will be an invaluable experience and learning opportunity."

Driven by their desire to help the community, the students said that they are happy to volunteer during

tough times, putting their medical skills to good use. Many of them feel that this is a chance to make a difference. As for the risk factor, they feel that it entails only an ordinary risk in the medical profession. "Being at the frontlines is part of our profession. Ever since we decided to pursue career as health professionals, we have been aware and willing to serve the people who need our help," one of them said.

Gulf Medical University is ensuring that the student volunteers are supported with the necessary trainings, safety gear and supervision. All volunteers will be trained on hygiene procedures for health professionals, teaching them the right way of disinfecting and using protective gear.

The student volunteers will be deployed at the various academic hospitals under the Thumbay Hospital network in the UAE and if needed in other hospitals in UAE. They will be tasked with assisting senior doctors and nurses in all ways possible.

GMU and its network of academic Thumbay Hospitals, Thumbay Labs & Thumbay Clinic play a key role in UAE at this juncture of the crisis.





"I consider it my duty as a UAE citizen and a healthcare professional, to provide whatever assistance I can in the fight against COVID-19. As soon as the MOH asked final year students of medical professions to volunteer, my University immediately contacted us and encouraged us to volunteer. Since my first day at GMU, I've been trained on the proper and correct use of PPE, so I am confident of being able to take all the precautions to keep myself and others safe. By volunteering, I hope to help my colleagues by taking some of the load off them, as they work hard to render selfless services for the society."

**Ms. Salwa Ali**  
(UAE national), 4th Year BBMS.



"My inspiration for volunteering are the doctors and nurses all over the world who are working every day to fight this pandemic. I believe that these are the kind of times we take our oaths for, and that we need to help in whatever way we can. GMU has encouraged us and given us a wonderful opportunity and I feel lucky to be able to avail this opportunity. I am very happy to be doing this and it feels like one of the best experiences ever."

**Ms. Palwasha Javed**  
(Pakistani national), 4th Year  
MBBS.



"I never miss an opportunity to help people and make them happy, and this trying time is the best opportunity. GMU has given me the chance to volunteer to serve the community and has made sure that sure I do so in a safe manner. I hope to do everything I can in order to fight this pandemic and help whoever might need it."

**Mr. Mohammed Rayan**  
(Indian national), 4th Year MBBS.



"I believe that doctors are meant to help during tough times, and as an aspiring doctor, this has been my inspiration to volunteer. GMU has supported our desire to volunteer by informing us about the opportunity and encouraging us. It feels great to be helping the medical professionals at the frontlines of this fight against COVID-19, and has made me realize the amount of work and effort healthcare professionals put in every day."

**Ms. Priya Rani**  
(Bangladeshi national), 4th Year MBBS.





“Even though I am a fourth year medical student and still a ‘doctor-in-training’, I feel it is my duty to help in any way I can during this pandemic. GMU has been instrumental in supporting and encouraging us, the students, to volunteer. The skills I have learnt from GMU up to this point have been invaluable and have enabled me to help the best I can. I hope to help ease some of the burden that the doctors and nurses have on their shoulders, during this tough time.”

**Ms. Alyssa Fourie**

(South African national), 4th Year MBBS.



One of the key pillars of our university has always been community engagement, and GMU is currently the only university in the UAE that has given students the opportunity to help as volunteers, to utilize our training for the better good. I am well aware of the risks associated in these times, but i am grateful for being under the supervision of senior doctors. There is no greater honor than doing your duty when called upon.

**Mr. Sajadhossein Bazrafshani**

(UK national), 5th Year MBBS.



# MEET THE TEAM

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