

Soldiers with Stethoscope: *the show must go on...*

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Ever since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic, it continues to trouble the whole of humanity.¹ The whole world finds itself in a state of despair and exhaustion of not only having to deal with the pandemic but also simultaneously addressing the fallout of social, political, and economic structure. The biggest brunt of this catastrophe called COVID-19 is being borne by the soldiers with stethoscopes—the medical fraternity—in every possible way.

We, as doctors, face unprecedented challenges in the form of a deadly masquerading enemy, which is highly infectious, has diverse signs and symptoms, mutates at the speed of light, and leads to everchanging consensus on the actual line of treatment and the unknown long-term ill effects. We have also faced long and exhausting working hours, insufficient resources, inefficient supply lines, especially with regard to drugs and equipment, including an oxygen crisis and multiple instances of violence against health care workers.² Apart from the mental trauma of being an instrument of transmission, the virus affecting our near and dear ones, and staying away from our families, we have been repeatedly shocked at the news of the loss of our seniors and peers to this scourge.

According to the Indian Medical Association (IMA) COVID-19 registry, 864 doctors have already succumbed due to the pandemic in India, of which at least 420 doctors have lost their lives during the second COVID-19 wave.³ In a nation where doctor to population ratio remains low at 1:1456 against a WHO-recommended 1:1000, not only are we losing soldiers (doctors) fighting at the forefront but also feeling of a sense of anxiety, panic, and loss in terms of intellectual guidance.⁴ Amidst all the violence, mistrust, chaos, bombardment of nonscientific information, lack of standard guidelines, and reaching the brink of both physical as well as mental exhaustion, physicians are still attempting to find pearls in the mud. Short on supplies and sleep, we truly appreciate the nature of

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our responsibility and duty toward our patients.⁵ We realize it is not just a mere professional doctor-patient relationship but a human bond.

Following the idea of complexity thinking, we acknowledge and accept the challenges as opportunities for positive adaptations, innovative solutions, and emerge as a stable system.⁶ Notwithstanding the crisis, we continue to be well-rooted in evidence-based medicine, continuous medical education programs through webinars, and training of juniors. We are keeping abreast of the everchanging treatment plans and strategies, and disseminating relevant medical information not just within the fraternity but also to the general public. So, by challenging uncertainty, embracing innovations, building resilience in character, and serving humanity, let us eulogize and immortalize this spirit of “the show must go on ...”

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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