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## COVID-19: The time for action is just now; It's still not too late



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#### Letter to Editor,

“By Failing to Prepare, You Are Preparing to Fail”. - Benjamin Franklin.

Although we fully agree with Lancet editorial that health-care authorities and political leaders in the so-called high-income countries have taken “too little, too late” measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic [1], we genuinely believe the window for global containment has been closed down for a while. “Catch and isolate” policy proposed by Watkins [2], although important, should no longer be the main focus of the health care policies. We have already moved to a “plan for the worst” stage [2]. Hellewell in a stochastic transmission model showed that even with a high success in tracing and isolation of COVID-19 cases, “catch and isolate” policy is only partially successful specially when dealing with low number ( $< 40$ ) of cases [3]. As Iran, China and Italy epidemic has shown us, the success rate of such policies in controlling COVID-19 spread decreases significantly when the number of cases increases. WHO finally announced the elevation of the COVID-19 cases to the pandemic level. We are reaching the exponential phase of COVID-19 worldwide; while it took more than two months for the total cases to reach to 100,000 threshold, more than 400,000 new cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed between March 5–25th [4]. Accepting the negative short-term public, freedom restrictive and costly economic consequences of a robust action plan which includes more assertive infection control measures is essential for taking the following steps at the highest national level [1]. The current health-care facilities and infrastructure in the high-income countries allows these steps to be potentially practical and successful. Designing and implementing a “telemedicine for COVID-19” system [5], diverting the main focus of COVID-19 care to walk-in centers away from the hospitals except in situations where patients need tertiary care, delivering medications, food and hygienic supply to patients while placing them at home-quarantine, using a purpose designed “COVID-19 courier system” with trained drivers familiar with isolation principles, performing nasal

swab, blood draws along with physical examinations either at home or purely at walk-in centers or at drive-through facilities, to prevent unnecessary exposure of the community and health-care professionals to the virus, and load the mounting pressure off from hospitals are some of the required steps. Educating the public, elite groups, health-care professionals, politicians and having the financial institutes and insurance companies on board, along with government financial support packages are the initial essential steps for a success, otherwise we should all prepare for a disastrous outcome.

#### Declaration of competing interest

None.

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