

## 2021 Olympic Games Tokyo: Safety Issues and Protection against COVID-19 Transmission

Sir,

Tokyo will soon host one of the world's biggest sporting events, Olympic Games that are expected to happen on July 23, 2021. This event is a great opportunity and potential for triggering a new global dissemination of not only the coronavirus but also bacteria containing successful antimicrobial drug-resistant determinants.

One recent study published by Kissler *et al.*<sup>[1]</sup> highlighted the problem. According to this publication, even in the event of apparent elimination after the initial, most severe pandemic wave, SARS-CoV-2 surveillance should be maintained since resurgence in contagion could be possible as late as 2024. One of the risks in large concentrations is the presence of someone capable of infecting a considerable number of people, and it can be a calamity considering that the initial estimates of R0 for SARS-CoV-2 vary from 1.6 to 4.1.<sup>[2,3]</sup> In addition, the strong infectivity of SARS-CoV-2 and the rapid asymptomatic transmission during the long incubation period have been precisely demonstrated.<sup>[4]</sup>

The treatment of COVID-19 is mainly focused on the rigorous implementation of public health measures, since SARS-CoV-2 infections do not yet have antiviral therapy and effective vaccines. In addition, another concern that is being considered in recent years has been regarding ease of transmission of respiratory-borne diseases in an air cabin environment.<sup>[5]</sup> In this context, the risk of international spread of COVID-19 for several countries is imminent and worrisome because we may be facing a second infection curve in the near future.

These risks and their implications for public health are often overlooked. They are very important and should be considered by the WHO and other health authorities in advance of a sporting global event. Since an understanding of the risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2 is well known in the world, prevention and accompaniment of travelers measures can be discussed when an event of this size will be held.

The Olympic Games Tokyo 2021 will undoubtedly ensure that the stadiums will be crowded with spectators. The risk of exposure to COVID-19 among other communicable diseases

through close contact both for travelers and spectators attending the event themselves would support the recommendation of the post-Olympic Games surveillance system. This measure would be essential to prevent the international travel of possible epidemic microorganisms, as well as ensure the isolation of those with symptoms for COVID-19.

Although scientists do not believe that a related COVID-19 epidemic will spread rapidly and intensively in Japan, the COVID-19 pandemic will be able to test again world health systems; however, the world is more secure when safe measures are taken from the experience gained.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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