

Correspondence

The COVID-19 ethical principle for public health: a deep and genuine love for service

This is in response to Castillo's¹ correspondence where the author proposes the need for a virtue ethics of compassion to public health. To examine, the current standard of practice of our health professionals includes already such concept of ethics, may it be 'virtue' *per se* or 'compassion' just to name. Professional ethics is not simply a code intended to maneuver properly the mechanism of medical or health practices. Practicing their profession in medicine and health care and spreading the 'right' information to the public is a sign already of genuine 'ethical' practices to the public, a testimony of sincere service.

While our medical frontliners are courageous enough to combat this pandemic in hospitals and medical centers, we the public must do our share. SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19 does not simply spread beyond human intervention. An irresponsible person can also be the cause for the transmission of this virus. Hence, responsibly following the minimum health protocol (wearing face mask, sanitize and social distancing) is a way of practicing 'compassionate' ethics. As Gibson *et al.*, in their study, say 'the increase in social distancing intentions is likely a result of the public health community's emphasis on the importance of these measures, as well as an increase in the number of people who had direct experience with COVID-19'.² We must remember the dedicated hours of service by our medical practitioners in the hospital to impart a more simple contribution for us—stay home, observe social distancing, sanitize, wear properly our face mask. We do not need to 'moralize' all human actions in order to execute simple rules. If we could not follow this stipulated health guideline, then how much more will we follow the abstract principles? Though, at some point, these stipulated principles are testaments already of abstract principles. Education is the key in reiterating to the public the important need in winning successfully against the virus. Poor practices in observing health protocols must be addressed in all levels.³

To conclude, as Castillo mentioned 'ethics is concerned with the governance of a person's conduct', every individual has already this innate belief of goodness. But to standardize

this natural capacity of a person to feel good, or to feel pain or to be compassionate transgresses the core creativity and potential of this individual to accent into the embrace of the consciousness of goodness. Our medical and health professionals 'often need to apply moral reasoning to their interactions with co-workers, clients, and the general public'.⁴ Hence, we take pride in honoring their duty daily, especially in this time of COVID-19 pandemic. But we, the general public, must remain conscious enough not to put to waste this hard labor of our frontliners. While we call for vaccine equity at this time, we can still make things happen for the better if we cooperate. Let us do our share.

References

- 1 Castillo F. Virtues in public health: easing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. *J Public Health* Jan 2021;**43**(2):e277–8.
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- 3 Islam S, Emran GI, Rahman E *et al.* Knowledge, attitudes and practices associated with the COVID-19 among slum dwellers resided in Dhaka City: a Bangladeshi interview-based survey. *J Public Health* March 2021;**43**(1):13–25.
- 4 *Ethics Unwrapped. Professional Ethics*. McCombs School of Business, The University of Texas at Austin. <https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/subject-area/professional-ethics>. (20 July 2021, date last accessed).

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