

LETTER**Solidarity and transparency against the COVID-19 pandemic**

Dear Editor

Since December 2019, coronavirus (CoV) disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread rapidly throughout the world, and World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a health emergency, and most recently, pandemic.¹ More than 100 countries including developed and underdeveloped ones have been affected. Public health approach and strategies may be similar in such situations around the world; however, developing and poor countries lack an adequate health care system to wage a strong attack.²

The approach of developed countries such as China and Italy to detect and isolate cases, prevent transmission, and detect susceptible hosts has been encouraging.³ It includes quarantine, social distancing, and isolation. However, such strategy is difficult to follow in developing countries, due to lack of surveillance resources, appropriate technology, and funds. In addition, the poorer countries carry a higher risk of increased morbidity and mortality due to overcrowding and large population sizes and densities. Furthermore, lack of accurate diagnostic methods places them in a more vulnerable situation due to inadequate source identification. Individual behaviors such as self-isolation, social distancing, and accessing health care only if symptoms are severe, may be lacking in poorer countries due to inadequate information and illiteracy. Dispersion of misinformation and false beliefs are also more common.⁴

Amidst this somber situation, the blame of "politics of epidemics" in which politics mostly attributes to the broad effect of local, national, and international establishments, on the health consequences of communities in disease outbreaks, in Asian countries like India and Iran is challenging.⁵ This has been attributed to various factors and sentiments, for example, fear of low tourist inflow causing recession or fear of creating panic in the public. This is in sharp contrast to developed countries like Italy, whose transparency helps developing appropriate strategies.

As we have entered a pandemic, we need to act fast and right. Furthermore, solidarity must define our onward battle. WHO develops plans based on the principle of solidarity among countries such as gathering the world's leading experts for discussions on top research and innovation. It also works with member states to promote knowledge and empower communities. By working together, countries promote efficiency. Cooperation is a key weapon in the battle against COVID-19. We each need to recognize our unique risks, the prevailing cultural and social practices in our region and work a way around. Let us stand together in solidarity, beyond borders as "The Human Race," to fight and overcome the COVID-19 threat.

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