



## **EDITORIAL**

### **The New Normals!**

The new normal in everything is here to say. In fact, many scientists are telling us that COVID-19 is going nowhere. We will all just learn better and ever improving ways to deal with it, to live with it. While that sounds scary with daily confirmed cases increasing, it is looking like they may be very correct. We see more nations easing the imposed lockdowns to enable economic activity, to ensure that there is some level of productivity. Secondary schools that were only taking online classes are being opened up to allow some level of in-school activity. Restaurants and eateries are being allowed to open up for take-out services. This is a new normal for the eateries who are used to customers sitting and being served. I was pleasantly surprised when I discovered that my favourite eatery within the main campus of the University of Lagos has evolved a delivery service with full complement of despatch riders and motorcycles. It is very true that if you refuse to change, you will become absolutely useless in the scheme of things. And this pandemic has certainly proven that.

The use of face masks is a definite new normal. To enter into most buildings now, you must use a face mask. Your face and nose must be properly covered. I saw a humorous post somewhere which shows the future of t-shirts and it has the photo of the wearer on the body of the t-shirt with a sign that shows the name of the person beneath the mask since it's a bit hard to identify people beneath their face mask. Covering the nose and face with a face mask is the least you should do. You may add a face shield for added protection. Face shields should not be worn without a face mask beneath it.

Social and physical distancing which were being used interchangeably at the beginning have now been properly defined to show that you maintain physical distance when you must be in public places while you maintain social distances of staying at home to avoid crowds and other places when you do not have to go out. I find it alarming to see crowds at the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) bus stops with many people not using masks yet being clustered together. I wonder how those people are allowed to enter the buses since use of the face mask is supposed to be compulsory to use the service. The Lagos state government and its Transport Management Authority should do something about this. Another thing I find alarming is when I find passengers on commercial motorcycles popularly called Okada in Nigeria and either the passenger or the driver is not using

a face mask while the other is using. It is understandable to me if both are not using but why hail a commercial motorcycle with a driver that is not using a mask when you are or why allow a passenger not using a face mask to board your motorcycle. Correcting these discrepancies still fall within the purview of the Transport Authority.

Inevitably, there will be new normals for teaching in the higher institutions. Despite the ongoing strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), something will eventually give and the strike will be over. Then we need to implement new strategies for teaching students in the tertiary institutions. The days of overcrowded teaching auditoriums are over. Institutions will need to institute virtual teaching programmes and innovate on how practical classes, clinical rotations, research and other field experiences will take place. The capacity of public universities as a whole and individual programmes within the universities will need to be enhanced to accommodate multiple virtual learning systems at the same time. For other businesses, especially the artisans, new normals have evolved requiring use of face masks and sanitizers often, home delivery via logistics companies, staggered work hours for different staff members, marked boxes for people to stand in queues and other industry specific new normals. In the pharma industry, especially in the community, there have been institution of engineering controls with dividers to separate clients from pharmacy staff, tele pharmacy services with home delivery of medications, use of appropriate spacings between clients on queues within or outside the pharmacy, to mention a few.

Thus, I welcome us all to this season of new normals in all our endeavours. The underlying message however, still is, if you do not need to, stay at home. COVID-19 needs people to move around and the more we stay put, the better our chances of flattening the curve in a shorter, rather than longer, time. Using face masks, distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene appropriately will also contribute to us reaching this flattening quickly. I must however, say that Africa seems to have been spared from the worst of the pandemic. I know we are generally testing as many people as we should as a continent but I daresay if people are dropping down and dying in their thousands there is no way it can be hidden. We bless God fervently.

I will not cease to remind you to visit our website regularly to find useful articles for your research work as well as share your blogs or respond to blogs written by others. We can confirm that more and more people are getting to know our journal. We enjoin you to direct others to the site to also send in their own articles. We are still on course with our plan to seek COPE membership.

As I have vowed to do, I am calling out colleagues in patient-facing practice areas, community and hospital, to make time out to publish practice-oriented articles that will provide us with useful

and useable data for future planning, forecasting and interventions. The pandemic before us has called up a number of research areas that we may not have been thinking about before. In addition, there are grants locally and internationally targeting COVID-19 and other infectious diseases that can be applied for to enable interested researchers assess funds for properly planned projects.

Many journals, including ours, have a special supplement focused on COVID-19 that we can utilize to share the results of our COVID-19 oriented research. So, no procrastinating. It is time to get to work. We look forward to receiving your manuscripts for consideration.

Thank you and have a great day.

## **SIGNED**

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