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Letter to Editor: Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): A Global Health Problem

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Letter to Editor

Novel Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory tract infectious disease that is caused by a Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), provisionally called the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) [1]. COVID-19 is a newly identified pathogen and thus termed as a novel coronavirus disease [1]. COVID-19 causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11th March 2020 [2]. COVID-19 was first reported on 31st December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and was initially referred to as pneumonia of unknown etiology [3]. The signs and symptoms linked to COVID-19 include fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, sputum production, sore throat, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, myalgia,

arthralgia, bluish lips or face, diarrhea, vomiting, respiratory failure, organ failure, septic shock, new confusion or inability to arouse [4]. It may take up to 2 to 14 days for someone to experience signs and symptoms associated with COVID-19 after exposure to the virus [1,3,5]. The recommended preventive measures against COVID-19 include adequate hand sanitizing with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, washing hands regularly for 20 seconds with soap and water, covering your nose and mouth with a face mask or disposable tissue, flexing your elbow when coughing, wearing gloves, social distancing by avoiding close contact with people who are unwell, and staying at home and self-isolate from others if you are unwell [1-6].

Table 1: Worldometer indicating the top 10 countries with the highest number of COVID-19 cases

Country	Continent	Confirmed cases	Recovered	Deaths
United States of America	North America	468,895	25,928	16,697
Spain	Europe	157,022	55,668	15,843
Italy	Europe	143,626	28,470	18,279
Germany	Europe	118,235	52,407	2,607
France	Europe	117,749	23,206	12,210
China	Asia	81,907	77,455	3,336
Iran	Asia	66,220	32,309	4,110
United Kingdom	Europe	65,077	135	7,978
Turkey	Asia/Europe	42,282	2,142	908
Belgium	Europe	26,667	5,568	3,019

Being a respiratory tract infection, just like common colds, most people will be tempted to start self-prescribing of antibiotics. Besides, prescribers will be forced to inappropriately prescribe antibiotics as is evidenced from studies. The increased self and inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics will negatively contribute to another global health problem of

antimicrobial resistance [7-9]. Therefore, it must be emphasized that antibiotics must be appropriately prescribed as is recommended in the antimicrobial stewardship programs worldwide. As of today, there is no known treatment for COVID-19. Nevertheless, scientists from across the world are working hard to find a vaccine and therapy for COVID-19. Currently, researchers and pharmaceutical companies are doing

their best to test some drugs against COVID-19. There must be constant and novel research worldwide to find the treatment for diseases [10,11]. Therefore, there is much hope that the vaccine and treatment against COVID-19 will be discovered soon. The COVID-19 is affecting 210 countries and territories around the world and 2 international conveyances. As shown in **Table 1**, COVID-19 has caused more confirmed cases in Europe than in any other region. There are 1,615,092 confirmed cases, 97,791 deaths, and 362,542 recoveries globally as on 10th March 2020. The United States of America has the highest number of COVID-19 confirmed cases whereas Italy has the highest number of deaths. In Africa, there are 12,987 confirmed cases, 642 deaths, and 1,704 recoveries till date with the first case of COVID-19 reported in Egypt on 14th February 2020. Currently, South Africa has the highest number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Africa with the first case being reported on the 5th of March 2020. Zambia recorded its first case of COVID-19 on 18th March 2020. These statistics keep on changing every time the Worldometer is updated.

In conclusion, COVID-19 is a global pandemic that requires a multisectoral approach to eradicate. It is a requirement that every individual must abide by the preventive measures recommended by the World Health Organization and Ministries responsible for Health in each country. Together, we shall overcome and conquer the COVID-19 pandemic.

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