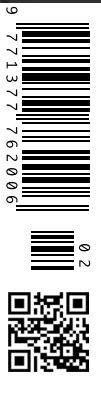




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Pandemic Prevention Strategies

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed numerous vulnerabilities in global health systems. The existing facilities have been insufficient, and much of non-COVID-19 care has been suspended. The infrastructure and supply chains have proven to be easily disrupted. The public health efforts led by local, national and international agencies have received a lot of criticism. After the initial shock of global lockdowns, the public is now gradually recovering and is now demanding answers and guarantees from those at the top. With the second wave already emerging in some regions and the global North approaching the winter (i.e. flu) season, do we have those answers? Are we ready to withstand new challenges that we are likely to face based on the knowledge and experience gained so far?

In this issue, we talk about the lessons learned from COVID-19, analyse various public health strategies for the 'new normal,' such as immunity passports and the use of digital technologies, and look for solutions that would enable us to better handle future infectious disease outbreaks.

A group of researchers led by Prof. Amir Khorram-Manesh provide the Swedish perspective on the COVID-19 management. Fons Rademakers describes how the BioDynaMo model, developed at CERN, is used to study COVID-19 spread in closed spaces. Prof. Simona Agger Ganassi focusses on the post-pandemic 'new normal' while Prof. Stefan Heinemann explores the ethical issues behind the potential introduction of COVID-19 immunity passports.

Rafael Vidal-Perez reflects on the role of telecardiology as seen through the lens of the pandemic, and Prof. Florencio Travieso stresses the importance of data intelligence in predicting future outbreaks. JJ Coughlan and Cormac Mullins look into how the changes in communication during the pandemic have led to the rise of the virtual clinic and Lloyd Humphreys analyses the ways digital technologies can be used for mental health care.

In the Management Matters section, experts provide their perspective on the current and future developments in healthcare. Prof. Derek Alderson talks about the rapid changes in the world of surgery and the need to adapt to these changes. Peter Kapitein weighs the matters of risk, cost, benefit and trust within the healthcare 'check and balances' system. Héctor González-Jiménez shares his opinion on how COVID-19 is impacting the role of robotics in healthcare, while Donna Prosser summarises the lessons in patient safety we have learnt during the pandemic.

We hope you will enjoy this issue and will gain inspiration from it. As always, your feedback is welcome.

Happy Reading!