

## COVID-19; looking back after a year into the pandemic

It just seems yesterday to me when I heard that Pakistan was also going into lock down like most other countries in the world. It was March 2020 when Islamabad went into lock down after the World Health Organization labeled COVID-19 as a pandemic which I had only read in books. Now I was about to witness a generation defining event, something I would never ever have thought about. Amidst utter confusion and fear, loose ends at work were tied up with a number of emergency meetings with the staff and calling scheduled patients to inform cancellation of their appointments for an uncertain period of time. Nothing was clear, yet no one wanted to be at work due to the fear of the pandemic.

Many people have recovered, some have sadly died and many more remain unwell. We have been through different waves of the pandemic, each wave bringing in more fear. Students have missed face to face training and interaction has been more on ZOOM with them, resulting in an impact on their preparedness and maturity as future doctors or consultants.

While I know that some people may believe the virus is a hoax, I fear they may pay for their ignorance. I think our re-opening and working like pre pandemic era will be gradual as the infection and death rate is reduced by increased rates of vaccination. Even as we achieve herd immunity, our first visits to public places will be tense. It will take a while before we feel confident while socializing. I hope that by the end of 2021, we can begin to achieve regular academic activities, however this will depend on a great deal on prevention and then willingness to take a calculated risk. Over the past year, we have remained fully masked, distancing from each other. What comes next is that our needs will be balanced against our fear of this deadly virus.

Finally, I pray and hope that we gain a deeper understanding of the “power of nature” and the limits of human technology. Our desire to control the virus is questionable as it keeps mutating leaving us helpless in the face of the force of this virus. God, please provide us the strength to fight it out and help us recover. Amin.

Professor Haroon Shahid Qazi  
BDS, MS, MCPS(HPE), FACD  
Editor in Chief,  
Pakistan Orthodontic Journal