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Ongoing Lessons During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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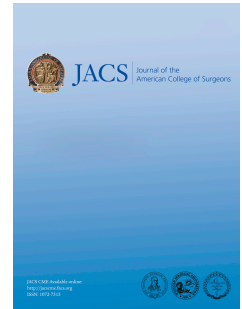
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Ongoing Lessons During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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I read with interest the article from Sterpetti [1] regarding lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the unprecedented waves of COVID-19 continues to plague many nations, we can take lessons from the epicentres that experienced this brutality. Retrospectively I could not agree more that the need for intensive care unit beds and staff is dire. Volunteers from the public and retired healthcare workers have stepped up to assist the overstrained healthcare system. Not only do the numbers of the workforce need to be scaled up quickly, but the welfare of the frontline workers also needs to be maintained. Many are experiencing burn-out, fatigue, anxiety, distress, and a myriad of mental burdens [2].

Assigning dedicated health facilities enables sick patients to be treated and healthcare workers to be protected. Healthcare systems should have surge capacity to meet the ever-rising numbers of COVID-19 patients. While new and makeshift hospitals are being built, attention needs to be paid to the ventilation and waste systems [3, 4].

The importance to avoid medical facilities unnecessarily during this period of time has been rightly pointed out. Reducing and rescheduling of less urgent outpatient appointments will help to ease the manpower strain in the hospitals, allowing them to be deployed to designated wards and facilities. Hospitals have been implementing more stringent visitor policies. While some post-surgical patients would need rehabilitation and caregiver trainings that necessitates caregivers being around, numbers of registered caregivers should be limited to a minimum. At the end of the spectrum, many had been denied visiting their kin who are nursed in the ICU due to the highly virulent nature of the contagion [5].

Beyond the walls of the hospitals and medical facilities, draconian measures such as lockdowns have been proven to decrease growth rate and increased doubling time of cases [6]. Confinement, quarantine, and stay home notices are widely prevalent now in global efforts to slow down the rapid spread of COVID-19. Careful planning is needed to maintain sustainability of resources during this period. The lessons from COVID-19 may not stop here as we are still learning from the bitter experiences around us daily.

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