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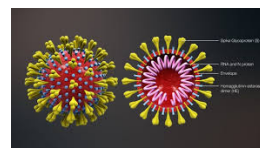
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22nd March 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
NOVEL CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)
PANDEMIC 2020



Dear Colleagues,

I am sure you will agree that last week has been an extraordinary period for us all as the Coronavirus outbreak continues to spread unabated. The Global Healthcare systems and Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) are facing a multitude of challenges. As an obstetrician, I know that many of you like me, are concerned about the impact of COVID-19. At this time, our primary focus is, of course, the health and wellbeing of our patients, ourselves including our colleagues and loved ones.

The UK government announced a change to their policy and guidance relating to the ongoing global outbreak of COVID-19. I am writing to let you know that MANSAG as an organization shares your anxiety. We are ready to support you, the members, both professionally and your general wellbeing.

WORKPLACE PRESSURE

We recognize the pressures that our members are facing as key workers, in the healthcare sector who are at the front door due to this pandemic. I also know that Nigerians are very stoic in the pursuance of their professional responsibilities. As we approach the peak of the Covid-19 infection in the UK, the expectation is that primary, secondary and tertiary care and public health services across all four nations will be put under extreme pressure.

This experience is shared worldwide in both low resource and high resource nations. The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel remarked that the current challenges posed by Coronavirus outbreak demands a unified worldwide robust response similar to the experience post Second World War. It is likely that you will experience greater workplace pressures, exacerbated by sickness leading to staff shortages, rota gaps, increased caring responsibilities and longer working hours.

There will be an increased need for us all to be flexible, supportive and adaptive under such pressures to ensure the highest standards of care for all our patients. We may be asked to work in unfamiliar circumstances and settings, and we may find ourselves working outside our comfort zone.



MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIANS

ACROSS GREAT BRITAIN

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Many of us will have to make some very challenging decisions underpinned by complexities and uncertainties.

There is something unique about our healthcare, something that brings out the best in us when the going gets tough. I am confident that you will respond rapidly and professionally, as you always do. But it is important to look after yourself and your family and ensure that you are familiar with your local operational arrangements for safe care of patients with possible COVID-19 to carry out your professional duty.

See the recently published Guidance principles for all trainees (from UK bodies) in the [BMJ 2020;368; M1059](#) as shown below:

GUIDANCE PRINCIPLES FOR ALL TRAINEES (FROM THE UK TRAINING BODIES)*

Trainees must not be asked to undertake any activity beyond their level of competence and must be advised that they should seek senior workplace guidance if that arises
The relevant postgraduate dean should be informed of plans to redeploy trainees of any grade
Trainees deployed to a different clinical area must have appropriate induction and be informed of who they are reporting to and who is providing supervision, with details of how to contact them
Arrangements for redeployed trainees should be reviewed weekly and updates provided to the relevant postgraduate dean on a weekly basis to ensure that trainees are adequately supervised in the host environment or specialty and that they continue to work within the limits of their competence appropriate to their stage of training
Where training is interrupted or learning outcomes are not achieved due to a major incident response, these issues will be taken into account at the trainee's next annual review of competence progression, which will inform future training requirements and placement planning
Current recruitment and selection processes are continuing, and guidance for candidates will be updated regularly.

*Adopted from [Abi Rimmer BMJ 2020](#)

UK Registered Charity No. 1077899

Chizo Agwu, Treasurer • Alexander Obboh, Financial Secretary • Tonye Wokoma, Publicity and Fund Raising Secretary
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However, many of you will understandably feel anxious about the potential consequences of working in unfamiliar territory. The Bawa-Garba and Jack-Aldock Case (HBG-Hadiza Bawa Garba) continues to generate a lot of flashbacks amongst us.

One reassurance in this respect is the letter signed by the Chief Medical Officers of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the Medical Director and Director of Education and Standards of the General Medical Council (GMC), providing assurances about the requirements likely to be placed on doctors working in these difficult circumstances. This may include working outside your usual scope of practice.

I recommend that you also read the accompanying [GMC statement](#). This document is loaded with information which is rapidly changing by the hour. It also contains guideline on PPEs such as to when to use a surgical face mask or FFP3 respirator.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874310/PHE_11606_When_to_use_face_mask_or_FFP3_02.pdf

MANSAG REGIONAL AND NATIONAL EVENTS

All MANSAG activities including medical missions are suspended and the Nottingham Educational symposium and Charity Ball has been cancelled. A letter to that effect has been cascaded to all members last week and further information is available on our website mansag.org.

The next annual MANSAG event is the Scientific Conference and Annual General Meeting in October. Further information will be published in keeping with government advice and will continue to be under review.

APPRAISAL AND REVALIDATION

The GMC has declared that to free up vital time, revalidation dates between 17 March 2020 and the end of September 2020 will be deferred one year. They have also postponed this year's national training surveys for trainees and trainers.

Many Trusts have suspended the appraisal process temporarily but please familiarize yourself with your Trusts agenda.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Postgraduates trainees will remain in their current posts and Trusts on and after April 1 2020 due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Rotations may only occur where inductions, supervision and support can be guaranteed.

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This should not affect the ARCPs and the recruitment and selection process. The basis of stopping these educational events was contained in a joint letter from the four UK training bodies and the GMC referred to above. Health Education England (HEE) stated that the recruitment and selection remained unchanged and that the schedule of selection centres was being planned as normal. The statutory education bodies together with the GMC and AoMRC (Academy of Medical Royal Colleges) are determined to ensure the long term needs of doctors in training are not compromised.

Some Royal Colleges have cancelled their exams including the RCOG, RCP, Royal College of Radiologists, Royal Surgical Colleges and Royal College of Pathologists. As at the time of writing, the Royal College of Anaesthetists has not cancelled any UK based events or activities for the time being.

All Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) tests were cancelled to enforce social distancing strategy (meaning avoiding physical contact as much as possible) from the 18th March until at least 1 July 2020. Automatic refund is guaranteed to all the applicants within 10 working days. Further queries could be directed to PLAB@gmc-uk.org by email and please avoid any telephone contact as this is a very busy period for the GMC.

As the Covid-19 coronavirus continues to impact people, their families and communities across the world, it is an anxious time for everyone. The current situation is unprecedented and, as you know, the situation across the UK is changing daily.

The following resources can provide you with the latest news as well as answers to frequently asked questions:

1. World Udometer provides real-time world statistics on population, government, economics, society, environment and health.
<https://www.worldometers.info/>
2. World Health Organization (WHO) western pacific emergencies including COVID-19 website:
<https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/covid-19>
3. General Medical Council.
4. Public Health England (PHE).
5. Individual NHS Trusts.

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I hope you find this message reassuring and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance through the secretariat. secretary@mansag.org.

Yours sincerely,

Ibrahim



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"Letting go means to come to the realization that some people are a part of your history, but not a part of your destiny." - Steve Maraboli.

View my profile on [LinkedIn](#)

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