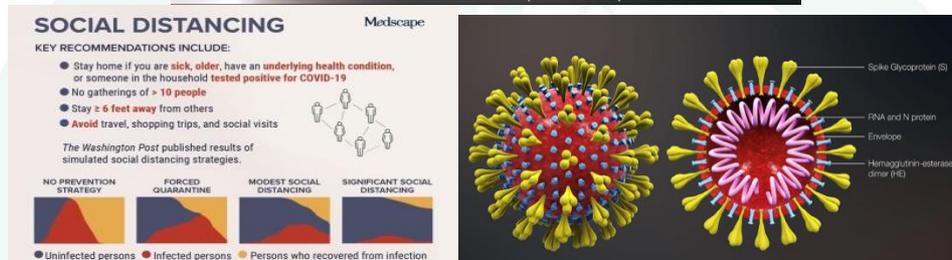




**President:** Mr Ibrahim Ismail Bolaji MBBS, PGCE, FRCPI, FRCOG, MD, LLM  
Email: president@mansag.org

**Secretary:** Dr Chris Agbo MBBS, FWACP, FHEA, MRCP, FAcadMED, MSc (Med Ed)  
Email: secretary@mansag.org

**Registered address**  
MANSAG  
Kemp House  
152 - 160 City Road  
London  
EC1V 2NX  
United Kingdom



## NOVEL SARS-CoV-2 DISEASE (COVID-19) PANDEMIC 2020

13<sup>TH</sup> May 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The past six weeks of COVID-19 induced lockdown has been a difficult time for many of us. Our lives continue to be hugely restricted by the lockdown, and our work is dominated by the spread of coronavirus, especially frontline healthcare professionals in hospitals, GP practices and care homes.

I have reached out to our sister organisations in the UK through their presidents, including Princess Wendy Odutola, President of the [Nigerian Nurses Charity Association UK \(NNCAUK\)](#) and Dr Chyke Ohuegbe, President of the [Nigerian Radiographers in Diaspora \(NIRAD\)](#) to get a feel of concerns of their members. The common theme is about safety in our working environment and the impact on our family and us.

Within the environments where many of us now work, especially in the frontline, we have to assume that most of our patients have COVID-19, symptomatic or not. There is a minimum level of personal protective equipment (PPE) for all acute areas that we feel must meet the concerns we have heard from you all. Please read the advice on PPE under risk assessment below carefully. Many of the scenarios within the new guidance allow considerable flexibility should the situation described by PHE not fit your needs.



# MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIANS

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We are all highly concerned about the devastating loss of our colleagues as a consequence of this disease. The provisional analysis by the National Office of Statistics (NOS) has shown that the risk of death involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) among some ethnic groups is significantly higher than those of White ethnicity.

I am increasingly moved by the report of the disproportionately high mortality of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. The black community has come off the worst both in the general population and in the healthcare setting.

Every life lost is a tragedy as every life counts, and it is vital that the system learns from them. We have sent letters to those in authority including the Health Secretary about the need to set up an enquiry to explore the reason behind this outcome. As a result, a scientific review by Public Health England (PHE) into the impact of Covid-19 on frontline workers from ethnic minority backgrounds and the wider community is already underway. The rapid review will examine health records to try to establish more "robust" data on emerging evidence that the virus is having a disproportionate effect on us. The Government has confirmed that Professor Kevin Fenton will be leading this inquiry. He joined Public Health England in 2012, having previously held executive positions at the United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Protection Agency.

As blacks are at a higher risk, may I leave you with a thought on physical distancing? We observe the 2M memoirs in most places around us (grocery stores and supermarkets) but do we apply this in our work environment (wards, canteen, coffee room, team briefing, and handovers)? Please observe an improved physical distancing amongst the staff on your wards to reduce transmission by unidentified asymptomatic super spreaders. Hence we should be mindful of overcrowding during handovers. Aside from good infection control practices and wearing appropriate PPE during contacts with patients, we need to think about each other at work.

UK Registered Charity No. 1077899

Chizo Agwu, Treasurer • Alexander Oboh, Financial Secretary • Tonye Wokoma, Publicity and Fund Raising Secretary  
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I have enclosed a short survey to get a more comprehensive picture of what is happening to our members and their expectations. Please ensure that you complete this so that we can take appropriate action.

### RISK ASSESSMENT

Public Health England has made it mandatory for all the BAME staff to be risk assessed by their employer, and I suspect that some Trusts and employers are not yet compliant. Please ensure you are risk assessed and appropriately deployed. A typical risk assessment form used by the West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust is attached for your perusal. The NHS Trusts are operating at different levels, and some have already rolled this out to management staff.

I felt it is also important to draw your urgent attention to some new guidance from PHE around the use of PPE and Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) as this is particularly relevant to us working in the frontline. There is no doubt that PPE is one of the most important precautions against COVID-19 as there has been no anaesthetist or intensivist amongst the healthcare professionals who have died from COVID-19. The link below gives you update information about PPE.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

As always I am keen to hear your comments – please send these to our [secretary@mansag.org](mailto:secretary@mansag.org) for the quickest possible response.

### NHS STAFF OFFERS

The NHS nationally has been working to put all the offers available to NHS staff in one place for ease of reference. These can be found on the NHS England and NHS Improvement website under staff offers (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/nhs-staff-offers/>).

### MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

This pandemic has caused a lot of work-related stress amongst us. With some small changes announced to the lockdown by the Prime Minister, taking place from today, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020, I think now is the time for you to be thinking about booking some well-deserved annual leave. It's really important for us all, and I include myself and the executive team in this, to take some time away and give ourselves a break from work. It helps both our physical and mental health.

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An important resource is the INDIGO POPPY (Programme of Post-traumatic Stress disorder) a programme developed by a team from the University of Nottingham, Liverpool John Moore's University and Countess of Chester Trust. This is a 38-mins training video that aims to reduce the development of PTSD in healthcare professionals during this unprecedented SARS-CoV-2 pandemic crisis. It covers how to help yourself and colleagues in the prevention of long term distress.

Watch the video on the link below and please provide feedback to the producer.

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/project-ares/preventingptsd/>

### MANSAG EVENTS 2020

*11<sup>th</sup> MANSAG Annual educational symposium and Charity Ball – Nottingham 2020*

This has now been cancelled, and the next charity ball will be in 2021, the venue, and other arrangement will be advertised shortly on MANSAG website.

*Annual General and Scientific Conference in October, 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 2020*

This will now be an annual general conference, and it will be held virtually as advertised on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Further arrangement will be communicated to you in due course.

We are inviting you to an extraordinary virtual general meeting to touch base with you. This is scheduled for Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 16:00-17:00hr by Zoom. Kindly complete the MANSAG questionnaire before this meeting.

### DIGITAL INNOVATION

I do not want to end in a negative note. It is not all doom and gloom. COVID-19 has facilitated the digital revolution in and outside the NHS. I have attended a digital birthday party, funeral event, celebration of promotions and graduations. We have all developed different routines and ways of coping using social media, including Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp, Facetime, and Attend Anywhere platforms. Our recovery from this SARS-Cov-2 pandemic will be shaped in so many ways, but while digital interactions are bound to form a more significant part of our work, home and social lives, we will still need physical meetings.

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I hope that there will be an opportunity for us to enhance the tradition, dump the social distancing and congregate next year at the **12<sup>th</sup> MANSAG Educational Symposium and Charity Ball** on 15th May 2021. For the time being, **stay safe**.

Yours sincerely,

*Ibrahim Bolaji*



**Ibrahim I. Bolaji MBBS, PGCME, FRCPI, FRCOG, MD, LLM**

Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecological Surgeon

Senior Clinical Lecturer (HYMS)

Divisional Clinical Governance Lead (O & G)

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

**MANSAG PRESIDENT**

**M** +447885470001 **W** <http://www.mansag.org>



"It is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation." - Herman Melville.

View my profile on [LinkedIn](#)



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