

IN THIS ISSUE

Readers should be aware that this Special Covid Issue was not a planned or promoted issue but has been published as a direct result of authors submitting articles on the topic. In fact, some 17 articles were submitted with 13 articles being published. This represents articles predominantly from Asia Pacific countries, some eleven countries that reflect both the authors origin and the health system of the country on which they report.

The decision to publish what amounts to a third issue half way through our normal three issue annual series responds to that demand and a sense that the APJHM should respond to our authors and readers in what is a significant moment in health systems globally. The Journal believes it is important to record the pandemic event as perceived by academics and health professionals so that their voices are heard and that this might provide a basis for further research and publication as events unfurl and the pandemic continues.

In doing so we also apologise to other authors who have submitted articles on non-pandemic subjects for delayed attention to their submissions, but it is still our intention to assess those articles for our final issue towards the end of the year.

The editorial written by Briggs and Isoard, both from the University of New England is entitled 'Going forward, going back: Covid pandemic where to from here? It is a collaborative effort that raises concerns and perceptions based on events predominantly but not entirely Australian and the events traversed continue to 'be in play' as we write. Some authors also to some extent editorialise in their articles, particularly in contrasting between different nation states approaches to the pandemic. We make no claim to having the solutions but believe we have raised issues that need further consideration in future debate about health systems approaches to pandemics.

We start in the context of culture. Our first article with a review article about 'intrinsic cultural factors that helped Vietnam overcome the Covid-19 pandemic compared with other countries' by Ngoc Cindy Pham and colleagues, who are based at USA universities, some originally from Vietnam and from Bangladesh. The article was one of the first received and they argue that eastern Asian cultural traits played a role in reducing the spread of Covid-19. They address Hofstede cultural dimensions theory and traverses issues of collectivism and individualism.

The emphasis on culture continues with our second article from the Philippines that attempts to discover the sociocultural factors affecting the Covid-19 dispersion factors in that country. Laurence Garcia and colleagues from the Research Institute for Ageing and Health at the Cebu Normal University utilise an analysis of published official data to describe the local context and also draw on the Hofstede cultural dimensions theory as it describes the socio-cultural factors evident in that country.

Tejativaddhana, Suriyawongpaisal, Kasemsup and Suksaroj predominantly from the ASEAN Institute for Health Development, Mahidol University, Thailand, provide our third article, an analysis of management practice. They describe the successful interventions in addressing the pandemic in Thailand with an emphasis on the role of village health volunteers and interventions at the local district level. They demonstrate a successful approach based on primary healthcare and public health and extensive community and local organisational engagement.

Our fourth article is provided by Lloyd, Walker and Goswami of Griffith University, the Queensland University of Technology, and the Salvation Army respectively and provides a commentary on health information, applications and challenges in the Covid-19 pandemic. They describe the strong reliance on data and information in addressing the pandemic and the challenges this

presents in terms of data capture, reliability, accuracy, how it is presented and visualised. They suggest that those who have strong data and information systems have achieved better health system preparedness and a better prepared public in managing their responses.

Nankervis and colleagues of the Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network present the fifth article, an analysis of management practice that describes the experience of one Australian Primary Health Network in exercising its responsibilities and in engaging with government, health providers, health professionals and communities, in the pandemic. The activities and processes are described as is the evaluation of the period by the PHN described in phases with positive engagement in the PHC and PHN context and strong uptake of telemedicine. Key future strategies are also addressed.

The next group of articles published point to the global dimension of populations that culturally come from Asian countries but are know significant populations of residents and international students in differing nation states. The impact of the pandemic on international students is of importance to many nation states. The sixth article, a viewpoint by Fong and Law of the Hong Kong College of Professional and Continuing Development, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University is entitled 'Covid-19, a tale of two cities, being Seattle and Vancouver'. The article traverses the experience of two closely located cities, in two different democratic nations, albeit with different political and health systems. They contrast the approaches and experience and also draw on other nations experience in addressing the pandemic.

In further addressing the global impacts of the pandemic Pham and Shi provide a qualitative research article on mental distress of Vietnamese students in the USA in the pandemic period. International students are a global feature in the universities of many nations and are all in some way impacted by this event. This study analyses interviews of Vietnamese students in the New York City university contexts. This article is followed by the eighth article, from Pham and colleagues in presenting research to understand mental health services and help seeking behaviours of college students in Vietnam in a university in Ho Chi Minh city. They conclude by providing some guidance about the factors that encourage students to seek professional mental care.

Continuing the emphasis on mental healthcare Chakraborty and colleagues, predominantly from India and also Poland, examine how to address the mental burden during lockdown in developing country contexts of India, in the ninth article. In the tenth article the authors are concerned with health, wellbeing and prevention and suggest that yoga presents a medium for individuals to establish physical, mental, and spiritual balance. The authors Malik and Sharma are from the Amity University, Jharkhand, India. Their research reported on using a tele-yoga- based intervention to a group of participants across India through live television. The results suggest decreased stress levels, improved energy and better sleep. Our eleventh article is by Perihan Eren Bana of the İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl Üniversitesi, Turkey. The review article draws on the Turkish health systems experience in the epidemic in psycho-social contexts and impacts on health professionals.

Das, Datta and Kumar, from the University of Delhi, the Bureau of Indian Standards, New Delhi and the Indian Institute of Management Rohtak, Haryana, India provide the twelfth article, a research article that identifies key exit strategies to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. They suggest a multi criterion decision making techniques of Interpretive Structural Modelling and cross-impact matrix multiplication analysis. They go on to suggest the strategies identified in their study can assist governments and policymakers.

In our thirteenth article Gupta and Trivedi from the National Academy of Indian Railways the Indian Institute of Management-Kapishipur and Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara, India, respectively have provided a review article. This article examines the pandemic in the context of engagement in international trade, healthcare expenditure and population density, related to the pandemic death toll. The findings indicate positive correlation between international trade and the pandemic death toll.

In conclusion the library bulletin prepared by Yaping Liu provides articles relevant to the Covi-19 pandemic.

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DS Briggs
Editor in Chief