

# WONCA News

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World family doctors. Caring for people.

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## From the President: May 2020

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As one conference or meeting after another is cancelled or postponed in each of our regions and for many of our Member Organisations, we are looking for – and finding - new and innovative ways of keeping in touch, keeping informed, providing each other with care and support. We have always understood the importance of conferences and meetings to facilitate the sharing of information, of good practice, of ideas and possibilities in an open and friendly environment. Our members from across the globe use these opportunities to renew friendships, to build new interest groups and to increase their knowledge about particular issues and topics. Conferences and Member Organisation meetings are an important facet of our WONCA lives.

Many WONCA members are part of various chat groups, both within their own nations, regionally, and globally. These connections are more appreciated than ever, with such disruption going on in our lives. Over the last few weeks WONCA has been holding a series of webinars on topics of relevance to family doctors globally. So far, we've had webinars sharing news from each of the regions, with regional Presidents relating their experiences and challenges; on mental health of patients and GPs, issues which concern family doctors on a daily basis and are inevitably exacerbated during a global emergency. Webinars have also been held on education during a time of uncertainty and distancing – undergraduate education, postgraduate education and

Continuing Professional Development; on research to inform our future responses and readiness; and on family violence, which is projected to increase manifold during periods of enforced isolation. Others are planned. We know many of our members participated. I hope you are finding them useful, and stimulating.

What has been really gratifying to witness during this time of adopting and using new and innovative ways of communicating, is the degree of collegiality across our Member Organisations from different countries and regions; the readiness which people exhibit to share their experiences whether those experiences are positive or negative; and the safety offered and accepted within the WONCA family space for people to open up about challenges to the way they practice, to adopting new and untested systems for diagnosing and testing patients, for dealing with all the 'normal' illnesses and diseases of patients, when life is anything but normal.

For our first webinar we had taken out a zoom contract to allow up to 100 people to participate: there was a full house. More than 1,300 people watched live on Facebook (with more than 60 shares of the live coverage); many others watched later on the WONCA YouTube channel. For the second webinar we had to increase our zoom capacity to 500, with the potential to further extend should we need to. The second webinar had thousands watching on Facebook. Clearly, we are meeting a need for our members and, along with all our other channels of communication, we are trying to ensure that our members stay as informed as possible, with respected experts talking on each of the issues. Now, as never before, the work of our Working Parties and Special Interest Groups is proving its worth. The work that continues in the background, in addition to their normal working lives, undertaken by keen, enthusiastic members, has a ready audience, hungry for information and advice. It is no surprise that WHO colleagues have expressed their gratitude to WONCA for addressing these issues openly and informatively.

[View previous webinars](#)

As our methods of communicating with members adapts to changing and challenging

circumstances, we will endeavour to keep our members across the globe informed and offer them a range of platforms to share with colleagues. WONCA is here for you, in good times and in bad times.

A key feature of the social distancing rules in place in many countries is that GP consultations are having to be done by telephone, skype or other virtual means. GPs are as susceptible to COVID 19 as any of our key health workers. Sadly, a growing number of our colleagues are succumbing to the virus and, while many have made a recovery, some have not. We will use the opportunity of our next face to face meeting to remember them.

GPs are embracing telemedicine and AI as the need presents. In my President's column of November 2019 I reported that WONCA Executive had taken the decision to be involved in a pilot project with Ping-An Good Doctors Group, an established telemedicine services provider based in China, to contribute to the development of a family medicine specific telemedicine system. I am delighted that we took the lead on this initiative at such

an early stage of the development of the system. WONCA's direct involvement allowed us to inform and mould the developing system to suit family medicine, rather than trying to change the system after it had been developed by non-GP specialists.

Elsewhere in this edition of WONCA News you can read the assessment of the Ping-An Good Doctors telemedicine system by the independent consultants ([more here](#)). I look forward to further collaboration and developments with Ping-An Good Doctors, who have proved both receptive and responsive to WONCA's recommendations and proposals. A family medicine-focused telemedicine system will enable us to provide the best possible consultations for our patients, when face to face consultations simply are not feasible.

Please stay safe. And stay informed from reputable sources.

Donald Li  
President

## From the CEO's desk- May 2020

For all of us, the last few weeks have been quite surreal. COVID-19 has had a major impact on countries around the globe, with very significant effects on the health systems and the economies. Health systems have been placed under immense strain and family doctors have had to quickly learn new ways of working, with virtual consultations and telemedicine becoming the norm in a very short space of time.

For WONCA too the effects have been significant. Thailand, home of the WONCA Secretariat, has imposed significant restrictions on movement and gatherings. Nevertheless, Dr Nongluck and her small team of Anuta (Accounts) and Mint (Admin) have worked hard to maintain services as best they can, and I send my personal thanks to them for their unstinting efforts on WONCA's behalf.

The May Executive meeting, when members of Executive were to meet for two days in Belfast, has also fallen victim to the pandemic.

Instead, Executive will meet virtually, over the same two days (14th and 15th May) to discuss and debate the various issues. It will be challenging for all of us, but we will give it our best shot.

### WONCA Webinars

As most of you will be aware, many WONCA conferences have had to be postponed or cancelled. However in an effort to unite the WONCA communities across the globe we have organised a series of WONCA webinars on a variety of topics, to be held each Sunday



at 1300 GMT. Webinars can be accessed via Zoom, but are also streamed on Facebook, and participation so far has been astounding.

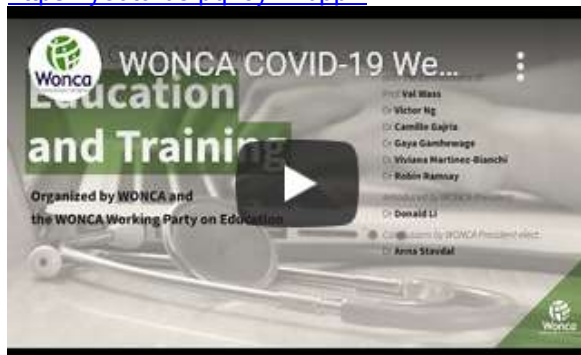
The programmes as devised to date, and most often with direct contributions from WHO colleagues, includes:

- Sunday 12th April – President, President elect and region presidents discussing the global situation. <https://youtu.be/5FvL0k9abC4>

- Sunday 19th April – Mental health issues relating to the pandemic  
<https://youtu.be/QDX2AFKtcgw>



- Sunday 26th April – Adapting medical education during a pandemic  
<https://youtu.be/pqz6yKXbppy>



- Sunday 3rd May – Family violence issues in a pandemic  
<https://youtu.be/3bmX-fYJTrw>



- Sunday 10th May – PHC-UHC  
- Sunday 17th May – Rural issues (Note time will be 1000GMT)  
- Sunday 24th May – Quality and Safety issues

As well as live participation, members can also access the webinars through YouTube and Youku.

[WONCA YouTube channel](#)  
[WONCA Youku channel](#)

## COVID-19 Resources

With the COVID-19 pandemic there has been an inevitable plethora of information about the condition, with blogs, websites and many other information sources – what some have referred to as a “covidemic” or “infodemic”. We have been concerned about the reputability and accuracy of some of the information being circulated, and so we have created our own WONCA webpage where we have aimed to provide a series of articles, from reputable sources, relevant to family doctors about COVID-19. Through this we have provided links to WHO (including the WHO EPI-WIN site) and other trustworthy websites which contain valuable information for family doctors having to deal with COVID-19 cases.

[WONCA COVID-19 resources](#)

## WONCA Conferences and Events

I wrote last month that the global COVID-19 pandemic had taken its toll on many WONCA conferences and events. Since then the WONCA Europe conference in Berlin (scheduled for late June) has also had to be postponed. A revised, and somewhat smaller, event has now been planned for 17th to 19th December, as a combined European Conference of Family Doctors and DEGAM National Conference. Further details can be accessed [here](#)

For the moment at least, WONCA World in Abu Dhabi still going ahead. If there are any changes then we will post details on the WONCA website and circulate via the regular e-updates. Abu Dhabi may well extend the deadline for abstract submissions so please check their [website](#).

## Digital health accreditation

Finally, a brief word about Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital health and telemedicine, and the development of robust standards. As I mentioned earlier in the article, family doctors have very quickly had to adapt to new ways of

consulting, including teleconference and AI. As these will have a significant impact on family medicine, we at WONCA decided that we need to take a strong lead on the development of standards for digital health. Our major concern was always that some other body would start the development but without any inputs from family doctors, thus rendering any standards dubious at best.

The President has provided more details of this pilot in his article for this month and a short article appears elsewhere in this WONCA News on "WONCA assessment of digital health" where you can read more on the background to this study. ([more](#))

Until next month, stay safe everyone.  
Dr Garth Manning - CEO

## Feature stories

### World Family Doctor day - May 19, 2020

Dear colleagues

World Family Doctor Day (FDD) – 19th May - was first declared by WONCA in 2010 and it has become a day to highlight the role and contribution of family doctors in health care systems around the world. The event is a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge the central role of our specialty in the delivery of personal, comprehensive and continuing health care for all of our patients. It's also a chance to celebrate the progress being made in family medicine and the special contributions of family doctors globally.

"World Family Doctor Day: May 19" has also now been translated into a number of different languages, including Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese:

- Día Mundial del Médico de Familia: 19 de Mayo
- Dia Mundial do Médico de Família: 19 de Maio
- 519世界家庭醫師日

#### 2020 FDD Theme: "Family doctors on the front line"

We're happy for Member Organizations to develop their own theme for FDD, depending on local priorities, but this year we'd especially like to highlight the theme that relevant to challenges and responsibilities



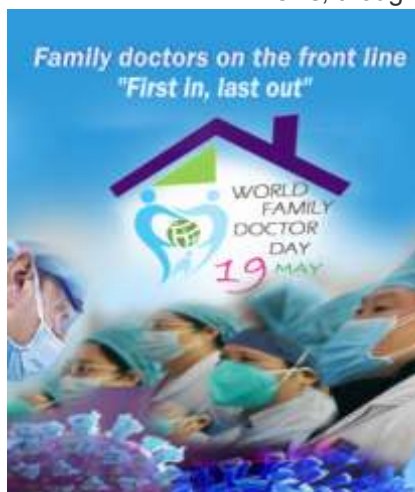
of family doctors in the new global coronavirus outbreak. – "Family doctors on the front line". We especially want to emphasise that family doctors have a key role in the management of pandemic outbreak and also their pivotal role of "First in, last out."

Last year many of our colleagues across the globe celebrated the day by organising a variety of events and activities, and we received reports and photographs from many countries, which we were able to feature in WONCA News. The Secretariat has also produced some posters which can be used and adapted locally: [Download posters and logo](#)

We look forward to getting reports from Member Organizations in due course with news and photos of the events held – whatever theme you choose. Many of these will be featured in future editions of WONCA News, though we regret that we now receive so many submissions on FDD that it's simply not possible to publish them all.

With best wishes  
Dr Garth Manning

[All Family Doctor Day information](#)



## Guest Feature by Dr John Wynn-Jones: The Four Seasons

*Dr John Wynn-Jones is well known in WONCA circles and immediate past chair of the WONCA Working Party on Rural Practice. During the COVID-19 crisis he has been writing a daily 'Rural Miscellany' email with poems and resource ideas to help and divert us in this difficult time. He graciously agreed to write a guest column for WONCA News this month.*



I get up early each morning and go for a short walk along the river by my house keeping my distance from anyone that I meet. This morning was a particularly bright sunny spring day and it is truly ironic that we find ourselves in isolation and solitude during one of the most beautiful springs in recent years. This morning as I walked, I listened to Vivaldi's Four Seasons. This joyful music lifted my mood and I began to wonder whether illness and the plague would have impacted on the thriving creative environment that developed during the glorious age of the Venetian Republic. Can the arts flourish at a time of pestilence and are the two mutually exclusive?

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi was born in Venice in 1678. His father was a renowned violinist and he grew up in a musical family. At the age of 15, he began to study for the priesthood, and was ordained as a priest in 1703. Vivaldi wrote over 500 instrumental concertos and sacred choral works. He also composed some 40 operas but he probably now known mostly for The Four Seasons (Le Quattro Stagioni). The work is a group of four violin concerti, each representing a season of the year. He also published 4 sonnets, one to accompany each concerto.

Outbreaks of the plague were commonplace across Europe at the time, causing widespread panic and fear. Venice was particularly prone due to it being maritime gateway and having a damp waterlogged environment. Between 1456 and 1528, there were fourteen documented plague outbreaks in the city. One of the victims of the 1510

outbreak was the young Giorgione, one of the city's most celebrated painters. The 1630 plague was the most devastating, killing a third of the city's population. The memories of that epidemic had a major economic impact on the republic and were still relatively fresh when Vivaldi was born a couple of generations later. It is probable that the repeated outbreaks contributed to the economic decline and eventual downfall of the republic.

Lazzaretto Vecchio, an island in the Lagoon is believed to be the world's first lazaret—a quarantine colony intended to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. It helped Venice recover more quickly, was opened during outbreaks and its presence helped the city recover more quickly. When plague struck the city, everybody sick or showing any suspect symptom were restricted on the island until they recovered or died

One of the images associated with the plague



was that of the Plague Doctor. These physicians specialised in treating victims of the plague. They were public servants hired in towns and cities when the plague struck. Their duties were to treat and cure victims and bury the dead. They wore a particular costume and mask to ward off infection and bizarrely has some resemblance to the PPE of today. They were also responsible for cataloguing and recording the outbreaks

What impact did the plague have on the culture of Venice? By the time of Vivaldi, the republic had already been in decline as a trading power. Some of this was due to the impact on the economy, the workforce and its fighting capability. Instead Venice was becoming a city of culture, a visitor attraction and fashion setter. Every time that the city was riven by plague, relieved and terrified citizens gave money to build plague churches in the hope that this would save them. These churches contributed to the architectural splendour of the city. This mood was also captured in art (through the sacred works of painters such as Titian and Tintoretto) and in the music of composers such as Vivaldi. The influence on Vivaldi was exemplified in some of his sacred and sombre music such as The Credo. It's difficult not to draw some comparisons with the world that we find ourselves in now and our impotence in dealing with a modern 21st century plague.

Finally let us return to the happy and enjoyable music of the Four Seasons and in particular Spring and Summer and I leave you with his sonnets to those two seasons. Let's hope that we can soon return to enjoying the seasons ourselves.

## La Primavera (Spring)

Festive Spring has arrived,  
The birds salute it with their happy song.  
And the brooks, caressed by little Zephyrs,  
Flow with a sweet murmur.  
The sky is covered with a black mantle,  
And thunder, and lightning, announce a storm.  
When they are silent, the birds  
Return to sing their lovely song.  
And in the meadow, rich with flowers,  
To the sweet murmur of leaves and plants,  
The goatherd sleeps, with his faithful dog at  
his side.  
To the festive sound of pastoral bagpipes,  
Dance nymphs and shepherds,  
At Spring's brilliant appearance.

## L'Estate (summer)

Under a hard Season, fired up by the Sun  
Languishes man, languishes the flock and  
burns the pine  
We hear the cuckoo's voice;  
then sweet songs of the turtledove and finch  
are heard.  
Soft breezes stir the air but threatening  
the North Wind sweeps them suddenly aside.  
The shepherd trembles,  
fearing violent storms and his fate.  
The fear of lightning and fierce thunder  
Robs his tired limbs of rest  
As gnats and flies buzz furiously around.  
Alas, his fears were justified  
The Heavens thunders and roar and with hail  
Cuts the head off the wheat and damages the  
grain.

Listen to you own version or the International  
Orchestra of Geneva's version here.  
<https://youtu.be/YnDLlajMxyo>



## WONCA on COVID-19

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### WONCA Webinar Series on COVID-19

As the threat and spread of COVID-19 continues its path, and rapidly changing circumstances, we know already that we are facing unprecedented challenges for the foreseeable future. Our family doctors around the world have risen to the challenge of this global pandemic. So we need to share our experiences, make sense of what we can and look forward to a less frightening future. To enhance WONCA support to our Member Organizations, from region to region, and among professional health care teams, staying up to date with information through social media links and connections, is one of our key strategies.



WONCA has launched a webinar series on COVID-19. The first webinar was held on 12 April with the participation of the WONCA President, President elect & representatives from all seven WONCA regions.

- President, President elect and region presidents discussing the global situation.
- Mental health issues relating to the pandemic
- Adapting medical education during a pandemic
- Family violence issues in a pandemic

Watch all past webinars on the [WONCA YouTube channel](#) and on [Youku](#).

#### Upcoming webinars

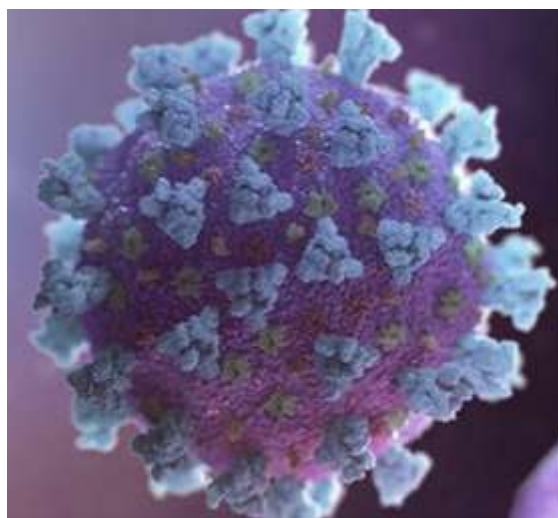
- Sunday 10th May (1pm UTC) - Primary Health Care for Universal Health Coverage
- Sunday 17th May (10am UTC) - Rural Issues
- Sunday 24th May (1pm UTC) - Quality and Safety

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources

### Family Doctors on the front line

COVID-19 has been declared a pandemic by WHO, and is affecting everyone in every part of the globe. Family doctors are on the front line of medical care – both during the acute phase and also in dealing afterwards with the sequelae of the illness. In fact our theme for World Family Doctor Day 2020 is most appropriate – “Family doctors on the front line”.

Through this webpage our aim is to provide a series of articles relevant to family doctors about COVID-19. We will also provide links to WHO and other reputable websites which contain valuable information for family doctors having to deal with COVID-19 cases.





## Topics

- President's messages
- WONCA Webinar Series on COVID-19
- WHO resources
- WHO EPI-WIN updates
- Major Journals' resources
- WONCA Member Organizations' Resources
- AAFP information
- Shabir Moosa's Blog
- Other items of interest

View all resources here <https://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/Resources/COVID19.aspx>

## WONCA Webinar on Education and Training during COVID-19



*Prof Val Wass, chair WONCA Working Party on Education reports:*

*“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our*

*thinking.”— Albert Einstein*

The WONCA Working Party on Education thanks WONCA World for hosting a Working Party on Education webinar. It provided an international platform to explore the impact of COVID-19 on Education and Training.

The webinar can be viewed below:

Presentations looked at issues across the continuum of education; undergraduate, postgraduate and continuous professional development. Common global themes emerged:

**The learner:** Covid-19 brings fear, uncertainty, risk to safety, a rapid need for new knowledge and often redeployment into new roles of an unpredictable duration.

**The teacher:** Faces similar fears and anxieties and a sudden need to replace clinical placements using virtual environments and new technologies for both training and assessment.

We learnt:

**Yes:** There is an urgent need to change thinking on how to work on virtual platforms. We must collate and share experience building an evidence base repository; acknowledging the constraints of low resource settings.

**But:** Many issues of our current thinking should not be lost. The fears and anxieties compound the learners' needs: We must still:

- Be explicit about the purpose of teaching



- Focus on what the learner needs
- Remember a human face and voice are powerful
- Acknowledge both learners and teachers are under stress. Both need support.

**What next?** WWPE will work to answer the questions raised and develop shared resources. In the meantime, these platforms may help:

WHO: has a new interactive, web-based, [knowledge-transfer platform](#)

EURACT: Is planning [two studies](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on Family Doctors.

The International Association for Communication in Health care (EACH) has a [COVID-19 resource page](#) on health care communication teaching.

AMEE has helpful [webinars](#)

[Pedagogical and practical tips](#) for online conversion during COVID

The webinar confirmed the importance of sharing our global resources. As our Present Donald Li said in this conclusion. "May we all proceed with wisdom and grace".  
<https://youtu.be/pqz6yKXbpyY>

## A letter from WONCA's YDMs

*The YDMs have written a small text for our colleagues all over the globe. It is written as prose poetry, that's why the format is a little different.*

Dear colleagues,  
We are facing a difficult time.

Challenges are upon us on a daily basis, we need to adapt ourselves over and over again in order to be able to answer to the challenges that surround us.

We feel the panic around us - the struggle of our colleagues, the anxiety of the population, the yearning of our family and friends. People are living in their homes, in a birdcage, in order to protect themselves against this invisible threat.

Around the world we know about the numbers, we see the victories and the losses of this war against a common threat. We see our struggles, the battles we are facing and our triumphs.

We are facing fears, doubts, questions... a turmoil of emotions that we need to manage in order to continue, to carry on, not stopping in our paths.

All your stories are an inspiration. You are doing an incredible work and you are a motivation to all of us. You are true heroes in this story.

As primary healthcare workers we are in the frontline. We are the cornerstone to tackle and control this global pandemic. We support our communities and our healthcare system and we are able to offer people the trust and safety they need in order to overcome this hurdle.

All around the world, we are united in this mission.  
All around the world, your spirit and motivation echoes in our hearts.  
All around the world, we are the strength that will overcome this outburst.

Be strong  
Take care of yourself  
because  
we are in this together  
Thank you, everyone.



## South Asia Statement of Solidarity on COVID-19 Pandemic



**By the South Asian Family Physicians**  
4th April 2020

Dr Raman Kumar  
President WONCA South Asia Region

### **COVID-19 pandemic 2020 in South Asia**

The COVID-19 pandemic presents one of the most unprecedented challenges to the health and wellness of the people of South Asia. After having a devastating impact on the population health of many countries, the threat is now looming over the countries of the most populous region of the world. The impact is likely to be short term as well as long term; both on health as well as the economy. South Asian countries share many healthcare problems that are unique, including maternal and child health issues; the double burden of infectious diseases as well as noncommunicable diseases. Also, there is a need to reach of the weaker section of the society, the one who is marginalized, vulnerable and underserved, during the pandemic. Having a population predominantly of rural habitation, special provisions are required to protect the rural population from the adverse outcomes of the pandemic in South Asia. Healthcare professionals as precious resources not only for South Asian countries but for the whole world. When the health systems of the most developed countries are struggling, we recognize that all sections of society and the healthcare professionals, within our respective countries, need to come together to be able to pool resources and ensure optimal care during the most testing circumstances.

### **Health system response and the role of primary care physicians**

Primary healthcare and teams including family

doctors, medical officers, nurses, and other healthcare providers are essential foundations of any emergency community response and risk management. Family doctors as primary care physicians are the front line health workers who provide services to persons from all age groups, organ systems, and genders. They also provide the most cost-effective medical care within the community. Within the government systems, medical officers play the role of primary care physicians. Family physicians often see undifferentiated symptoms such as fever and flu and are more likely to encounter COVID-19 cases as well. They are proficient in managing infectious diseases in the community in the south Asian context. Therefore the family physician's role is pivotal along with other healthcare professionals towards addressing the community aspect of the pandemic. However, considering the novelty of COVID-19, we emphasize that it is necessary that all family physicians and the primary care providers have access to unhindered updated academic resources, equipped with appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE), upgraded with digital technologies, and be given a safe working environment. We also recognize that the health systems should be receptive to the needs of healthcare providers and protect them adequately while they can perform their duties in front lines of the pandemic situations. In this regard, the need for personal protection equipment (PPEs) for the primary care providers is equally important to anyone else working in a similar situation irrespective of the setting of care provision.

### **Primary care physicians: Specific roles and responsibilities**

In a pandemic situation, the roles and responsibilities of family physicians as primary care physicians are manifold. The specific roles in mitigating the pandemic include triage, fever screening, handling the helplines, providing telemedicine consultations, training the paramedics, educating the community, facilitating community participation, guiding the local community leader and assisting the public health authorities. Their contribution is also important in the context of the provision of care for non-COVID-19 morbidity. Family physician's unique training and experience

enable them to take care of ninety percent of the community-based morbidity. They can also provide primary care for mental health issues. Thus as front line primary care providers, they can help in mitigating the pandemic and prevent unnecessary burden presenting at the hospitals.

## **We stand together in solidarity!**

In the moment of a great public health crisis, something which impacts all human beings on the earth, we the family physicians of South Asia are together in solidarity with all our professional colleagues and people. We salute all healthcare workers who have stood to this call of duty. There is no greater service than the service of humanity. May we all triumph together for ourselves, our families, our people, our countries and our world.

## **Consensus statement by:**

WONCA SAR - World Organization of Family Doctors South Asia Region  
The Spice Route - WONCA Young Doctors Movement of South Asia

WONCA Rural South Asia Region (WoRSA)  
South Asia Primary Care Research Network (SAPCRN)  
Academy of Family Physicians of India (AFPI)  
Bangladesh Academy of Family Physicians (BAFP)  
Bangladesh College of General Practitioners (BCGP)  
College of Family Medicine Pakistan (CFMP)  
College of General Practitioners of Sri Lanka (CGPSL)  
Federation of Family Physicians Associations of India (FFPAI)  
General Practitioners Associations of Nepal (GPAN)  
General Practitioners in Bhutan  
General Practitioners in the Maldives  
Indian Medical Association College of General Practitioners (IMACGP)  
Pakistan Society for Family Physicians (PSFP)  
MRCGP (INT) South Asia Board  
Primary Care and Rural Health Bangladesh

## Working Party News

### **Depression -an evidence based first consultation- now the video**

In 2017, Profs Chris Dowrick and Bruce Arroll wrote an item on behalf of the WONCA Working Party on Mental Health called "Depression -an evidence based first consultation" which was translated in to Mandarin, Arabic and Portuguese. Prof Bruce Arroll has now made a high quality film on the subject - it has the latest information from the FDA about the effectiveness of antidepressants in different settings. It is now open source and free to the public.

Professor Bruce Arroll is the Head of Department and Director of the Goodfellow Unit, Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care, University of Auckland, New Zealand

["Depression -an evidence based first consultation"](#)

<https://youtu.be/7legPN4-bmU>



## WONCA and assessment of digital health

[中文](#)

The World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA) is supporting family doctors / general practitioners across continents and cultures to enable accessible, safe and good quality healthcare for all people. WONCA is responsive to healthcare challenges and works continuously on improvement in collaboration with their members and partners. The latest developments in science and technology are essential for WONCA to support family medicine now and in the future.

Digital technology plays a pivotal role in the daily work of family doctors with patients and colleagues. Digital solutions can make healthcare services more timely, collaborative, efficient and tailored to the needs of people.

No method to evaluate digital health solutions through the eyes of family doctors existed and therefore WONCA, supported by its Working Party on eHealth, decided to develop a dedicated assessment framework. This framework includes 11 domains of evaluation: ranging from user aspects to healthcare system and ethical matters.

One of the world's largest digital health platform from Ping An Healthcare and Technology Company Limited in China participated in testing of the assessment framework. Their Good Doctor AI Consultation System (PAGD), a digital service with an artificial intelligent (AI) based consultation for the assistance of online doctors, was evaluated.

The ratings according to the 11 domains were translated in outcomes along three dimensions relevant for family medicine: 1) whether PAGD system was scalable to other settings, countries and healthcare systems; 2) the comprehensiveness of the services provided, and: 3) the validity and available evidence, such as cost-effectiveness, of the PAGD services.

The evaluation showed that digital platforms as PAGD have a great potential to improve healthcare and support family doctors. The assessment framework is helpful in identifying the digital solution benefits, risks and areas for improvement.

After this successful pilot, WONCA continues the development of this digital health assessment framework with members and partners, including a number of our Working Parties and Special Interest Groups. The collaboration with Ping An Healthcare and Technology Company Limited and other companies will be continued.

Prof dr Nick Guldemond PhD DSc  
Professor Integrated Care & Technology  
IM Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University;  
Researcher at Leiden University Medical Center

Dr Harris Lygidakis  
Digital Health Consultant and  
WONCA CEO-designate

Dr Pramenda Prasad  
Chair, Working Party on eHealth

## Survey on the effect of PHC on COVID outcomes

Survey closed May 4<sup>th</sup>

[See respondent numbers by country and region as at April 22](#)

Dear colleagues

We hope you are faring as well as possible in your respective countries. We are writing to invite you to participate in a study on the role of primary care in the current pandemic response.

We want to know how prepared you think your country was to deal with COVID-19, how your country responded, the nature of your primary health care system, and changes that have been made in fighting this pandemic. We want to see how these factors might influence the rate and pattern of incidence and deaths. This knowledge can inform us about countries' potential resilience in responding to a future pandemic, and the role primary health care can play.

You have been selected because you are a

primary health care clinician, researcher or policy-maker who can respond about your country. Please consider completing this [anonymous survey](#). It should take no more than 15 minutes of your time.

This research is endorsed by WONCA, Primafamed, the Primary Health Care Research Consortium, NAPCRG, the European General Practice Research Network, the Robert Graham Center, the George Institute for Global Health, and the Besroure Centre. Ethical approval has been granted by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee.

Please also forward this email on to all other individuals or networks you consider relevant. We are hoping for as many responses as possible from every country in the world. With that goal in mind, we have reached out to our numerous networks which could result in you receiving this request more than once. We understand how many of you are overwhelmed

with work at this time, and hope you will find a few minutes to provide your valuable insights. Please only complete the survey once.

Should you have any queries, or suggestions about whom else we should approach to complete this survey, please email [PHC\\_COVID@kkinder.de](mailto:PHC_COVID@kkinder.de) or Prof Felicity Goodyear-Smith, [f.goodyear-smith@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.goodyear-smith@auckland.ac.nz).

Thank you for your assistance. We look forward to your feedback. Take care and please keep safe and healthy.

The research team: Felicity Goodyear-Smith, Karen Kinder, Robert Phillips, Andrew Bazemore, Cristina Mannie, and Stefan Strydom

[Take the Survey - English / español](#)  
Professor Felicity Goodyear-Smith,  
Chair, WONCA Working Party on Research

## Featured Doctor

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### NASHAT HEGAZY, Dr Nagwa

**Egypt- Family doctor and medical educator**

**Can you tell us about your current work?**

I work in a University setting, providing primary health care and teaching undergraduate and postgraduates medical students. Currently I'm the inaugural Director of the Medical Education And Human Resources Development Center (MEHRDC) in the Faculty of Medicine, Menoufia University. As well I'm a writer for the Applied Knowledge Test, examiner in the OSCE and Scientific Board member of the Egyptian Family Medicine team of the MRCGP (INT). I am also an Egyptian Family Medicine Association (EFMA) executive board member.

**What other interesting activities that you have been involved in?**

I'm passionate about learning and learning experiences, so consequently I developed my interest in research particularly in medical education, mental health, and women's health in primary care. I gained a diploma in research methodology and program evaluation from the American University in Cairo (AUC). Currently

I'm working as an executive editor for the Menoufia Medical Journal (MMJ) and Associate Editor for the Egyptian Family Medicine Journal (EFMJ).



I am a starter of things as I was the first family medicine resident in our newly established department at that time, the founding convener of the WONCA Al-Razi Young Doctors' Movement for the East Mediterranean region).

Joining our big WONCA Family in 2011 was a turning point in my life. I had the chance to network with colleagues all around the world, learning from them and doing experience exchanges with them. It's been an enriching

experience where my role as a medical educator was more visible.

Focusing on my role as a medical educator, I had joined the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research through Ain Shams Middle East North Africa FAIMER Regional Institute (ASU-MENA-FRI) in January 2019. I was privileged to join my FAIMER family where I evolved and grew up through our community of practice.

## What is it like to be a family doctor in Egypt?

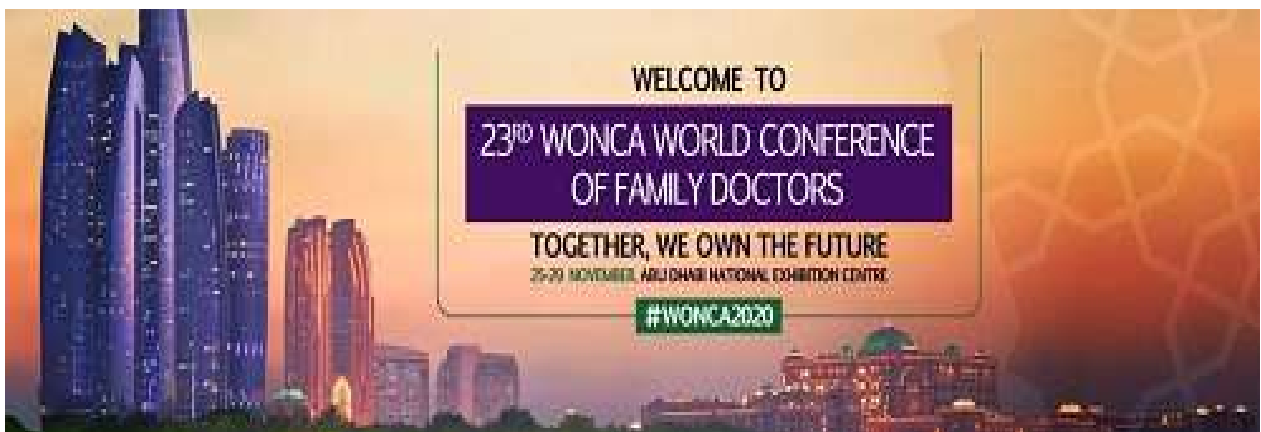
The choice of my career as a family practitioner has evolved from a solid belief that that the family practitioner is the cornerstone of any health service in my society. Being a family doctor providing comprehensive health care for our patients is a true challenge in the current situation. I was frustrated by the marginalization of the potential and important role of family medicine in our country in addition to care fragmentation, so I devoted

my time and effort to put the role of family medicine into the limelight. I believe that with the application of the new health insurance law with the target 'health for all', Family Medicine could start to properly take its right role.

## Your interests at work and privately?

As a family physician, I am interested in medical education and primary care research and world networking with colleagues from different WONCA regions.

Apart from work it's travelling, of which I am very fond of. It's a huge learning experience where you see through the window of the world. I had travelled frequently and went from far west of Egypt to Rio de Janeiro also to the far east to Seoul and Beijing. I regularly spend my free time walking as I consider walking and contemplation the best way to release tension and I adore the time I spend with my children.



## Young Doctors' Movement newsletter

WONCA's Young Doctors' representative on World Executive, [Ana Nunes Barata \(Portugal\)](#), is coordinating regular news from our seven region Young Doctors' Movements.

**A word from Ana Nunes Barata -  
YDM representative on WONCA Executive 2018-2020**



The Young Doctors' Movements (YDMs) are WONCA's active network that engages youth and promotes intercultural knowledge exchange that helps to create new ideas, projects and initiatives that contribute for the development of Primary Care at the global level. WONCA's young doctors are defined as in their first five years' of practice as a family doctor OR in training as a family doctor. Each WONCA region has its own YDM that strives to develop its network and engage with the young doctors from every country it represents. You may find more information about the YDMs [here](#)  
[Join your region's Young Doctors' Movement](#)



## The Rajakumar Movement

**Asia Pacific region**

In line with our objectives to exchange ideas, perspectives and best practice in Family Medicine, the Rajakumar Movement has launched three programs: Entrepreneurship skills for young doctors; Journal and Research; and Case Discussion and Management.



Weekly on-line sessions on various concepts in entrepreneurship were conducted by Mayur Vibhuti, Efen Suwangto, and Siti Shuhaizam. There were 11 participants who were asked to formulate and modify business plans based on the entrepreneurship on-line sessions. For the journal and research program, the young doctors discussed possible collaboration for research that is essential to the practice of Family Medicine in Asia Pacific region. For the case discussion and management program, Loretta Chan spearheaded the three case discussions that were interesting and challenging. Relevant cases were likewise discussed on the effects of climate change, disaster medicine and COVID-19 response in line with cultural differences and various health systems.



**Efen Gustilawan Suwangto**  
Adinda • Yesterday at 10:40 PM • 🌐

First session of emotional well-being session for young doctors. If you want to join in, please contact [erfen\\_gs@yahoo.co.id](mailto:erfen_gs@yahoo.co.id). We will meet each Sunday night at 8 p.m Jakarta time.



As with the other young doctors in the world, most of the Rajakumar Movement young doctors are also front liners in COVID-19 pandemic. Frequent catching-up, sharing of experiences, and providing emotional support to one another are being conducted via social media. To provide further emotional support, an on-line session on emotional well-being and stress management was launched on April 19, 2020 by Efen Suwangto, with at least 13 young doctors participating in the first on-line session.

Although the WONCA Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Auckland has been postponed due to COVID-19, the Rajakumar Movement is still hopeful for young doctors to meet on November 5 – 7, 2020 in



Auckland; as the TRM, together with TRM New Zealand representative, Katelyn Costello, has prepared pre-conference sessions on indigenous health, young family doctors as emerging leaders in global health, and a wellness workshop for young doctors.

The Rajakumar Movement wish to express sincerest gratitude to all he doctors, especially young doctors in Asia Pacific region, and health care workers who are tirelessly working during these tough times. The Rajakumar Movement likewise would like to remind everyone to stay healthy and keep safe.

Erfen G. Suwangto, Chair TRM and Mel Anthony E Acuavera, Secretary TRM

## The Spice Route Movement

### South Asia region

#### New Council appointed

Sankha Randenikumara was appointed the Spice Route Chair in 2019, but there were some practical difficulties in appointing the rest of our council. Finally, with the appointment of office bearers in all the countries in the region, a new council was selected in the month of March.



- Regional Secretary: Zainab Anjarwala (Pakistan)
- FM 360 Regional Coordinator: Jyotika Gupta (India)
- Editor/Image Coordinator: Rupak Bhandarai (Nepal)
- ASPIRE Regional Representative: Kinley Bhuti (Bhutan)



Zainab



Jyotika



Rupak



Kinley

#### New office bearers appointed for the Spice Route Pakistan

The Spice Route Pakistan appointed their new office bearers in January. The Chair Elect Zainab Anjarwala was confirmed as the new Chair. Dur-e Nishat and Noor e Sahar have been appointed as National Secretary and FM360 National Coordinator respectively.

#### Creating an online data base of the Spice Route members

The Spice Route adopted a common google membership form which will be used by all countries in the region, creating an online data base of the Spice Route members. It has been decided to enter all the existing information to the same data base which would be extremely useful in future activities.

#### MRCGP [INT] South Asia Scholarships for WONCA Abu Dhabi

The Spice Route has advertised the above scholarships enabling the young South Asian family doctors to attend the WONCA World Conference 2020 in Abu Dhabi. Applicants should possess an approved abstract submitted for the above conference. They can send their CVs along with a motivational letter to the Spice Route National Chair of the country. Deadline is 15 May 2020. Sankha Randenikumara - *The Spice Route Chair*

## Movimento Waynakay

Iberamericana CIMF region



The beginning of 2020 found us in full swing of organising the activities that were to take place within the now postponed "Ibero-Americana Summit of Family Medicine", in Puerto Rico.

Until the beginning of March, the YDM meetings aimed at meeting the members of the Movement, and the happy incorporation of a new country to the team, Puerto Rico itself.

But circumstances changed rapidly because of COVID19. And the energy changed suddenly, anxiety invaded us. The concern for the health of colleagues on the other side of the world grew, at the same time as the uncertainty of knowing when it would be our time to face it.

Today, Waynakay young doctors are united despite distance, supporting each other much of the time. Several members of the Movement have joined the CIMF ad hoc COVID19 working group in order to develop local tools that allow us to organise the large volume of information that arrives minute by minute to guide our work.

We have also participated in different virtual meetings, webinars and other similar encounters. We are working hard spreading messages, reaching all people with the greatest possible inclusion, on how to care. To do this, we have started a campaign to translate the message #stayathome into native Latin American languages and we will shortly do a publication on this. Pictured are at left. María Belén Giménez Reyes (Paraguay) and Cassandra Renault Pisco (Brazil). We remain active, with ups and downs in our energies, but above all, supporting the urgent need to take good care of ourselves and also take care of our own people and the entire community.



We believe that primary health care needs to stay strong, today, more than ever. But all things considered, we must demand that we be cared for in a comprehensive way, just as we believe that we must care for our peoples.

We deeply regret the lives of colleagues who have been lost due to this contingency. We strongly support all the health workers who are doing their best, so that we can get out of this together.

We embrace, at a distance, the daily efforts made all over the world.  
#quedateencasa #staysafe

Gabriela Di Croce - member of Waynakay Chairs Team

## Vasco da Gama Movement

### Europe region

VdGM has been actively engaging with our members across the continent in order to share the experiences amidst the COVID19 outbreak. Some great, uniting initiatives have emerged during this stressful time – strengthening the VdGM community inside out as ever. Here are a few most notable ones:



- The network has set up a **Whatsapp online communication group** for representatives from each national network in order to facilitate the sharing of best practices and experiences. It serves as a platform to receive and share the rapidly incoming pieces of information regarding epidemiology, testing, treatment tactics, practice reorganisation and much more. It also is a place to cheer and support peers and colleagues in this difficult time.
- **Newsletter** – VdGM has launched a Newsletter. The first issues were focused on the ongoing global pandemic and related issues, however in the future the VdGM executive board as well as supporting team have ambitious plans in expanding this source of communication with its members and partners. Thank you to our image officer Kristina and webmaster Luis!

[Issue 2 – Wellbeing](#)

[Issue 1 – COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

- **“Tales in the time of COVID”** – a project initiated by VdGM Events’ Officer Elena Klusova is set to collect series of articles, which will “bring together a small number of beautiful, tender, hopeful and sad human stories, written by health professionals from all countries...”. The series will be shared and published on main VdGM communication outlets and will allow readers to learn about the lessons learned professionally, as well as personally, by the junior family physicians working in the field and fighting against the outbreak. If you have a story to share, please contact: [ele.k@hotmail.es](mailto:ele.k@hotmail.es)
- **Wellbeing sessions** - VdGM with the help of partners and experts in the field have been organising three weekly, free, open-access sessions in order to address the wellbeing of young and future family medicine doctors amidst the pandemic. This includes one meditation-based session and two reflection sessions. They focus on sharing, learning how to cope with increased stress and workload, improving mental health and positivity during this difficult time. If you want to join in – follow VdGM social media announcements for the links. We are grateful to Nick, Sonia and Claire for this initiative.

VdGM has also taken a decision to postpone the annual Pre-Conference which was set to occur before 2020 WONCA Europe conference, in Berlin. The Pre-Conference will be now moved to December and will occur before the European Conference of Family Doctors. For further details, news and information regarding further developments of the Pre-Conference , please refer to our website : <https://vdgm.woncaeurope.org/> or contact us at [info@vdgm.eu](mailto:info@vdgm.eu)

Keep being strong, stay healthy, we are all in this together

Katarzyna Nessler, VdGM President  
On behalf of the VdGM Executive Team

## WONCA CONFERENCES

### WONCA Conferences 2020

April 15-18, 2020	World Rural Health Conference	Dhaka, BANGLADESH	GOING AHEAD VIRTUALLY <a href="http://www.wrhc2020.com">www.wrhc2020.com</a>
POSTPONED	WONCA Asia Pacific region conference	Auckland, NEW ZEALAND	<a href="http://www.woncanz2020.com/">www.woncanz2020.com/</a>
POSTPONED	VIII Cumbre Iberoamericana y Congreso Mesoamericana de Medicina Familiar	San Juan, PUERTO RICO	<a href="http://cimfwonca.org/eventos/proximos-regionales/">http://cimfwonca.org/eventos/proximos-regionales/</a>
POSTPONED	WONCA Europe region conference	Berlin, GERMANY	<a href="http://www.woncaeurope2020.org">www.woncaeurope2020.org</a>
November 26-29, 2020	WONCA World conference	Abu Dhabi, UAE	<a href="http://wonca2020.com">http://wonca2020.com</a>

WONCA Direct Members enjoy *lower* conference registration fees.

To join WONCA go to: <http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/AboutWONCA/Membership1.aspx>

### WONCA Conferences 2021 and 2022

July 7-10 2021	WONCA Europe region conference	Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS	<a href="https://woncaeurope2021.org/">https://woncaeurope2021.org/</a>
August 5-7, 2021	World Rural Health conference	Kampala, UGANDA	Save the dates
October 20-23 2022	WONCA World conference	Sydney, AUSTRALIA	<a href="http://www.woncanz2020.com/">www.woncanz2020.com/</a>



**26<sup>th</sup> WONCA**  
Europe Conference

Amsterdam  
7-10 July, 2021



## Member Organization Events

For more information on Member Organization events go to  
[www.globalfamilydoctor.com/Conferences/MemberOrganizationEvents.aspx](http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/Conferences/MemberOrganizationEvents.aspx)

26 Aug           **23rd Family Medicine Scientific Conference**  
- 29 Aug           Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur  
2020

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01 Oct           **RCGP annual primary care conference**  
- 03 Oct           Glasgow, United Kingdom  
2020

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13 Oct           **AAFP Family Medicine Experience**  
- 17 Oct           Chicago, USA  
2020

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15 Oct           **RACGP GP20**  
- 17 Oct           Perth, Australia  
2020

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04 Nov           **Family Medicine Forum / Forum en**  
- 07 Nov           **médecine familiale**  
2020           Winnipeg, Canada

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04 Nov           **RNZCGP Annual conference**  
- 07 Nov           Auckland, NZ  
2020

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20 Nov           **North American Primary Care Research**  
- 24 Nov           **Group (NAPCRG) annual conference**  
2020           San Francisco USA

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17 Dec           **European Conference for Family Doctors**  
- 19 Dec           **and DEGAM Annual Congress**  
2020           Berlin, Germany

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