



ECPCP Message for Primary Care Paediatricians regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic

The World is facing the worst and largest pandemic in a Century and Europe stands at the front.

We express our solidarity with all health workers, physicians and their teams during this difficult time and convey our condolences to the families of the victims and especially those of our dear colleagues who sacrificed their lives in the fight against Covid-19, many due to their exposure to the virus but some due to improper personal protective equipment.

The daily practice of Medicine has changed at all levels, but mainly in primary care. Families have helped primary care paediatricians and their teams by reducing their visits in recent weeks. Stress level has risen, and the Pandemic has generated new challenges and uncertainties. Primary care paediatricians and their teams have found themselves changing their practice to a new form based mainly on telephone triage, virtual consultations, clinical risk management and unfortunately reducing most of the preventive activities. Some pediatricians have been asked to expand their care and help in the care of adult patients and emergencies.

Dear friends and colleagues: we stand together in this endeavor. Humanity and Medicine have had encounters with worse enemies and succeeded. We recommend you to take a deep breath and consider these 19 tips in the war against the COVID - 19 pandemic:

1. Stay safe! The safety of health professionals is of utmost importance, equal to that of the patients.
2. Demand from the health authority's proper personal protective equipment and infection control for you and your team. Your patients will not have a benefit when you get sick.
3. A paediatrician should not only cure but also educate: teach your patients the correct handling of personal hygiene, hand washing and social distancing.
4. A paediatrician should not only educate but also be empathic and supportive with children and their families at each encounter.
5. Do not discourage parents to bring their children to the practices or hospitals in case of severe symptoms and disease.
6. Give preference to telephone triage and virtual consultations for minor disorders, thus avoiding putting these patients at danger to get infected with COVID- 19.
7. Be aware of the danger of increasing domestic violence and child abuse under the circumstances of quarantine.
8. Don't allow unannounced walk in consultations except for life- threatening emergencies.
9. In case of suspicion of a non-severe COVID-19 case, either perform COVID-19 lab test taking proper precautions if available in your office or refer to a proper nearby test center (depending on the regulations in your country).
10. In case of suspicion of a COVID-19 with signs of respiratory distress refer urgently to the nearest children's hospital with the capacity to deal with COVID- 19 patients.
11. Encourage nursing mothers with COVID- 19 infection to initiate and continue breastfeeding while taking aseptic measures (wearing a mask, washing hands, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces).
12. If patients with possible COVID - 19 are attending your practice make sure that you have full protective equipment, space and time resources, a separated room, and enough trained personnel available.
13. Avoid the use of nebulizers when a patient is suspected of having COVID 19.
14. Stay informed from reliable professional sources. Avoid information from doubtful resources, such as social media. Turn to professional sites such as your health authorities, Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health JHU, WHO, CDC, ECDC etc.
15. Stay connected in your private life. Use telephones, mobiles and social media to keep connected, to give and receive support. Watch out for colleagues who may be at risk of professional isolation or burnout phenomenon as a result of chronic intensive stress at work.
16. Stay home and share positive, happy experiences without meeting many people. Keep a sense of humor, use exercise, music, art and literature to boost natural psychological defenses. Share examples of humanity, altruism and special moments. Heroes are everywhere, they are the people in the public implementing the official guidance on safe human interactions and they are not putting others at risk.
17. Encourage and take part in the exchange of knowledge and resources with peers.
18. Support solidarity among countries with transfer of patients, physicians, nurses and protective material.
19. Stay optimistic!

Please share the ECPCP MESSAGE REGARDING COVID-19 PANDEMICS among your organization members
On behalf of ECPCP executive board 1st April 2020

Dr. Angel Carrasco President of ECPCP

Dr. Shimon Barak Vice- President of ECPCP

Dr. Gottfried Huss General Secretary of ECPCP

