

WONCA Europe Secretariat

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To WONCA Europe Member Organisations

Dear Colleagues from WONCA Europe Member Organisations!

Europe is facing a crisis of humanity, not experienced since World War II, since the emergence of COVID-19. Only months after discussing tackling non-communicable diseases (NCD's) to meet the goals of the sustainable goals, we are now fighting an infectious disease. We, including all partners in collaboration and decision makers, have been asked by some of the World Health Organisation (WHO) officers to share our learning with each other for an institutional memory. As family doctors, we may not be dealing with the sickest, but we are the "first in" and we will be "last out". Our Memorandum Operandi (MO)'s must be included in each and every health policy decision today.

We already have a huge impact on the communities that we serve; of which some of us have leadership roles. I know that some of you work continuously and tirelessly for your populations and have sacrificed much to be on the front-line. There will be long-lasting effects on society, economy, education and health services, not just our style of living.

This is why WONCA Europe urges you, the family doctors of Europe, to:

1. Protect yourself, to use your skills and expertise wisely and stay safe! Everyone needs their family doctor to be there for them in this increasingly worrying world and so do your family! Take care of your health, eat healthy food, and assure enough breaks from work.
2. Demand protective equipment from your government. Work with the available protective equipment, when consulting potentially infected patients.
3. Limit your face-to-face consultations to a minimum. Use new technologies available, and think how to improve them in daily practice.
4. Be extremely careful what you are posting on social media. You are an influential voice. Minimise posting on social media to "absolute science" and if this is uncertain, please think before posting
5. Urge your governments to include family doctors to the stakeholder group that is dealing with the COVID-19 response.

6. Urge your governments to set up a call-centre for citizens in need of accurate assessment that can be provided by health staff
7. Support other colleagues and disciplines to act as a health care team for the patients. We are in this together.

We wish you and your families strength, and stay safe!

On behalf of WONCA Europe Executive Board

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Ugan', written over a horizontal line.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ugan
WONCA Europe President