

Editorial

From the Editor's Desk

COVID- Residency, and Life

'And the more I think of it, the more I realize when this battle finally ends, there will be no great warriors but only scarred survivors' – Chauhan, Divya

Covid has had the entire medical resident community in a fix- physically, emotionally, and academically. Because being at the forefront of the healthcare team, COVID has had us working in PPE's where every breath was a constant reminder to our living selves; the frail, fragile beings we are, and tend to be. We worked in shifts- morning, afternoon, evening, and night. Further, despite the allotted breaks after every shift, we spent entire days tired and physically drained. It has had us away from our homes for the longest of times, from the beings quintessential to our existence, family, because of the constant worry for their safety. Further, we have digressed, a lot, from our choices of residency specialties to the practical workforce at the frontline.

As an ophthalmology trainee, we have come a long semester away from ophthalmology in being called onto our skill sets of the yester years as a medical student. It was all in its existence, a tiresome process. For all of us, as a resident community, had at that particular point in time moved on from that space of putting in a central line during our intern year through the years to intravitreal antibiotics as a resident. Our academic sessions came to halt while the cast was still setting over the advent of covid, and gradually over time moved onto online platforms. As comfortable as they were, the lack of one-to-one interactions with the professors were new and made us realize how much more effective and personal the offline classes were.

As trainee surgeons, months went by, and we now had entire semesters when we didn't operate, an unprecedented hiatus from the paths we had originally embarked upon. Looking back, we have now passed two waves of covid, with the stringed emotional, physical, personal and academic toll with the after effects still lurking around. We look around and see our juniors have had an even worse predicament. The surgical skill sets have moved down two or three semesters in comparison to how it was pre-covid. They tell us they haven't done much through the years in their residency. But then when we look back into our own shoes, back when we were juniors, to see our seniors, extremely skilled at what they did, I realize we aint that far ahead of our juniors but are miles behind our seniors. The residents trained in the pre-covid times; residents of exceptional skill sets. Further, now being the senior lot of the trainee residents, I see a lot of us at a halt in the process of our doctoral dissertations. A lot of patients lost to follow up. The worst part? We still are not through the woods with the constant threat of the impending next wave.

We have now come to terms with the fact that the time and space we now get to ourselves can only be used to strengthen our theoretical foundations of the subject, as limited as they can be. For medicine as a field, requires that we learn from our patients. And one without the other is, for all practical purposes, a futile attempt. With our dissertations, most of us have now shifted to lower sample sizes for the well-being of everyone involved. Something that we realize affects the quality of research that we do as clinician-cum-scientist. And for surgeries? we tell our juniors, and ourselves to practice as much we can on the goat's eye. Because as senior trainees assisting ourselves and our juniors through surgery in this phase of uncertainty, it helps for them, and us to be practiced in ways of surgery, the required chirurgical skills of suturing.

It, therefore, becomes imperative that all of us abide to the highest standards of COVID appropriate behavior. For us, for our loved ones with us, and for our existential beings back home- family. Because as doctors, 'being trained in the covid era' won't fend for us when we move on life; when we move on in life to cater to the suffering and the ailing. When we move on in life to progress knowledge as researchers. I guess, in the end, when all this ends, there really won't be any great warriors, but only scarred survivors.

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