LETTERS

COVID-19: OPEN LETTER TO THE UK GOVERNMENT

Prevent loss of life by providing all NHS staff with WHO standard personal protective equipment

Isabelle Hero *retired consultant histopathologist*

Leamington Spa CV31 1HE, UK

As a retired consultant histopathologist with 40 years' experience of working in the NHS, I am appalled that NHS staff are not being provided with adequate personal protective equipment (PPE).

PPE that meets the standard set out by the World Health Organization is still today, 27 March 2020, not reaching many wards and clinics.^{1,2} All NHS staff need to be protected. All hospital departments, general practices, ambulances, and care homes need adequate PPE. We must prevent what happened in Italy.³⁻⁵

In the UK, six doctors and nurses are already fighting for their lives on ventilators, and one surgeon and a GP have already died from covid-19.⁶⁻¹⁰ And the battle has only just started.

Please prevent the loss of numerous precious NHS staff through lack of PPE of WHO standard.

Competing interests: None declared.

1 Newman M. Covid-19: doctors' leaders warn that staff could quit and may die over lack of protective equipment. *BMJ* 2020;368:m1257. doi:10.1136/bmj.m1257.

- 2 Locke T. Covid-19 Medscape UK PPE poll: 7 in 10 lack supplies. *Medscape* 2020 Mar 23. <https://www.staging.medscape.com/viewarticle/927344>
- 3 Giuffrida A, Tondo L. "As if a storm hit": more than 40 Italian health workers have died since crisis began. *Guardian* 2020 Mar 26. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/26/as-if-a-storm-hit-33-italian-health-workers-have-died-since-crisis-began>
- 4 Medici e infermieri in prima linea. Italia, ancora 6 medici morti per il coronavirus, a torino azione legale contro lo stato. *Rai News* 2020 Mar 26. <http://www.rainews.it/dl/rainews/articoli/amp/ContentItem-6d363f91-1b5a-4585-9000-a72ac67db1f1.html>
- 5 Gallera G. Coronavirus, Lombardia: morti altri 6 medici. I nuovi casi sono 2171, 209 vittime nelle ultime 24 ore. *Il Messaggero* 2020 Mar 19. https://www.ilmessaggero.it/AMP/italia/coronavirus_medici_morti_lombardia_bergamo_cremona_crema_ultime_notizie-5120459.html
- 6 Jolly B. Coronavirus: three doctors aged 30 "struck down by virus in same NHS hospital." *Mirror* 2020 Mar 22. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/coronavirus-three-doctors-aged-30-21734594.amp>
- 7 Hamilton M. Three junior doctors aged 30 are believed to have been struck by Covid-19 in the same hospital. *Sun* 2020 Mar 22. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11226440/three-junior-doctors-aged-30-struck-down-by-coronavirus-in-the-same-hospital/amp/>
- 8 Osborne S. Three junior doctors aged 30 struck down by coronavirus in London hospital. *Express* 2020 Mar 22. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1258665/London-news-coronavirus-latest-news-junior-doctors-infected-london-hospital-bma/amp>
- 9 British Laryngological Association. Updated and amended message from the BLA president, Mark Watson. <https://www.britishlaryngological.org/news/updated-and-amended-message-bla-president-mark-watson>
- 10 Fox N, Sturdy J. Coronavirus: Essex GP with "textbook symptoms" dies. *BBC News* 2020 Mar 27. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/uk-england-essex-52040991>

Published by the BMJ Publishing Group Limited. For permission to use (where not already granted under a licence) please go to <http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions>