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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Cautious optimism: Light at the end of the tunnel

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After the announcement of plans for the gradual lifting of the UK lockdown (doi:10.1136/bmj.n528), many of you may feel that we are seeing the light at the end of a long and bumpy tunnel. With vaccine rollout success (doi:10.1136/bmj.n523) and further “ambitious but achievable” goals (<http://bit.ly/3uH8vn4>), we might have some hope for the summer ahead, and avoiding a fourth lockdown (<http://bit.ly/37XvxfH>).

Yet, after two million deaths, who can we hold accountable for mishandling the pandemic? In his powerful editorial (doi:10.1136/bmj.n314), Kamran Abbasi, executive editor of *The BMJ*, discusses whether those in charge have been guilty of murder, when they “wilfully neglect scientific advice, international and historical experience, and their own alarming statistics ... Is inaction, action?”

Meanwhile, there are concerns that “recovery from the pandemic will be as challenging as the pandemic itself” (<http://bit.ly/3bQhSrX>), as more and more stories appear in the media about the incredible strain that staff are under (<http://bit.ly/3dXYMCT>). The mental health charity Mind has called for the hero narrative—the glorification of the sacrifice of healthcare workers, which was intended to communicate their value—to be dropped (doi:10.1136/bmj.n337). Mind said it “may have unintentionally added to the pressure individuals have felt to rise to the covid-19 challenge, continually going above and beyond their duty of care, putting their mental health at risk,” and has launched guidance for NHS leaders (<http://bit.ly/37VIY16>) on creating workplace cultures where mental health and wellbeing are prioritised and talked about openly.

Some of you might be on your psychiatry rotation and learning more about the mental health and wellbeing of your patients. Some medical students share their tips on “How to make the most of your psychiatry placement” (doi:10.1136/bmj.n133), including that “the communication skills learnt during your psychiatric placement will be useful throughout your career, no matter which specialty you eventually choose.” If you are looking for another way to revise (or not actually revise, but watch something somewhat work related), you may wish to download the video-sharing social media app TikTok (doi:10.1136/bmj.n286), and follow the doctors who use the platform “to provide health related information to the public, on both covid-19 and non-covid-19 related matters,” as well as a handful of medical students who are using the platform to share more light-hearted medical videos.

Another app you might want to download—after listening to our episode of Sharp Scratch on “Tackling

the hospital tech” (<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/sharp-scratch/id331561304?i=1000509814118>)—is Induction, an online phone book for NHS doctors, which was recommended by panellists and guests alike (<https://induction-app.com/>). The episode covered (<http://bit.ly/2NGx1nZ>) everything from WhatsApp and bleeps to fax machines, and slow or broken computers. I hope none of our readers are losing sleep over being locked out of their hospital IT accounts—as our Sharp Scratch team also learnt more about the importance of adequate rest and good sleep from Mike Farquhar, consultant in sleep medicine at Evelina London Children’s Hospital, who joined us for our episode on “Naps and night shifts” (<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/sharp-scratch/id331561304?i=1000507863892>). “From a learning point of view,” said Mike, “you are much better in prioritising your sleep. Sleep is absolutely fundamental to learning.” Laura Nunez-Mulder, a final year medical student at Cambridge University and Sharp Scratch panellist, reflects on our conversations on the show in her piece “Sleep: the underhyped secret to success and safety in medicine” (<http://bit.ly/2OfMz1B>). Mike also advised us about the importance of taking breaks, which is the message I leave you with. As the weather gets warmer and the days longer, I know that many of you are still working, attending placement, and studying. I encourage you to take care of yourselves and allow adequate time for rest and breaks, even if we still can’t fill our spare time with our usual social activities. In the meantime, the roadmap to return to normality can be met with cautious optimism (<http://bit.ly/3uSmTcu>).

Competing interests: NN is enrolled as a medical student at the University of Manchester 2017-23.