



Since January 2020 Elsevier has created a COVID-19 resource centre with free information in English and Mandarin on the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The COVID-19 resource centre is hosted on Elsevier Connect, the company's public news and information website.

Elsevier hereby grants permission to make all its COVID-19-related research that is available on the COVID-19 resource centre - including this research content - immediately available in PubMed Central and other publicly funded repositories, such as the WHO COVID database with rights for unrestricted research re-use and analyses in any form or by any means with acknowledgement of the original source. These permissions are granted for free by Elsevier for as long as the COVID-19 resource centre remains active.

COVID-19—a very visible pandemic

Many predictions have been made regarding the slowing spread of COVID-19; it is not my intention to refute the epidemiological position of Johan Giesecke in his Correspondence.¹ However, I will respond as a student doctor concerned about the broader implications.

2 years ago, I was proudly inducted into the medical community by donning my white coat for the first time. I took an oath to root my relationships with patients in empathy, trust, and a shared humility. Even then, before developing medical expertise, I committed myself to train with vigour and embody the foundational belief that the mentality with which medical professionals approach patients and careers matters.

Even if slowing the spread is all but futile—an argument I will neither refute nor confirm—why should that change the behaviour of medical professionals? When confronted with a fatal, seemingly hopeless diagnosis, shouldn't medical staff promise patients that they will continue to try, despite what the data shows?

The medical community should offer not unscientific or blind hope, but hope rooted in the belief that they have the ability to help and that current understanding of the problem is not perfect. Whether the help of the medical community will be curative or not is impossible to say, except in retrospect. Nevertheless, this community must move forward with a profound sense that patients matter because people matter; and that the mentality of medical professionals and the way in which data are framed matter as well.

I declare no competing interests.

Evan J Keil

keilx039@umn.edu

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA

1 Giesecke J. The invisible pandemic. *Lancet* 2020; **395**: e98.

Submissions should be made via our electronic submission system at <http://ees.elsevier.com/thelancet/>