

## Another year another variant: COVID 3.0—Omicron

For many of us, especially those who are fully vaccinated and even boosted, the world was returning to normality. At least to a new normal, one that is perhaps more virtually based. The past 2 years have been one of new experiences like 'second wave, third wave' and 'new variant', travel bans and other terminology entering our everyday life.

The latest COVID comeback is the Omicron variant, at least at the time of writing, bringing the world to its knees yet again. Is this COVID 3.0, a term the younger generation will understand.

What is more worrying is not the emergence of a new variant but rather the quick and widespread response of governments. Public health experts have been warning us of the ongoing emergence of new variants as the world tries to get a high level of equitable vaccination across the globe.

Perhaps governments need to be better prepared, by listening to their own experts, and react appropriately rather than knee-jerk responses. It is recognised that at the beginning of the pandemic it was a delicate dance for governments as it was a new experience. However, most if not all governments have now had over 2 years of experience in the management of COVID-19. You would think by now it would be less knee-jerk. Please make decisions on a scientific basis rather than political.

Then again this should come as no surprise to wound carers across the world, as we have managed a silent epidemic for decades and government certainly does not make knee-jerk decisions in this area. Policy makers and payors have been slow at best in helping those affected by acute and chronic wounds.

Another issue wound carers have pushed for decades is that prevention is better than cure, and certainly less expensive. The same applies to COVID-19, preventing the disease is certainly more advantageous on many fronts. So, should the vaccination of the world's population not be a priority for all governments? Would it not be better for the rich nations to prioritise providing vaccinations to less developed nations for the global good? Yes, many countries have started the process, but let them be more knee-jerk about vaccinations, and get it done as quickly as they impose travel bans, or the rapidity of lifting mask and social distancing mandates.

This may be a more political editorial than usual for some, for that I make no apologies. In wound care, we have lived with the hesitancy of government for decades. Now in the most significant health crisis of our lifetimes, we see governments react not only quickly but constantly pivoting and changing the rules. A cynic would say this is politically driven, rather than economically or scientifically. However, all three are inextricably connected in these challenging times. But most politicians chose political survival over the other elements.

Climate change warrants global, national and regional action so does a global pandemic. If we are going to emerge from this, we must do it collectively for the good of mankind.

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