


 WHAT'S
HAPPENING
IN

Without Borders



From the Editor

Gretchen Birbeck, MD, MPH

Neurology Without Borders publishes experiences and perspectives from neurologists on global health research.

In an Invited Commentary, “Reflections on the ineffective response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal,” Drs. Ayush Chandra and Avinash Chandra write about the challenges Nepal is facing to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus. Nepal followed the World Health Organization’s recommendations to hold a nationwide lockdown; however, the country struggled to create a plan for mass testing and protective measure protocols. Nepal is encountering extensive resource barriers to help manage COVID-19, including a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), limited reliable tests, and a lack of public awareness surrounding the need to social distance. Drs. Ayush Chandra and Avinash Chandra attribute many of these challenges to limited government action and support. They explain that health experts are advocating for PCR testing, but because the test kits are scarce in Nepal, Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) are administered instead.

“According to the World Health Organization, PCR is recommended for COVID-19 testing because RDT cannot detect new infections,” write Drs. Ayush Chandra and Avinash Chandra.

In addition to the scarcity of PCR testing, there is also a scarcity of PPE leaving health care workers ill-equipped to care for patients with COVID-19. Drs. Ayush Chandra and Avinash Chandra describe what it is like for health care workers with rising stigmatization, growing public fear, and difficulties mandating social distancing in clinics.

“The clinics and consultation rooms in Nepal are small and lack ventilation. Physicians have instructed support staff to ask patients and patients’ parties to maintain social distancing, but it is difficult to enforce.”

Other recent blog posts cover the COVID-19 crisis and the growing unmet health care needs in low- and middle-income countries. Read the Without Borders blog to keep informed on the latest research influencing the global health landscape.



Blog

The COVID-19 Invited Commentaries are available on the Without Borders blog along with other invited topical blog posts. NPub.org/wbblog

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Neurology 2020;95;781

DOI 10.1212/WNL.0000000000010824

This information is current as of October 26, 2020

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