



# How do we keep our passion for research during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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**Keywords** Research · COVID-19 · Online

Against the current backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, many healthcare professionals and researchers continue to battle COVID-19 despite being subjected to restrictions in not only daily life but also in routine medical practice. Healthcare professionals on the front line of the fight against COVID-19 are exposed to the risk of infection every day as they diligently treat patients. As ultrasound examinations involve close contact between people, we need to consider the risk of infection during examinations, and therefore we must shorten examination times while taking protective measures against infection.

We have traditionally continued to provide medical services and not stopped the progress of research even under difficult situations such as disasters. During a disaster, areas not directly affected by the disaster can help the area hit by the disaster, and recovery efforts can be implemented. However, the effects of COVID-19 are currently being felt by the entire world. In the field of research that uses ultrasonography, which is our specialty, it has been hard to acquire new clinical data, making it difficult to continue clinical research.

Furthermore, educational opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills have decreased sharply as many conferences have been canceled or postponed in the past 6 months. As researchers, how can we continue our research without losing our passion as we lose these opportunities to discuss our research with other researchers?

We are currently being asked to change not only our everyday lives but also how we conduct research and practice medicine. At first, all educational and academic society activities had to be stopped in Japan after the COVID-19

outbreak, but educational activities at universities and other institutions subsequently resumed using primarily online classes. Many academic conferences are also being held online. Although there are limits to the number of people who can participate and technical restrictions associated with online academic conferences, real-time discussions are possible. In my case, I was able to present my research and discuss it with researchers in remote locations via an online conference. The experience was very satisfying and meaningful, and it stoked my passion to continue my research. I imagine that many researchers feel the same way.

The annual meeting of The Japan Society of Ultrasonics in Medicine, which was scheduled to be held in May 2020, has been postponed until December, and preparations are now under way to hold it online. No matter what the circumstances, discussing the results of one's research with other researchers will most likely improve the quality of the research and push it to the next level. The ultimate goal of research in the field of medical ultrasonics is to aid the diagnosis and pathophysiological assessment of the patient and improve the prognosis. How do we keep our passion for research during the COVID-19 pandemic? Let's share and amplify the unspoken passion we each have. By doing so, we can move forward together without stopping progress even in these difficult times.

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

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