



Re: Maxillofacial Surgery and COVID-19, the Pandemic!

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Abstract COVID-19 pandemic revolutionised the practice of oral & maxillofacial surgery in addition to almost all specialties in health care across the globe. Stringent infection control is the cornerstone in this regard. However, there are some hidden benefits of COVID-19 lockdown and social distancing in reducing the incidence of maxillofacial trauma.

Keywords Impact of COVID-19 · Maxillofacial surgery · Sri Lanka

Sir, it is with great appreciation we read the article in your esteemed journal by “Bali & Chaudhry” providing insights into how oral and maxillofacial (OMF) surgeons should go ahead fulfilling professional obligations while grappling with the unprecedented public health challenge of COVID-19 [1]. While endorsing valuable guidance provided by the authors, we understand that such a scenario has revolutionised the landscape of practice of OMF surgery underpinned by challenges, moral and ethical imperatives. Hence, showcasing the perspectives of OMF surgeons and their specialty to deal with COVID-19 is trending at present. There are an array of perspectives in this regard

including optimistic notions such as harnessing the opportunity of multidisciplinary training of OMF surgeons to support and engage in frontline roles of intensive care, triaging, taking nasopharyngeal swabs to sharing personal protective equipment and other resources with resource-constrained settings [2].

Further, recent research has assessed the impact of COVID-19 on OMF surgery practice across the globe [3]. Accordingly, traumatology remained one of the most maintained services as reported by 82% of OMF service provision centres during the peak of COVID-19 pandemic. However, the same survey revealed that there was a two-third reduction in oral surgery in the overwhelming majority of centres, while demonstrating a marked heterogeneity not only across countries but different treatment centres in the same country [3]. Maxillofacial trauma has garnered recognition as a priority area to provide emergency treatment amidst COVID-19 pandemic [1]. Hence, we aim to provide some unique trends observed in Sri Lanka which could draw parallels to countries of similar context like India, pertaining to maxillofacial trauma. Injuries encounter the main cause of hospitalisation dominated by road traffic accidents (RTA) in Sri Lanka. Hence, OMF trauma associated with RTA stands among top treatment priorities encountered by the majority of OMF units in public hospitals across the country. Stringent COVID-19 lockdown scenario and social distancing imposed in Sri Lanka resulted in a dramatic decline in vehicular and human transport. This brought near absence of RTA and OMF injuries presented to hospitals. Hence, behaviour modifications like social distancing and lockdowns with stringent enforcement that limits public and private transport to tackle community transmission of COVID-19 could be beneficial in minimising the incidence



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of OMF trauma which is a delightful observation for OMF surgeons.

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