COVID-19 Pandemic – A Message to our Neurosurgeons

The coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic started in China, Asia in December 2019, and by February, had spread to several Asian countries. It was declared a pandemic by the WHO on 11 March 2020.

It subsequently spread to Europe, the US and to many other countries around the world. As the pandemic spread, many countries have gone into some form of social and transportation lockdown, to try to slow down or halt the contagion. Unfortunately, as the number of infected people continue to increase, healthcare systems are being overwhelmed and their critical care capacity have been severely challenged. This devastating impact on healthcare systems have led to more deaths, especially among the elderly.

The COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented and the strain on our healthcare systems is also affecting the practices and well-being of neurosurgeons in Asia Australasia. Many hospitals have stopped elective surgeries because of insufficient beds needed for COVID-19 patients.

Neurosurgeons in several countries do not have sufficient personal protection equipment such as N-95 masks to do their job safely. From the surgical perspective, endonasal neurosurgical procedures, such as transsphenoidal procedures, carry the highest risk of COVID-19 infection, and some professional societies have recommended stopping these procedures altogether for now.

The situation is rapidly evolving, as this viral infection continues to escalate. In this challenging and uncertain times, we ask our Asian Australasian neurosurgeons to keep safe and to work within the limits of what they can, to care for their patients. We hope and pray, God willing, that this pandemic will swiftly pass.

The Administrative Committee of the AASNS