

## We, the frontliners

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In the past few months, our lives have been altered drastically by the COVID-19 pandemic. After more than two months under the Movement Control Order, Malaysians are warily stepping out and trying to get back to their regular routines. This is challenging because the situation still seems so uncertain and we are almost afraid to make plans that may have to be unceremoniously abandoned.

In my practice as an academic family physician in a teaching hospital, I have been so proud to see our trainees rising to the challenges. I watched them struggle with fears and anxieties of being infected and worse, infecting their families. Yet, they plodded on in their hot personal protective equipment and learned to take swabs and talk to patients through phone and mask. I have also observed colleagues at my department and in clinics all over the country deal with new operational procedures and coming up to fore. We have always known ourselves as frontliners but never has the label been used so widely or regarded as highly as it is now.

Doctors are being called heroes, wira in Malay.<sup>1</sup> We are seen as soldiers who fight for their country. But no one signed up to medicine thinking that we might have to risk our lives and those that we love. Thankfully we have not seen the lack of PPE here as reported in countries elsewhere. However, it was with great sorrow that I read about the 45 general practitioners who were infected with COVID.<sup>2</sup> To all my colleagues, trainees and doctors in the country, I ask that you protect yourself with evidence based knowledge, skills and practice during this time. We at the Malaysian Family Physician salute you for your efforts.

### References

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2. Loheswar R. After 45 GPs down with Covid-19, Health D-G urges health workers to take every precaution. The Malay Mail. 2020 April 22. Accessed on 27 May 2020 at <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/04/22/after-45-gps-down-with-covid-19-health-d-g-urges-health-workers-to-take-eve/1859265>.