

Reflections on COVID-19: Dr Chew Yi Cong

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I was asked to fill in for three shifts as part of the manpower augmentation at the NCID screening centre in early February. The government decided to raise the DORSCON level to orange on the day of my first shift. As my shifts covered most of the evening and early morning hours, I was spared the brunt of the influx in cases. Nonetheless, working at the centre requires on the job learning and training just as doing Radiology as a Medical Officer does (no one really teaches you what to do when DORSCON levels are raised in medical school; also I have never worked in the Emergency Department prior to this).

Working at the centre also allows me to interact with other colleagues from the Division of Surgery (in the necessary PPE) and also be guided by seniors in the emergency department. I was reminded early on to work at a faster pace as I was taking too long to see each case. This subsequently improved as I got more familiar with my tasks. It was an amazing environment as everyone was motivated to get the job done and help each other out.

Much of the workflow is protocol driven and an integral part of it is dependent on CXR findings (for which my Radiology colleagues have been fervently reporting). For instance, an abnormal finding is usually the deal-breaker for whether a patient has to be admitted or swabbed for the coronavirus at the centre (which has significant downstream effects/follow-up actions as well). This has showed me how our work in Radiology can affect important clinical decisions during this outbreak.

All in all, I would say this experience has reminded me of our value to patients and society as doctors. I was informed that one of the patients I have seen at the centre have written a compliment to thank the medical team for our efforts. In the age of social media and "fake news", members of the public still look to the government and healthcare professionals for accurate and up-to-date information as well as reassurance over public health issues. As such, I have a clearer understanding now as to how one might fulfil such a role.