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Editorial

The pandemic and beyond; ethical challenges, racial disparities

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As the world enters its sixth month of living with the threat of COVID-19, we have come to know many facets about the disease while there are many unknown areas as well. It is broadly known that herd immunity probably won't work; who the vulnerable groups are; social distancing works; mutation fears are unfounded and testing is the key. At the same time, it is not known how long immunity lasts; the definite timing of a vaccine and a potential second wave - with many geographical variations. This issue of the *GMJ* features two *Perspective* articles looking at different aspects of the pandemic. The very nature of the current pandemic has posed ethical challenges and dilemmas calling for different approaches deviating from normative practices. Mohideen and Ng Yiwey consider this aspect focusing on public health actions, research initiatives and healthcare worker vulnerability. Hewa analyses the disparity of COVID-19 related mortality between African Americans and Whites in the United States. A similar trend has been observed in the United Kingdom too, with a higher mortality in the ethnic minorities. It is bound to take some time for us to fully comprehend all aspects of the disease process. As we all aware, the pandemic has left a destructive trail globally with unprecedented social and economic ramifications.

The two leading articles have an underlying common theme related to surgical endocrinology: Ratnatunga makes a case for quality assurance of iodination of salt with a view of primary prevention of thyroid disease. Fernando in his article calls for screening and early treatment of primary hyperparathyroidism, clinical features of which can be mild and elusive. Alwis in a detailed review, presents her comprehensive work on factors that contribute to the ability of bone to resist fracture or 'whole bone strength' - going beyond mere bone mass. The original papers feature research on memory tests, measurement of psychosocial burden of chronic lymphoedema in filariasis and different aspects of maternal competence.

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