



## The Coronavirus Collective Behind the Mask

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As a GP, end of Life visits have been the most difficult. I would like to see my patients with sympathy and compassion. However, with a mask, visor and gloves along with an apron and head cover donned on, how am I supposed to be empathic?

I would not want to see my own doctor like this, would I? I am used to sitting next to patients and holding their hands. Now, the relatives only talk to me over the phone.

They ask me: "If the diagnosis is COVID pneumonia, then why I can't give some oxygen? Why aren't they given antibiotics? Why did the hospital not keep them?"

"If it wasn't for COVID my mother should have been able to live a bit longer."

"Why did the hospital leave my anorexic my daughter in the ward? Doctor, can you answer these questions?"

Every day, I go through this upheaval and turmoil which I feel has made us all helpless.

I was not prepared for this.

In the evenings, when I am ready to go home, my chest feels so heavy. However, if I go home with such a heavy heart I can't look after my family.

Once I am out of Billingham and on the A19, I cry loudly and literally howl to let off the built-up emotions. But, by the time I reach home I feel ready to face a beautiful evening with my children and husband.

*Dr Rishika Sinha has been a GP Partner at Kingsway Medical Centre, Billingham since 2006, and a GP Trainer since 2008. She came to the UK in 2001, having received her MBBS from Patna Medical College in India. She is the Clinical Lead for Primary Care at her local Clinical Care Group. She is married to a GP and has two lovely children.*