



The Coronavirus Collective

The One Who Must Not be Named

Anonymous

Article Information

Submitted	3 June 2020
Published	22 June 2020
Curated by	Triya Anushka Chakravorty

Corona. The New Corona. The virus.

All these pseudonyms are now part of the variety of language that one may hear outside the pub or while social distancing on a (crowded) beach, soaking up the unusually warm sun. In my workplace, I simply refer to it using the 'one who must not be named' – inspired by JK Rowling's Lord Voldemort.

I say, 'you don't wish to take away something (virus) that you did not come in with. This plus a nod of the head and an understanding smile, is all it takes to get this vital acknowledgment across.

I have seen this in the eyes of people, who are so breathless or shackled to their oxygen delivery devices that speech is not possible. A simple lifting the eyebrows as asking, 'have I got the dreaded virus' and a silent nod, 'yes you have'. Then the eyes are averted, the inevitability of the sentence sinks in deep and no further words are exchanged.

We are a race that is used to the idea of the inevitable, the fate that is not in our hands, the acceptance that one has done the best one can, the rest is not worth thinking about. Something strange I have noticed is that like in horror films, the nights are the most difficult to live through. In the daytime, any amount of dreadful news from the blaring 'news briefings'

can be tolerated, but at night, one is woken drenched in sweat (cold) and sitting up in a lonely bed, one can only check that one is breathing, check the temperature of the brow with a trembling hand, thank one's lucky stars and lie back thinking of how the world might look from a prone position.

Medical knowledge is a dangerous thing. Yes, you say, if applied wrongly or without care, there can be dangers ahead. I am sure many in the profession will agree that the same knowledge can be equally dangerous when the tables are turned, and one faces the same prospects.

I know of colleagues who have scoured the literature, read every scrap of published material to glean the knowledge that would help make sense of the unknown danger. I have done the same. I have read more papers in the last 3 months than ever did, even when I wrote my 80k word thesis.

Life is sacred. A lot is riding on our shoulders. While we offer comfort to those in our care and help them to make sense of the injustice of health and disease. We are not immune to these worries. I have learnt to acknowledge my fears and anxieties. To share openly, and therein find my solace.

You should try it.