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Opinion Article

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COVID-19: Thoughts of a Registered Nurse from North-Eastern Italy

Colussi AM *

Experimental Oncology 1, Centro di Riferimento Oncologico via Pedemontana Occidentale 12, 33081 Aviano (PN), Italy

***Corresponding author:** Anna Maria Colussi, Experimental Oncology 1, Centro di Riferimento Oncologico via Pedemontana Occidentale 12, 33081 Aviano (PN), Italy, Email: annamaria.colussi@asfo.sanita.fvg.it

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Dear Healthcare Colleagues,

The time to reflect on what has happened to me during the Covid-19 emergency situation has arrived, and I would like to share this with you. Very simple thoughts, but sincere, from my heart. Italy has been in Lockdown since 6 March 2020. Today is 29 April, a Catholic Feast Day dedicated to St Catherine of Siena, patron saint of Italy together with St Francis of Assisi. So I have asked her to intercede for us Italians, for Europe, for the whole world in this time of pandemic. A period of time that we don't know if and when it will end. Neither how many more deaths and burials in mass graves there will be. Neither when we will be able to think about returning to a 'semblance' of normal life.

On 21 March was my Birthday. It was a Saturday so I wasn't working that day, and I celebrated it at home, totally alone because of the Lockdown. The day before, I had said to myself: "What a sad day that I will have tomorrow!" Instead, it was just the opposite! I received a stack of phone calls from many people in different countries, lots of WhatsApp messages too, all of which gave me enormous pleasure. In fact, notwithstanding all, this Birthday was the strangest that I have ever lived, but also the most Beautiful!

At this moment we are in Lockdown for 8 weeks. The World has stopped moving, or almost, Mother Nature has woken up and started taking over what is rightfully hers. All is quiet, everyone is at home, all of us are learning to live Alone with ourselves, discovering new talents, new internal resources, new hobbies to keep us occupied etc.

At work, we have less patients, only Emergencies. All the other patients have had their appointments annulled for the time being. We await instructions from our CEO. He awaits instructions from the Government. At work we have kept ourselves busy, cleaning everything with chlorine-based products and making order in those cupboards that we hardly ever had a moment to reorganize.

We've also begun to know each other a bit better, to talk, to learn from each other, to see the good characteristics that each one of us has rather than the bad ones!! We've had a bit of "breathing space" in our workplace, never forgetting, however, our medical and nursing colleagues who are in the frontline with those patients who have and are dying from this Virus.

We are disappointed in the political authorities because they haven't done the Covid-19 tampon diagnostic test on us. We, who are supposed to be the first to protect the patients of the National Health System! Perhaps we are asymptomatic carriers of the disease. Perhaps we have already brought the virus into our own homes. My hope (they tell me that Hope is the last thing to die) is that the Pandemic will return to epidemic levels very soon and then become a controllable disease. Experts say that this will require a Vaccine. I have my doubts. Things will never be the same. In some ways, better that way! At least I can say that I have learned to take Life more seriously and with more Joie de Vivre!