



Editorial - Adapt and Evolve

In the past 1 1/2 years, we have seen how the world has changed in front of our eyes. COVID-19 has been dominating headlines in the past 18 months. “The Pandemic” has impacted almost every sector, including the economy, education, tourism and more relevant to us, healthcare. The first few months was filled with fear of the unknown. Nowadays, we yearn for the good old days when we could just decide to go anywhere at any time to hug family and friends. The toll of the pandemic on our nation has been great. Some have lost family and friends, while others have experienced the disease first hand. At the time of this writing, there have been 2,401,866 cases of COVID-19 with 28,062 deaths in our nation¹. The vaccine programme at least has given some hope in our fight against this virus.

Oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMS) in Malaysia has also been impacted by the pandemic. In the initial phase of the disease, we saw a significant reduction in the number of OMS cases seen². There were less trauma cases, as the roads became empty³. Most elective surgeries, such as orthognathic surgery, had to be postponed². The need for swab screening before surgery in the operating theatre demands extra planning and sometimes delays in emergency cases. All are changes that we have seen and adapted to during the pandemic. Amid all the changes, our services have never ceased. OMS has also contributed in other ways. Some have offered their services on the frontline to screen and swab patients with both suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19. Others have helped by providing vaccinations to the population at vaccination centres. The Malaysian Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (MAOMS) also contributed by donating financially and also contributing a number of oxygen concentrators to hospitals throughout Malaysia.

The training of our future generation has also been impacted by COVID-19. The reduction of OMS referrals thankfully did not last too long; thus, exposure to clinical cases was still there. However, both formal and informal teaching moved online. MAOMS also contributed on this front by collaborating with DePuy Synthes to organize frequent webinars featuring local prominent speakers. Also, this year’s MAOMS annual scientific meeting, for the first time, was held virtually in collaboration with the Universiti Teknologi Mara. We had the highest number of presenters in this year’s meeting, and their abstracts are included in the pages of this journal.

Moving forward, OMS will need to continue to evolve and adapt to any future obstacles, as we have done successfully through this one. Looking back on the past few months, the perseverance of the specialty in facing adversity has been shown. It is impossible to predict what challenges we might face in the future, but by continuously working together for the specialty through hard times, we will prevail.

References

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3. Jayakumar N, Kennion O, Villabona AR, Paranathala M, Holliman D. Neurosurgical referral patterns during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic: A United Kingdom experience. *World Neurosurgery*. 2019;144: e414–e420. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wneu.2020.08.162>

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