COVID-19 resources through Friends of Millbank website

David Vassallo

I would like to update you on the ongoing work of the Friends of Millbank further to our last letter published in BMJ Military Health.¹ Friends of Millbank is a society that celebrates the heritage, achievements and ongoing relevance of military medicine, normally holding talks at the former Royal Army Medical College (now Chelsea College of Arts) in Millbank, London. The Royal Army Medical College was the British Army’s centre of excellence for postgraduate military medicine and tropical health, and the home of the Journal of the RAMC (now BMJ Military Health), between 1907 and 1999.

Our meetings ceased when the UK instituted a national lockdown in March 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. We now hold monthly online talks, open to all, advertised through our website. As our contribution to tackling the pandemic and misinformation on the subject, we continue to collate the best official online resources into a regularly updated COVID-19 portal on our website which we recommend to your readers.² In this description, names in italics refer to links, prime examples being ‘World Health Organisation’ (WHO), ‘GOV-UK’ and ‘NHS – Latest advice’.

Once online, start with the thought-provoking personal perspective ‘LSHTM Viral Podcast – Peter Piot’s battle with COVID-19’. Piot is director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (see ‘LSHTM – COVID-19 Resources’) — and he fell seriously ill with COVID-19 in March 2020. The ‘RSM Live – COVID-19 Series webinars’ are excellent value. Frontline health professionals will benefit from ‘Coronavirus – e-Learning for Healthcare (e-LiH)’ and ‘St George’s online course’. There are excellent international courses: ‘WHO – Online courses for COVID-19’, ‘Coronavirus – e-LiH’ and ‘St George’s online course’.

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Firstly, the COVID-19 dashboard (GOV.UK – The COVID-19 dashboard) shows seroprevalence rates). See also ‘A history of the medical mask’ and ‘CDC – Cloth face coverings – DIY guide’. Other control measures are quarantine (of asymptomatic travellers) and isolation (of symptomatic persons and their contacts), see ‘NHS COVID-19 App’ and ‘NHS – Latest advice’. Mental health can be adversely affected by quarantine, be kind to yourself and others.

Fortunately, effective vaccines are becoming available (‘COVID-19 Vaccine tracker’), although the logistical challenges are immense. The UK vaccinated 14 million people in just 2 months, but many countries lag far behind. There is no specific treatment yet though clinical outcomes have improved. Herd immunity remains elusive (the ‘SeroTracker Dashboard’ shows seroprevalence rates). This highlights the importance of collaborative research, exemplified by powerhouses that shape government strategy: ‘Imperial College’, ‘Johns Hopkins University’, ‘Oxford University’ and the ‘Royal Society’. Do use the ‘COVID-19 Symptom Study app’.

Retired, Friends of Millbank, UK

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1. Vassallo D. BMJ Mil Health August 2021 Vol 167 No 4

2. BMJ Military Health: first published as 10.1136/bmjmilitary-2021-001812 on 4 March 2021. Downloaded from http://militaryhealth.bmj.com/
This is not a time for complacency, or to let down our guard (Stay Alert!). Lives may be lost by undue haste. Stay informed, stay safe, stay well.

Collaborators not applicable.
Contributors I am the sole contributor to this letter.
Funding The authors have not declared a specific grant for this research from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.
Competing interests None declared.
Patient consent for publication Not required.
Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

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To cite Vassallo D. BMJ Mil Health 2021;167:292–293.
Received 13 February 2021
Accepted 16 February 2021
Published Online First 4 March 2021

BMJ Mil Health 2021;167:292–293.
doi:10.1136/bmjilitary-2021-001812

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