

Dear IANPHI colleagues,

I recall last year's IANPHI annual meeting in visited Addis Ababa where we discussed public health challenges. Someone mentioned the possibility of a pandemic. Now, it has become reality.

For the last 3 months, every single day I thought it hit bottom, but the next day it only got worse. No expert could predict the future of this outbreak. I was only given fragments of information, but I had to make critical decisions every day. I'd like to share some tips that I've learned from my experience.

First, scrutinize closely. We got to know about COVID19, only a little by little. In Korea, the number of COVID19 patients increased sharply by a religious group. Without understanding the characteristics of their religious meetings, it was impossible to explain the sudden outbreak of thousands of COVID19 patients from a single city. Epidemiological investigations might only offer limited information and scientific analysis might fall behind, but we must collect information from all routes available. It's up to us to put the puzzle together.

Second, get everyone on the same page. The prime minister holds a video conference with ministers and governors every morning in Korea. KCDC reports the most up-to-date COVID19 statistics to discuss appropriate measures. Regions with only a small number of infected patients learn strategies from regions with mass infections and prepare themselves for war. If you think the fatal situations of other regions are someone else's business, it'll be too late once it becomes yours. I participate in 3 to 4 video conferences a day to make important decisions without meeting face to face.

Third, speed up. We are always fond of scientific evidence, but to stop the spread of COVID19, we must hurry. We need to quickly secure beds, medical supplies, and medical personnel. We have transformed training centers into living and treatment support centers for mild patients within a week. This can be done to gymnasiums, park tents and convention centers. What I'd like to emphasize here is to translate ideas into reality as fast as possible.

Forth, forget the past. In January and February, I wished to go back to my daily life, the calm and peace before this pandemic. So I fell in despair when the situation didn't any better. In March, I decided to compare it to worse times like wars or the Spanish flu. It made the following weeks much more

bearable.

Although the numbers are looking better now, KCDC does not assume that our COVID19 situation is fully under control. There's still no end in sight.

KCDC and the Ministry of Health and Welfare work as a team. Our staff including myself is trying our best, but it hurts me to see them slowly burn out.

All over the world, there are people fighting against COVID19, in lack of sleep and time to eat, just like you and me.

I hope to see everyone in good health at the IANPHI 2020.

Thank you.

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