

29 March 2020

Re: The Italian Medical Profession and Covid-19

Dear Presidents,

I write to you as Chair of Council of the British Medical Association (BMA), which represents all doctors and medical students in the UK, and is a fellow member of the UEMS (European Union of Medical Specialists), UEMO (European Union of General Practitioners) and EJD (European Junior Doctors' Association).

It is with deep sadness and horror that we learn that the lives of more than 50 doctors have now been lost in Italy to Covid-19, and I would like to extend my sincerest condolences, on behalf of the British medical profession. Our thoughts are with the loved ones of these doctors and we send a message of solidarity to those brave and committed colleagues who continue to battle the pandemic that is gripping your country and continues to spread across the continent and the world.

British doctors have looked to Italy with trepidation as the spread here continues, as we are naturally concerned that we may face a challenge of the same scale within weeks. The bravery and compassion shown by our Italian colleagues in the most harrowing circumstances is an inspiration to us. We have particularly noted with frustration your calls for proper personal protective equipment go unheeded especially in the light of the tragic deaths of more than 50 doctors.

In the UK, the BMA has been vociferous in its own campaigning around PPE, and the situation in your country must serve as a grave warning.

While doctors will want to do all they can to care for patients, they deserve to work in safety, and none should be forced to risk their lives simply by going to work – which is why we all need access to effective PPE.

As such, we welcome our European partners' [recent statement](#) which calls "on the European Commission and... governments to support and protect healthcare professionals fighting Covid-19" by ensuring that "staff must be provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and... be regularly tested, regardless of reported symptoms or exposure".

There is no time more important than now to stand together and support one another.
Geography, not politics, dictates that a truly pan-European response to this crisis is required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the name 'Chaand Nagpaul' written in a cursive style.

Dr Chaand Nagpaul CBE, Chair of BMA UK Council