

Letter in Reply: COVID-19 Infection in Oman

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Dear Editor,

We read with great interest the remarks made by Wiwanitkit.¹ We highly appreciate his comments on our study and agree with his interesting observation that the low mortality rates and mild COVID-disease in our population is similar to findings from many Asian nations.² These regional disparities need further research in addressing the effects of race, genetics, density, morbidity, and climate on the severity of COVID-19 illness, especially that impact of under-reporting and younger populations, which has been dismissed by some researchers.³ Furthermore, one needs a closer look into the speed of public health interventions taken by these countries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and prior experiences these regions have in combating epidemics such as SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV.⁴

In Oman, we do not have universal screening for whole the population. However, Oman started (14 July 2020) a national sero-prevalence survey among different age groups, regions, and populations. The sero-prevalence survey uses serology tests to identify

people in a community with antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 virus, to understand better how the virus is spreading through the country. In addition, the study will actively search for asymptomatic or mild COVID-19 cases for early disease control.

The study results can also provide information on areas where we can work with communities to increase public awareness of actions that people and communities can take to help slow the transmission of the virus, known as community mitigation strategies.

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