One year after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic

We nurses look back on the last 12 months
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UK, April 2021

It is again my personal concern to write on behalf of all healthcare professionals worldwide . With this public letter I review the nursing situation over the last 12 months.

What effects has this MAD situation had on us and our work?

My adopted home country United Kingdom has been infected with COVID-19 since March 2020. My colleagues from Asia have been battling this virus for over a year.

Where are we today, one year after the COVID-19 outbreak?

- What has this virus done to us in the health care professions?
  It brought us to the brink of exhaustion every day.

- How did our politicians treat us?
  With vague consolations and perseverance slogans.

- How did people rate our work?
  They clapped.

- Have health systems around the world been able to support us?
  With meagre bonuses for the few.

We wanted other answers!

In April 2020, I called for PPE in a worldwide campaign. Because of this deficiency I became infected with COVID-19 on my ward and became seriously ill.

We were chased into the worldwide bush fire to put out a gigantic fire with a watering can. Even after a year of fighting, COVID-19 is still not under control.

What still has to happen so that we nurses finally get the support we need from our politicians?

Especially in those countries where nursing is not autonomous, the pandemic has made it clear that the colleagues there need political support and not just bonus payments to keep them quiet. They need laws and they need systems that support them so that they can live up to their professionalism.

In the UK, nursing is autonomous, but public money has been saved instead of investing it in the health system (NHS), where it would have been sorely needed due to the pandemic. This mindless and dangerous behaviour cost lives, not only that of the patients, but also that of my colleagues. And yet, in spite of everything, we kept filling up the watering cans in strong solidarity and putting out the bush fire.

We often went beyond our limits. We are no longer willing to work like this!

We nurses have to shout even louder so that the decision-makers from society and politics understand what we need to emerge from this pandemic in a valued and strengthened manner.

When I decided to become a nurse more than 25 years ago, I knew I was putting myself at risk of becoming infected with dangerous pathogens. It is part of our job to nurse even in a pandemic.

However, COVID-19 overwhelmed us at a time when this crucial profession Has itself become a care-case in most countries.

Nursing itself needs care and change so that we can counter the demands of a pandemic with specialist knowledge and motivation.

Relentless efforts are required from us! We are also ready to do our best, but we are not ready to be fobbed off with perhaps well-intentioned mini bonus payments while nothing changes in ailing health systems.

They fail because they are profit-orientated and disregard our physical and mental health through personnel savings and neglect!

No, it cannot go on like this, in our interest and in the interest of all people, each of whom can become a patient at any time!

Despite better knowledge, we nurses are forced to "care dangerously" because we can no longer meet the care and safety standards. This is causing us - and all of our patients - harm.

Many of us died or became seriously ill from COVID-19 in this pandemic. We mourn these colleagues.

My conclusion for global care is:

Our profession is in danger!

Which government has solutions to nursing problems?

I asked this question 12 months ago and will keep asking it out loud until I finally get an answer.