

An Epiphany from Inside the COVID-19 Crisis in the UK



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The Lockdown May End, But Nursing Will Continue

My dear readers it is time again for my monthly update:

It has been two weeks now since we have some semblance of our lives back in the United Kingdom. Well, almost. All shops, cinemas, theatres, and concert halls are open. Also the UK has reopened for tourism, meaning people are allowed to enter and leave the country. AND we are allowed to HUG other vaccinated people. It may sound a bit mad for outsiders, but this was the highlight of the official reopening of the country: it was an official green light that we could finally hug people from outside our safety bubble!

The lockdown in the UK is almost over as well. The aim is that from the 21st of June we won't even have to keep social distance of 2 m from one another. I am not sure that this is the best idea, but perhaps the whole reopening of society is a research study in itself. Don't you think?

Within hospitals, the world is still different. We are still very cautious with patient visitors and I think it is correct to do so. Us nurses, midwives, doctors and other caregivers still need to be protected, too – as well as our patients. Therefore, carefulness is still in demand.

I did a shift on a hepatology ward last week and it was an eye opener for me that there is a world outside the COVID world. I had sick, actually very sick patients to look after. None of them had COVID-19, which was a relief, but at the same time, their medical and social histories were pretty tough to work with. This shift reminded me of 'old' times before the madness and the danger of COVID-19 started.

How can we be sucked into the new world of COVID-19 and almost forget the madness, which we had on the wards before? The human brain is a wonder: it forgets what it wants to forget. I worry that I am losing my touch with reality... Hopefully not!

This particular shift with my hepatic patients, however, showed me that 7 hours spent working on the ward is nursing of the highest level – managing severely ill patients and complex illnesses that are not COVID-19, which are still amply here.

After I left the ward and the hospital that day and re-entered the outside world, the almost back to the norm world, I felt something stirring inside of me. I walked home, taking in the sights around me – and it felt surreal... the clouds in the sky looked especially calm, yet vivid and dramatic. I wondered for a moment what was going on, but realised that it all fits in to my picture of life.

One moment you are on the ward and you are so clear and focussed on the task at hand – you know what you have to do, and react with all of your professional knowledge and your social skills – and then you have to run to get the crash trolley to save a very sick patients' life.

That shift was in many ways was an epiphany to me.

Yes, COVID-19 is there, and undoubtedly, yes, COVID-19 has changed our world, our lives and our views. It will never be the same as it was before. But there are still other patients, some with very complex issues, who need us, too.

As I always said working in a hospital is like existing in a totally different world. No other profession is so involved and challenged by the wide range of human stories and illnesses as are nurses.

Even when the lockdown is over and COVID-19 is no longer a prominent threat, nursing will continue – as it did yesterday, it will today and it will tomorrow.

Thank you for you for your time, my dear readers & stay safe!

Warm regards,

Sabine

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