

## Nurse's View: Are We Back to Square One with COVID-19 in UK?



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A personal reflection from a COVID-recovered Staff Nurse.

*Happy New Year!* I should scream it from the bottom of my heart to you all, dear readers, but it is only early January and I don't feel really happy. It is THE NEW YEAR, but my feelings say – it is still March 2020 onwards, when the horror of COVID-19 started in the UK.

Are we back to square one in the UK with this all?

After a good break during Christmas, I was back on the ward on 5 January 2021. We were a COVID-free ward for a 'long time' and I felt safe, proud and could rock on with my work. But back there, with three patients having tested positive, made me thinking again and actually worrying to death. I had the experiences of being ill with COVID-19 in April last year, when I got infected due to the lack of PPE and such. But nine months later, what have we all learnt from this most horrendous experiences of working in a pandemic and with a pandemic?

I was pretty depressed when I returned home. I was reminded about shifts in March-April last year. How much more do we need to give as nurses, midwives, carers, doctors, paramedics, to overcome this beast? The scientists published their new knowledge that the mutations of COVID-19 are even more infectious than the original virus.

We in the UK have the highest infection rates in Europe at the moment, which is just incredible, or krass as we say in German, to read; and to work with those numbers in the healthcare system is undoubtedly the toughest task I ever had to undergo.

Working with a PPE3 mask (plus gown, apron, gloves, visor, glasses) for seven hours is tiring, challenging, but it saves lives, both my life and the lives of my patients and my colleagues, too. On top of this matter one has to add the enormous mental stress and our nursing duties, which we all have to fulfil to ensure patient safety and give our professional care.

My ward was COVID-free for a long time – actually, for weeks. We all were pretty proud of our achievement, that we kept our patients and ourselves safe. But as it usually is with unforeseen or foreseen patterns of a virus infection, the tsunami wave of the COVID-19 mutations had hit us hard. It feels like (again) the Australian bushfire has come to Great Britain and has been fuelled with 100,000 L of petrol over the last seven days.

We are now in our third national lockdown, something we also had from March 2020 until July 2020. This time – all 'good' things come in threes – we will come out of this in a 'better' way. The government's target is that ca. 13 million people in the UK will have been vaccinated by mid-February. That includes the vulnerable people in our society and us, healthcare professionals.

Deep inside, as I stated in my previous article, I still have hope with the vaccine. I am on the vaccination list for this coming weekend; it will be epic to get this drug injected. I have never been that excited to get an injection like I am this time.

Hopefully in a month's time we will move to square two, with the light at the end of the tunnel finally appearing.

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