

## Letter to the Editor Re: Coronavirus disease 2019: The harms of exaggerated information and non-evidence-based measures

Prof. Ioannidis clearly and correctly identifies a real issue of the current emergency, namely that related to misinformation.<sup>1</sup> This misinformation led to an erroneous perception of risk in some cases with the consequent lack of adoption of preventive interventions and in others to unmotivated and irrational behaviour (eg panic shopping, shortage of supplies for personal protection such as face masks).<sup>2</sup>

However, the Author's position seems to underestimate the impact of COVID-19 on the population both in terms of morbidity and lethality. This position is unsatisfying if we look at the available data coming from countries such as Italy, Spain, or the USA itself. The impact of COVID-19 outbreak on a country like Italy has been, and is nowadays, devastating.<sup>3,4</sup> Reading that the case fatality rate (CFR) is probably not so high, or that the measures taken were perhaps excessive, is hard to understand.

Certainly, there is a need to acquire and/or deepen our scientific knowledge on this pandemic, since we know little about many aspects (eg immune response, duration of immune protection and effectiveness of adopted interventions), but we cannot prevent to adopt those measures that, although important and limiting personal freedoms, can avoid further and worse issues, in order to contain the spreading of the virus, and to reactivate as soon as possible the national economic system before its disruption.

The references that Prof Ioannidis makes regarding misallocation of resources also allow further observation. In recent months, the efforts put in place against COVID-19 have possibly led to a reduction in vaccination coverage for the immunizations of children and other age groups. Adequate interventions must be planned to recover immunization coverage rates in order to avoid the reappearance of diseases previously controlled, whose recurrence could have a heavy impact on health systems already exhausted by the ongoing emergency. Finally, bearing in mind the pulmonary damage that the new virus induces,<sup>5</sup> it will be important to plan and implement flu and pneumococcal vaccinations in order to protect the most fragile part of the population (the elderly,

people with co-morbidities, etc) and those who have had sequelae following COVID-19.

### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None to declare.

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