

Introduction

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The second *ERS Monograph* dedicated to COVID-19 offers a reflective view of the pandemic. It provides a patient perspective of the pandemic, as well as considering the pathophysiology of the infection and the consequences on global health. <https://bit.ly/ERSM105intro>

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This is the second *ERS Monograph* dedicated to COVID-19 and we write at a very different time, and in a very different healthcare environment, than when Aurelie Fabre, John R. Hurst and Sheila Ramjug published their *Monograph* in December 2021. At that time, the WHO still considered COVID-19 to be a global pandemic. Vaccines had become available in late 2020/early 2021 in many parts of the world but were still being rolled out. New variants were emerging, contributing to ongoing waves of infection and still placing a significant burden of the disease on healthcare, including inpatient care. It would take another 18 months before the WHO declared, on the 5th May 2023, that COVID-19 was no longer a public health emergency of international concern.

COVID-19 has not gone away, but developing a *Monograph* on COVID-19 to be published in 2024 requires a different perspective. In 2021, we were still very much at the beginning of the story, with many basic questions unanswered and a full understanding of the impact of the pandemic still elusive. In 2024, we can be more reflective and consider how the pandemic began and developed, understanding how COVID-19 and the public health measures taken to control it have affected public health. We can also consider how lessons learned during the pandemic are now influencing clinical trials and translational science, as well as our thinking about the role of viruses and the pathophysiology of chronic diseases like COPD and asthma. Looking to the future, we must consider how COVID-19 may evolve in an era of high population immunity and its clinical significance as another endemic respiratory virus.

A few chapters merit special mention. We are particularly pleased to incorporate a patient perspective of the pandemic and its impact, developed in collaboration with the European Lung

Foundation (ELF), who provided such outstanding support to concerned respiratory patients during the pandemic [1].

We feature several chapters on COVID-19 in special populations, reflecting on the impact during the most difficult periods of the pandemic, and the long-term sequelae relating to airway diseases [2], ILD [3] and the immunocompromised [4], for example. We review the current state of the art in therapeutics for COVID-19, in the community [5], in hospital [6] and in the ICU [7]. The long-term sequelae of COVID-19 have rightly generated a lot of attention, as millions of patients are living with a complex syndrome arising following COVID-19 infection. Given its public health importance, we include chapters focussing on the pathophysiology [8] and the management [9] of long COVID.

We are very grateful to all of our authors, who have contributed their time and effort to making this such a high-quality *Monograph*. The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented disruption to our way of life and to healthcare globally. It is right that we learn every lesson that we can. The end of the global emergency and the return to normal life for many across the globe represents a triumph of science and healthcare in developing effective therapies and vaccines. A further triumph will be learning the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic to develop better ways to prevent and treat respiratory viral infections and to avert the next pandemic before it happens.

We hope all of our readers enjoy the *Monograph*.

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