



## Mid-western University

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Master in International Cooperation and Development

### Health Lessons: Decoding COVID-19 in Wuhan and Lombardy

A Webinar by MICD-MWU

June 1, 2020

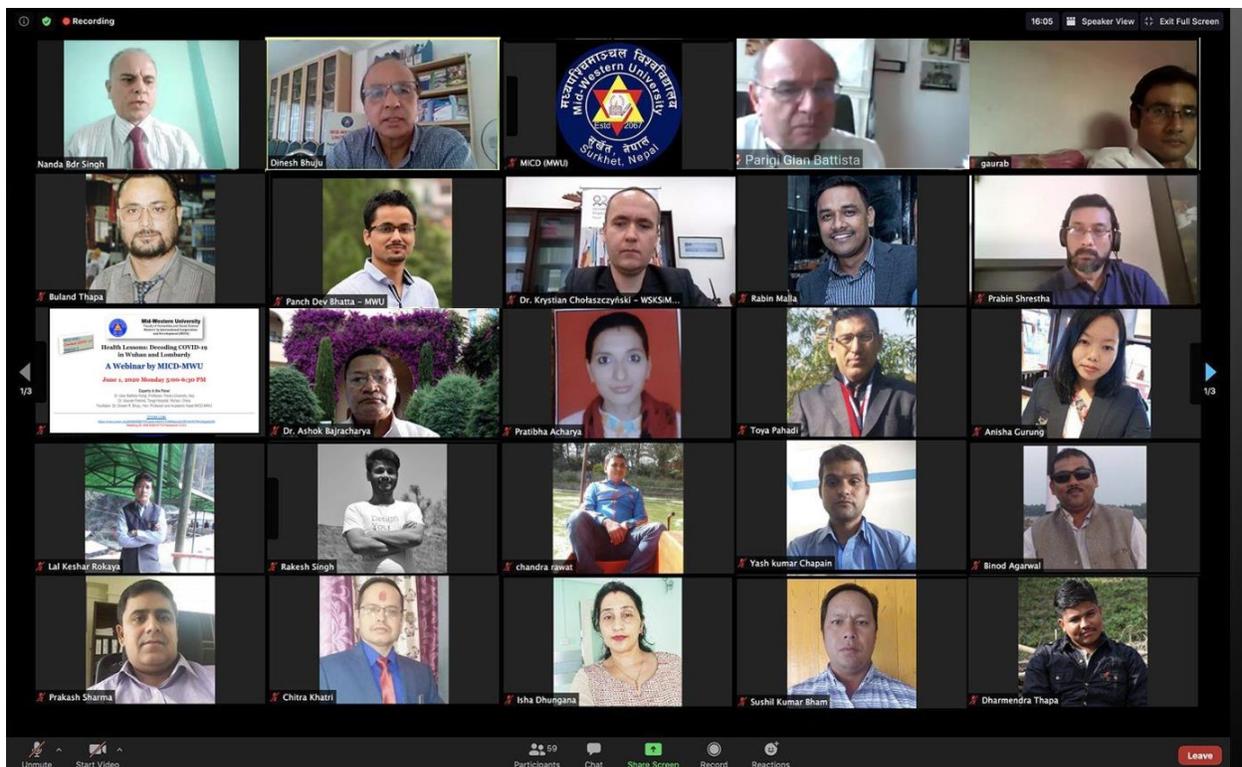
#### Summary

MICD-MWU Webinar-3 on “Health Lessons: Decoding COVID-19 in Wuhan and Lombardy” was organized on June 1, 2020. In his opening remarks, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nanda Bahadur Singh highlighted the importance of learning lessons from the biological disaster. Prof. Gian Battista Parigi (Pavia University, Italy) and Dr Gaurab Pokhrel (Tongji Medical College, Wuhan) were invited speakers of the program. MICD Academic Head Prof. Dinesh Bhujju moderated the virtual panel discussion, which witnessed the participation of more than 60 attendees. It aimed at seeking answer to a question: how was it possible to limit and control the spread of COVID-19 particularly in Wuhan (Hubei) and Lombardy? The reasons behind the rapid spread of COVID-19 in and out of the epicenter of the outbreak were transportation linkages and ties, increased economic interaction among various countries, underestimation or negligence of the related authority and weak implementation of lockdown. Establishment of crisis unit, postponement of OPD services, increment of online medical services, launch of research projects and increment of health services and facilities were the important measures undertaken by the hospitals in Wuhan and Lombardy to cope with the epidemic. The experts advised Nepal to effectively maintain social distancing as well as to control the movements across the borders.

*For detailed webinar report, please download from [here](#).*

#### Report

The Master in International Cooperation and Development (MICD) under Mid-Western University (MWU) organized webinar on “Health Lessons: Decoding COVID-19 in Wuhan and Lombardy” on June 1, 2020. This was the third virtual panel discussion of the MICD-MWU webinar series in COVID-19 pandemic since the lockdown was enacted in Nepal two months ago. At the outset of the webinar, Prof. Dr. Nanda Bahadur Singh, Vice-Chancellor of MWU gave an opening remarks. There were more than 60 attendees including academicians, diplomats, faculty members, medical experts and practitioners, and graduate students. The invited two distinguished experts- Dr. Gian Battista Parigi, Professor at Pavia University, Italy



and Dr. Gaurab Pokhrel, Post-doctoral Research Scholar at Tongji Medical College, Wuhan, China shared their ideas, knowledge and experiences being a frontline health warriors in Wuhan and Lombardy during the epidemic and responded to the queries of the participants.

In the beginning, facilitating the webinar Dr Dinesh R. Bhujju, Hon. Professor and Academic Head of MICD-MWU, welcomed the invited guests, distinguished experts, academicians and other participants as well as thanked them for showing up in the discussion program. Discussing the commonalities and differences between two historic places- Lombardy and Wuhan (Hubei), He said these cities were highly affected by COVID-19 in Italy and China respectively. He elaborated the historical and cultural ties between China, Nepal and Italy as Marco Polo, an Italian Merchant and Arniko, a Nepali architect arrived and stayed in China during the reign of Kublai Khan of Yuan Dynasty. Dr Bhujju said, the virtual seminar is aimed at exploring the answers to a question- “how was it possible to limit and control the spread of COVID-19 particularly in Wuhan and Italy?”

Delivering his opening remarks, Prof. Singh highlighted the importance of the webinar in the present context of new normal and to bring ideas, knowledge and experiences together in order to fight against the COVID-19. He elaborated two main strains of corona virus transmitting in human i.e. ‘L’ and ‘S’ types. Explaining the necessity of extensive research on Genomics and its relations with human composition, Prof. Singh pointed out the importance of genomic science, genetic code, nucleic acid code and biochemistry for understanding and deciphering the corona virus disease in the contemporary world. He illustrated the traditional Silk route did not only facilitate the trade between China, Nepal and Italy but also propped up the exchange of genes among the population. In this regard, three countries are connected through the occurrence of gene mutation. Updating the augmented positive cases of COVID-

19 in Karnali province with the influx of migrant workers from neighboring India, the VC of MWU mentioned that the decision of executive body of the university has allowed the provincial government to use the university premises as quarantine center in Surkhet.

The first distinguished speaker, Prof. Parigi, presented the data of the cases of COVID-19 in Italy that showed the declining number recent days. Updating around 38.6% cases of COVID-19 in Italy accounted in Lombardy, the Pediatric Surgeon unfolded the reasons of higher number of cases as:

- Densely populated area
- Economic and commercial interaction with China
- Underestimation or negligence of the authority in handling the COVID-19 (the authority initially considered COVID-19 as normal flu in Mid-January since the outbreak of flu usually happens in this month of Italy)
- Weak implementation of lockdown in initial days

Prof. Parigi briefed the measures undertaken by the national institute of medical research in Pavia (where he currently works) to respond the COVID-19 as following:

- Immediately activated the crisis unit in order to achieve well-coordinated actions
- Closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation through various research projects
- Split the patients entering the hospital into normal and possible COVID-19 patients
- Increased the number of surgical masks available
- Doubled the ICU beds in the hospital
- Augmented the number of oxygen tanks three times more than required in general time
- Reshaped the geography of the hospital devoting many places for COVID patients

In Chat box
<p>From Sushil K Lamsal to Everyone: 05:13 PM Namaste, I'm Sushil K Lamsal, joining in from Embassy of Nepal in Beijing, China.</p>
<p>From Dr. Eans Tuladhar to Everyone: 06:12 PM Very overwhelming</p>
<p>From Dr. Krystian Chołaszczynski - WSKSiM, Poland to Everyone: 06:14 PM Many governments decide to lift the restrictions. For fear of the economic crisis. Is not it too early?</p>
<p>From Dr. Saraswoti Bharati to Everyone: 06:15 PM The understanding among people and their perception of lockdown is very different, people found less serious</p>
<p>From Phurba Yangji Sherpa to Everyone: 06:19 PM Is it safe to donate blood during this pandemic??</p>
<p>From Prof. Dr Chitra Bahadur Budhathoki to Everyone: 06:20 PM Namaste/good evening, Dr. Gaurab, can you explain about protective measures used by Wuhan people after lockdown? How are people/students maintaining physical distance in public place, public bus and schools post-lockdown situation?</p>

In the end of his presentation, Prof. Parigi emphasized that the social or physical distancing, at present, is only an effective weapon dealing with COVID-19 until the invention of vaccine in the future.

Introducing the Wuhan, epicenter of COVID-19 and the beautiful capital city of Hubei Province of China, Dr Gaurab Pokhrel illustrated one of the main reasons behind the spread of COVID-19 in and out of China

was because of the transportation services and facilities operating from Wuhan. Wuhan has direct flight services to the cities in the world like London, Paris, Dubai and San Francisco. Also, it operates fast train services to major cities in China like Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou. Stating he was based in Tongji hospital during the outbreak of pandemic in Wuhan, Dr Pokhrel listed the actions adopted by the hospital to cope with the COVID-19 are:

- Postponed the OPD services
- Operated full-fledge hospital services from fever clinic
- Cancelled elective surgeries
- Delayed non-critical doctors visits
- Augmented online medical services
- Involved the whole departments and medical staffs in COVID-19 treatment

Dr Pokhrel summarized how the Wuhan government responded to the pandemic as:

- Immediate announcement of lockdown
- Extension of Lunar holidays
- Free testing and medical cost
- Isolation of positive cases
- Operation of the hospital through fever clinics
- Flow of accurate and reliable information and updates through dedicated websites, telephone hotlines, SMS services, social media and mobile app
- Proactive community mobilization or volunteers in tracing, testing, quarantine and isolation

#### In Chat box

From Dr. Ashok Bajracharya to Everyone: 06:27 PM  
Dr. Gaurav, May I suggest that your presentation be telecasted for general public of Nepal through one of the National TV

From Puskar Rijal to Everyone: 06:30 PM  
thanks parigi sir, you make clear

From Dr. Narayan Pd Koju to Everyone: 06:30 PM  
yesterday a child was dead with corona positive had symptom of diarrhea. and other four death had vomiting symptoms. As prof Parigi it seems we are ignoring this symptom. would please share symptoms different than flue

From Toya Pahadi to Everyone: 06:33 PM  
Dr Parigi, Why Itali has been facing such catastrophic Of COVID-19 despite of advanced medical and public health system?

From Rajesh Shrestha (IFA) to Everyone: 06:34 PM  
In Nepal it is predicate that number of corona virus patients will increase in june and july as our climate is changing. is it true that corona virus gets more active in rainy season?

- Use of drones and big data dealing with the pandemic
- Online delivery of food, medicine and other materials

Discussing the curbing rumors and fake news as a big challenge, the urologist Dr Pokhrel mentioned the five key elements to conquer the COVID-19 in Wuhan are: commitment to save the life, rapid decision based on fact and expert advice, best utilization of resources, full support of public and aggression of all kind.

During the question-answer session, Academician Dr Ashok Ratna Bajracharya, Dr Krystian

Cholaszczynski (Poland), Prof. Shrikrishna Giri (Vice-chair of Medical Science Education Council), Mr Rajesh Shrestha (ED of Institute of Foreign Affairs), Dr Prabin Shrestha, Prof. Chitra Budhathoki (Tribhuvan University), Dr Sarswoti Bharati, Ms Phurba Sherpa, Mr. Gyanendra Shahi, Mr Hemant Adhikari, Dr Narayan Koju (Pokhara Univesity), Mr Toya Pahadi participated.

Responding the questions, Prof. Parigi recommended Nepal not to underestimate the virus as Italy did in initial days. Furthermore, he emphasized social distancing as an appropriate weapon available to defeat the virus in the society. In the similar vein, Dr Pokhrel suggested to take effective action to control the movements across southern border of the country. With increasing influx of migrant workers from India, he advised to aggressive engagement in contact tracing, testing, quarantining and isolating of those arriving in the country. Responding the query, Dr Pokhrel illustrated the protective measures used by Wuhan people in post-lockdown situation are: completed mandatory PCR testing for all Wuhan residents, compulsory to wear face masks and hand washing, measurement of temperature before entering movie hall and shopping malls and mandatory to maintain social distancing.

The webinar was concluded with the vote of thanks by Mr Rabin Malla, Program Coordinator of MICD-MWU.

*-Report prepared by Dayaraj Subedi, Asst. Professor, MICD-MWU*