

## COVID-19 Letter



# Online Pain Clinic, A Growing Need During Coronavirus and Other Infectious Disease Outbreaks

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**TO THE EDITOR:**

New coronavirus infections have been rapidly spreading all over the world since December 2019 and it is becoming a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). Quarantine measures were implemented on January 23, 2020 in Wuhan, China for the first time during the current coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak (1). In the early weeks of the epidemic, no similar decision has been made in many countries to restrict the movement of people. But because of the growing number of suspected and documented COVID-19 patients referred to hospitals, many elective clinics, such as chronic pain clinics, have been closed. Restrictions on access to health care services and frequent home quarantine recommendations have prevented many patients with chronic pain from visiting the clinic at their scheduled time. Pain clinics ideally are designed to improve the pain and function of chronic pain patients (2). Meeting these goals requires periodic evaluations at regular intervals for patients, particularly those who have just recently begun their treatment. On the other hand, a large number of chronic pain patients are elderly people who, according to recent findings, are at greater risk of death from the virus than others (3). Because practice recommendations such as staying at home to prevent SARS-related coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection prevent chronic pain patients from being able to visit pain clinics at regular intervals (4), the need to establish online pain clinics is increasingly felt. Another reason for emphasizing this need is the continuation of the current situation for the next few months, in the most optimistic case (5). At this critical time, it is the role of pain physicians to define and provide a framework for online pain management services while also reducing the frequency of unnecessary referrals to clinics.

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