IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH IN THE PANDEMIC ERA

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First since the beginning of the crisis, clinical researchers in Greece have played a central role in the steps agreed by a task force that advised the government at all stages of the crisis (February). At the second stage, research infrastructures and know-how are being deployed in University Hospitals and Research Centers across Greece to build additional testing capacities, as well as to develop research projects and clinical trials. Greece did an excellent job of containing the virus. Most of our research projects specialize in better understanding the variability of manifestation of symptoms due to virus infection, the precise mechanisms that mediate severe outcomes and therefore the possible interventions. The key challenge is that the ability of the health care system to simultaneously look after the patients while supporting sample collection and clinical data availability to the researchers to advance the projects. The greatest chance is that we are witnessing the case of infrastructures and means of communication momentarily in such drastic situations, which would have taken months or even years before.

The World Health Organization is in theory an important body that has the potential to form an enormous difference in situations like this pandemic. However, it's my impression that the increased level of bureaucracy, political interferences and therefore the need for consensus in decisions has crippled the power of WHO to effectively coordinate the efforts of the many countries, which is so urgently needed, to fight this pandemic. After this pandemic is over, we would like to rethink the role of WHO and ensure its stronger position in coordination of health systems and public health efforts round the world.
This pandemic has taught us that we are far more relevant than we thought which the repurposing of our efforts to deal with such problems is feasible and may be rapid. But what it's also taught us is that the worth of basic knowledge of physical phenomena can't be assessed by what's relevant now, and that we got to advance and invest even more on what's called curiosity-driven research.

References:


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