



## A note from the editor

By Shugufa Dinarkhail

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These have been testing and tumultuous times- for us, our patients, our NHS. Our colleagues who have been re-deployed from their specialties to work on the front line, those who have willingly and bravely stepped forward to work on the Covid wards, those who have left their families to move into temporary accommodation for their peace of mind so as to protect their loved ones. More than ever we are empathetic towards our patients, often being the last to hold their hand whilst trying to fill the void of a wife, husband, son, daughter.

We have dealt and are still dealing with uncertainty and unpredictability. Our practice in primary care has changed and we have moved towards telephone and video consultations. It is efficient, and talk is that we may continue adopting this model for the future.

I myself have chosen GP as a career for the patient contact. I value the rapport I establish with a patient and I believe in the healing power of a good consultation. There is a sense of unease I feel when I'm not able to examine a patient and reassure them and myself. General practice is all about diagnosis based on probability and that probability has become a little more uncertain when the patient isn't right in front of me. But it's not all doom and gloom, I have gained valuable experience, honed in on my telephone consultation skills and learnt to be more versatile in my practice. We have come together as a team, and I am sure this is also reflected in the hospital setting.

As a workforce and as a nation we have pulled together and there is a united sense of solidarity. Gone are the days of frantic toilet roll buying and hoarding. 700,000 people have signed up to be a NHS volunteer and help key workers and the vulnerable. A local teacher has gathered the mums together to make face masks and they have distributed thousands to local hospitals. Neighbours are looking after their vulnerable and frail. These acts of kindness are heartwarming and have lifted our spirits. Lets keep united, for this too shall pass.

# Positivity in adversity

By Aditi Tana

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The last edition of the Murmur highlighted that as a healthcare professional we have a higher rate of mental illness when compared to the general population. Approximately 10-20% of health care professionals struggle with their mental health during some stage in their career. During the current COVID-19 crisis how have we reacted as health care professionals?

As a GPVTS1 working in secondary care during this time, although there have been some downs, there have definitely been plenty of positives to take from the current situation. The nature of the work has been at times stressful and plenty of difficult decisions have been made. It is, however, important to take away the positives and focus on the little things we can do to bring joy to our patient's during this period.

During the current COVID-19 crisis it has been more difficult than ever just to maintain a professional relationship with patient's and their families without any emotional involvement. Reflecting on a case this week, I saw a patient with a labile INR who was keen to get home in order to celebrate his wife's birthday. We were adamant to get him home. I am so grateful to all my wonderful colleagues that aided me in organising him prompt follow-up. The patient was overcome with emotion, it reminded me of the impact our decisions making on a patient. This is not one solitary case and I cannot be prouder of all my colleagues who are going above and beyond at this time to ensure that we produce many more positive COVID-19 stories for both ourselves and our patients.

I am sure we will all have those cases that will leave us thinking whether we could have done more. I am also sure that many of us will have some level of emotional scarring and burnout following COVID-19. It is, however, important to recognize this and talk to our peers, colleagues and loved ones. It is also important to recognise that some of our colleagues, peers, loved ones and patients will also be struggling at this time and to remember to be kind.

As GPs, we will be dealing with the aftermath of COVID-19 and its long-term impact on mental health. We have all rallied together to adapt to new working conditions, environments, challenges and rotas. The amount of love and appreciation the NHS and NHS workers has received has been overwhelming. We must continue to focus on all the good that has come from the current crisis whilst not forgetting the importance of self-care, self-forgiveness and compassion for ourselves and others.

**“Adversity introduces a man to himself.” Albert Einstein**

# Going back to my roots

By Sana Owais

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In these unprecedented times, we all need some sort of an outlet. Many of us have started baking or learning a new language. I've gone back to gardening.

When I look back to those long, hot summers I spent in Pakistan as a child I have fond memories of running through our garden playing all manner of games with my cousins but I also remember the beautiful variety of flora that grew in our garden.

My paternal grandfather loved gardening and whilst he enjoyed the gorgeous display of colours put on by the snapdragons, hibiscus and bougainvillea, I think he always loved fruit bearing trees just that little bit more. Our garden had banana, lemon and coconut trees as well as the very sweet tasting chiku tree.

The coconut trees were our garden's crowning glory with their lofty heads swaying high up in the canopy, an ideal perch for all the eagles in the area to survey the land.

We would sit out on the porch on wicker chairs, with the fan whirring away to beat the afternoon heat; my grandfather pointing out the various plants with his walking stick and our resident hummingbird.

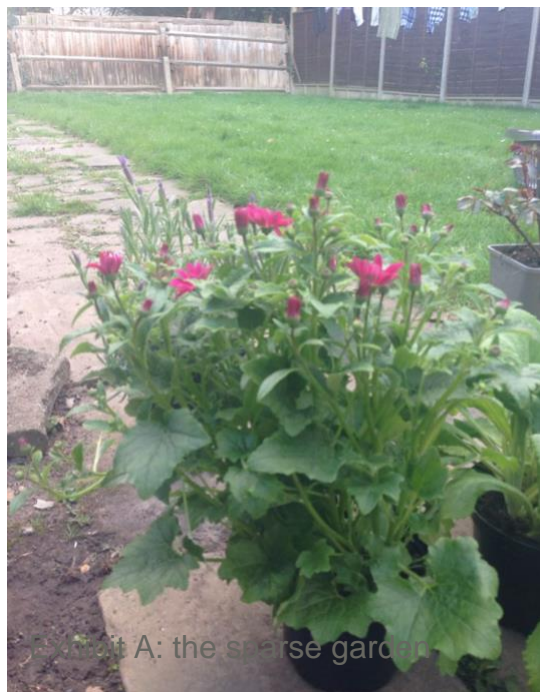


Figure A: the sparse garden

I think my passion for gardening came from my grandfather. As a teen, I would often gather the flower seeds that came with boxes of cereal and tell myself one day I would plant them and make our garden in London similar to that in Pakistan. It took a good ten years for that to become a reality.

My mother and I undertook that project. Our garden was rather dull and drab, with a patchy lawn and a clothing line as its only adornment.

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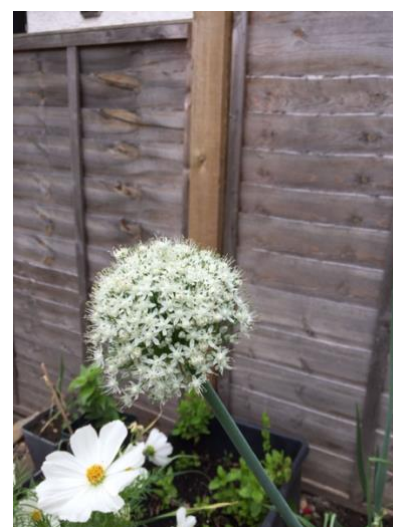
Visiting a garden center for the first time can be overwhelming and leave you wondering where exactly to start. The key is to just dive right in, your initial foray may not be an entire success but you will come out of it learning something.

I love roses and whilst it may seem a rather common and uninspired choice to some, for me it was like unearthing a cornucopia. Roses, to me, are the queens of the flowering world. They come in an abundance of shapes, scents and sizes. My first rose was a delicate pink David Austin variety with a sweet lemony scent.

That's not to say that all this success came without some losses, but if you don't try your hand at something you'll never learn. The ongoing triumph of this garden is all owed to my mother and it has been her labour of love with a few sprinkles of zest from the rest of the family.

Since moving out with my sister into a flat, we don't have the luxury of a private garden anymore but that hasn't stopped us from starting from scratch. Small spaces and a lack of a garden does not mean you cannot grow plants. Pots and hanging baskets are your friends. Even the smallest of spaces can be transformed by a few strategically placed plants. There is a veritable plethora of plants you can grow indoors as well.

And if you're not a fan of flowers and prefer something a little more pragmatic then start with vegetables or fruits; like lemons, cucumbers or tomatoes. Spring onions are excellent, hardy growers and have the wonderful pay off of a large head of dainty white flowers in the Spring. Homegrown fruit and vegetables will always taste that much more delicious because of the effort you have put in, even if they look a little bit like Quasimodo's cousin.



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Naturally the garden centres are all closed right now but there are a lot of online shops from which you can order seedlings and plants. Soon you'll be knee deep in Gardner's World and quoting Monty Don.

My sister and I placed our first order last week and we have just received our first delivery of plants, including a lemon tree, a chilli plant and yes, you guessed it, a rose.

So, start creating your own little haven, filled with the heady scent of blossoms and the sun dappled shade of leaves to unwind after a long day and remember those wonderful summer days gone by.

# Wellbeing Corner

By Santhya Loga

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Wellbeing and a focus on protecting our mental health has become more topical than ever in the midst of the current crisis – early studies from Italy and China have noted the self-reported adverse psychological impacts of being a healthcare worker at the current time.

In terms of workplace interventions to benefit wellbeing, a more pro-active approach, encompassing early intervention and continuous support has been demonstrated to be more effective in management of mental health around traumatic events than post-event single session debriefing. To this end, small group sessions, talking to colleagues and supervisors, support from the trust, and staying connected can be beneficial. There are a wealth of resources available, from helplines to availability of wellbeing apps. A few links are included at the end of the article.

Self-care is another important factor in maintaining our wellbeing. What are a few ways we might look at taking care of ourselves?

## Resilience

Building resilience is a self-care practice that works around adapting positively in adverse situations. It involves developing a sense of 'realistic optimism' and taking responsibility for looking after yourself in these difficult times.

What are some simple ways in which we can build resilience?

- Reminding yourself of previous specific challenges, and how you handled them. What was e
- Developing gratitude. Writing down three small things at the end of the day that were positive or went well, however small they may seem. The positive impacts of keeping a gratitude diary have been researched; this can help us shift towards more positive thinking and improved wellbeing.
- The usual aspects of taking care of ourselves that we know about – sleep hygiene, eating well on and off work, and exercising regularly and with variety.
- Staying connected with others, even at a distance.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a self-care activity that teaches us to center our thoughts on the present, which can help when face by worry or racing thoughts. Over time exercises such and mindfulness meditation can significantly reduce stress.

Even a minute of mindfulness can help when feeling anxious and can be extended to as long as you like. Here's a few simple mindfulness exercises to try.



Even a minute of mindfulness can help when feeling anxious and can be extended to as long as you like. Here's a few simple mindfulness exercises to try.

*If you have less than a minute to spare...*

- Mindful breathing is simply taking a few deep breaths and simply focussing on the progression of your breath and nothing else. If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to the breath.
- Yawning and stretching. A big fake yawn will take a few seconds and interrupt your thoughts back to the present. A deliberate, aware stretch, noticing any aches or pains or tightness (but without any judgments or complaints) is another simple and quick way of bringing your mind back to now.
- Could your car journey or walk to work be made mindful? Rather than driving on autopilot or zoning out to the radio, try practising awareness of the sounds, the feelings of your feet on the pavement or pedals, the view through the windshield or ahead of you.

*Got a bit more time?*

- Doing a body scan is a really nice mindful activity. In a comfortable position, eyes closed, such as on your back or sitting on a chair with your feet grounded, first take a few deep breaths as above. Then slowly scan through each part of your body in turn, starting from your feet up to the crown of your head, being aware of how they feel, any tension or aches, where that part is resting. Gently bring your attention back if it wanders. This can take up to 30 minutes. Feeling relaxed?

There are many apps out there that offer guided mindfulness exercises which can be completed daily. Why not try Headspace, which is free to NHS workers until the end of the year?

<https://www.headspace.com/nhs>

## Resources

There are a number of helplines available offering counselling and support.

- 24 hours confidential, immediate phonenumber/textline support provided by NHS Frontline service, BMA, The Samaritans. See a full list and further wellbeing resources at <https://london.hee.nhs.uk/covid-19-hub>

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- REST and Care First support line, along with further resources provided by our trust at <https://freenet2.royalfree.nhs.uk/sites/corporate-directorates/people-microsite/SitePage/64105/rest-hub>



# Recipes

By Safeena Daroge

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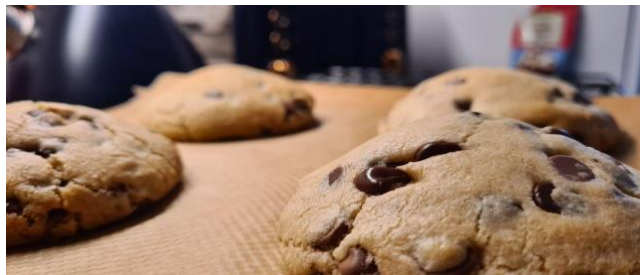
## Chocolate chip cookies (8 Cookies)

### Ingredients:

125 g Unsalted Butter  
100 g Light Brown Sugar  
75 g White Granulated Sugar  
1 Large/Medium Egg  
300 g Plain Flour  
1 + 1/2 tsp Baking Powder  
1/2 tsp Bicarbonate of Soda  
1/2 tsp Sea Salt  
300 g Chocolate Chips (150g Dark, 150g Milk)

### Instructions:

1. Beat sugar and butter in a bowl.
2. Add egg and beat again
3. Add in the dry ingredients and mix well. Make sure the chocolate chips are well distributed.
4. Roll the cookie dough into balls. Leave in the fridge for at least 30mins.
5. Whilst the cookie dough is in the fridge, preheat the oven to 180C (gas mark 4) for a fan oven (200C (gas mark 6) for a regular oven).
6. Place cookie dough on a lined baking tray. Bake cookies for 12-14mins



# Chocolate chip banana bread (1 loaf)

## Ingredients:

3 ripe bananas  
75g butter (melted)  
100g sugar  
1 egg, beaten  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
salt, to taste  
185g all-purpose flour  
85g chocolate chips

## Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 180C (gas mark 4)
2. In a bowl, mash the bananas until smooth.
3. Add in the melted butter and stir until well combined
4. Add the sugar and egg and stir until well combined.
5. Add the vanilla and dry ingredients including the chocolate chips and stir until the batter is smooth.
6. Pour the mix in a greased loaf tin. Top with additional chocolate chips
7. Bake for 50minutes-1hour (until a toothpick comes clean).



# Young leaders

By Saru Ranjan

The Digital Summit for Young Leaders is a two week online programme for 15-18 year olds interested in leadership, innovation and solving some of the biggest global challenges. We bring together some of the best leaders in the world to mentor our ambitious young delegates. Throughout the summit, our students work in small international groups on a problem within one of the Sustainable Development Goals, eventually pitching their solution to an expert panel. If you know anyone interested in participating or would like more information please visit our website

[www.youngleaders.digital](http://www.youngleaders.digital)

90+

A PRESTIGIOUS LIST OF  
90+ SUBJECT EXPERTS

50

50 ESSENTIAL CAREER  
MENTORS & TUTORS

6k

OVER 6000 STUDENTS  
ENGAGED & MENTORED

40

STUDENTS FROM  
OVER 40 COUNTRIES



YOU THE CHANGEMAKER



OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

## OUR IMPACT



STRONG ALUMNI  
NETWORK



SKILLS AND TOOLS  
FOR THE FUTURE



COVID RESPONSE  
EDUCATION PLATFORM

SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

SDG-THEMED  
LOCAL PROJECTS

# Crammers Corner

By Santhya Loga

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1) A 53 year old gentleman presents with a significant worsening of his plaque psoriasis after a recent addition to his medications. Which of the following is **not** associated with exacerbation of psoriasis?

1. Propranolol
2. Lithium
3. Aspirin
4. Simvastatin
5. Ramipril



2) A 60 year old female has re-presented to you after a course of topical fusidic acid for the above patch below her lips that has not helped. She is systemically well. She has had a recent hospital stay for laparoscopic surgery. What is the most appropriate next step in management, after taking swabs?

1. Topical mupirocin
2. Oral flucloxacillin
3. Referral to dermatology
4. Oral erythromycin
5. Await swab results and discuss with micro accordingly