

Correspondence

Global solutions to prevent a pandemic

Investment in research must be fast-tracked if we are to tackle the new coronavirus disease, COVID-19. We need greater insight into the transmission, progression and epidemiology of this respiratory illness. We need to know the risk factors for infection, the role of asymptomatic or mild infection and the nature of 'super-spreaders'. We must determine disease seasonality and the viability of the virus in hot, humid environments, and improve estimates of death rates by age.

Research relevant to countries with weaker surveillance, lab facilities and health systems should be prioritized. In those regions, vaccine supply routes should not rely on refrigeration, and diagnostics should be available at the point of care. The World Health Organization is mapping such research and development priorities.

Social-science issues are important, too. These include how to communicate to the public what the options are for managing and preventing the disease, and how to tackle misconceptions and fear and avoid stigmatization. Community engagement and responsibility must be encouraged.

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Careless virus names stoke sinophobia

The coronavirus that is currently causing severe respiratory illness worldwide has now been named SARS-CoV-2, and the disease is COVID-19. When the virus first emerged last December, it was generally described in medical journals as the '2019 novel coronavirus'. *Nature*, however, used 'China coronavirus' and 'Wuhan coronavirus'. Such interim terminology based on geographic characteristics is objectionable because it can stimulate prejudice and discrimination against Chinese people, fuelled internationally by fear spread through social media.

Although it is difficult and time-consuming to formally name diseases and viruses, it is essential that we methodically select no-harm names for them to make their way into human history. In 2015, the World Health Organization issued guidelines intended to minimize "unnecessary negative impact of disease names on trade, travel, tourism or animal welfare, and avoid causing offence to any cultural, social, national, regional, professional or ethnic groups". It asks scientists, journalists and health officials to use neutral, generic terms when referring to new human infectious diseases.

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Editor's note: *Nature* has stopped referring to the 2019 novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) as the Wuhan or China virus, for the reasons cited in the Correspondence. The names that appeared in earlier headlines were used to reflect the situation as it was understood at the time.

No special code for disaster research

As directors of the University of Delaware's Disaster Research Center, we disagree with the call by J. C. Gaillard and Lori Peek for a code of conduct for disaster-zone research (*Nature* 575, 440–442; 2019).

In our view, such a customized code would be likely to create a compliance morass out of all proportion to any ostensible harm. For example, the authors apply too broad a brush in referring to 'communities' and 'local priorities'. Communities are characterized by politics, power differences and stakeholders clamouring for attention. The authors suggest that research should align with community priorities. But rarely is there a single local priority, so whose priorities should take precedence, and why? Those priorities might even recreate the conditions that led to the disaster, or further marginalize other voices.

A disaster zone is not easy to define. The whole of Japan was affected by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, for example – even areas that were not physically hit. And, contrary to the authors' implication, there is no evidence that ethical concerns in post-disaster research are more severe than in other research involving human participants.

Such research can be done badly if, for example, the researcher has not properly reviewed the vast literature on quick-response best practice. Imposing criteria set by the United Nations would not prevent that. Dissemination and refinement of best practices remain the most crucial goals.

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Authorship: include citizen scientists

In our view, protocols for academic authorship need to adapt to acknowledge those members of the public who are increasingly engaging in important collaborations with researchers. These citizen scientists, who might include naturalists, farmers or Indigenous communities, rarely meet rigid journal-imposed criteria for authorship (see, for example, go.nature.com/2urkbrp). Consequently, protocols designed to stamp out ethical breaches, such as ghost authorship and conflicts of interest, exclude contributors who are not professional scientists.

Providing due credit is a core tenet of scientific ethics, and citizen scientists are pivotal to research projects and to the resulting publications.

Creating group co-authorships for cohorts of citizen scientists would credit them under a collective identity (see, for example, G. Ward-Fear *et al.* *Trends Ecol. Evol.* <http://doi.org/ggd6v7>; 2019). Furthermore, citizen scientists can play a crucial part in the uptake of scientific understanding by the general public.

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*On behalf of 4 correspondents (see go.nature.com/37kr9q5).

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