












# Adequate measures to prevent medical personnel from contracting COVID-19 should be promptly implemented: support from numerous agencies is needed

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The importance of preventing medical personnel from contracting COVID-19 has been noted in Japan as elsewhere. Among the various medical personnel, nurses most often deal closely with patients. Caring for patients who have COVID-19 is a major risk for nurses, and the public needs to fully understand this fact.

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) reported that by mid-August 2020, 1,097 nurses in 44 countries had died from COVID-19 [Kochi Shimbun, 2020 September 16 evening: 2], and as that the description noted, it is likely that an even greater number of nurses' deaths due to COVID-19 would have been identified if the reporting had been conducted in more countries. The ICN noted that an average of 10% of the medical personnel in 32 countries had contracted COVID-19 [Kochi Shimbun, 2020 September 16 evening: 2]. The ICN report also indicated that: (1) there is a lack of protective equipment for medical personnel working in long-term care facilities, (2) rumours that medical personnel are a source of infection can lead to discrimination and violence, and (3) nurses are not being allowed to

move into rental housing [Kochi Shimbun, 2020 September 16 evening: 2].

Medical personnel are responding to COVID-19 despite the threat to their own lives. A common-sense approach and strong support are needed to address the three above-mentioned issues. Responding to COVID-19 is also extremely mentally fatiguing for medical personnel. An extensive onsite follow-up is crucial to the mental healthcare of nurses and other medical staff who care for COVID-19 patients. Physical care for individual medical personnel should also be provided in the workplace. Assistance from the government (at various units' levels) could facilitate a more robust care for nurses and other medical staff. Medical personnel are working in settings in which they are constantly dealing with the dangers and challenges of COVID-19, and they are under constant tension. Their mental and physical fatigue can intensify; if it worsens, it can lead to suicide. The government, workplaces, and relevant agencies need to consider COVID-19 and its various impacts, and they need to work together when necessary to provide ongoing support to medical personnel.

