

September 9, 2020

To: American College of Cardiology
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Physicians
American College of Radiology
American Heart Association
American Society of Echocardiography
American Thoracic Society
European Association of Cardiovascular Imaging
European Society of Cardiology
European Society of Radiology
Heart Rhythm Society
Infectious Disease Society of America
North American Society of Cardiovascular Imaging
Radiologic Society of North America
Society of Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Hospital Medicine

Dear Society Leadership:

We are a group of clinicians, researchers and imaging specialists writing in response to recent publications and media coverage about myocarditis after COVID-19. We work in different areas such as public health, internal medicine, cardiology, and radiology, across the globe, but are similarly concerned about the presentation, interpretation and media coverage of the role of cardiac magnetic resonance imaging in the management of asymptomatic patients recovered from COVID-19.

Studies ¹⁻³ investigating the prevalence of myocarditis in patients with recent COVID-19 have found features of subclinical myocarditis on cardiac magnetic resonance (CMR) imaging in patients without symptoms. Some commentators have raised concern that COVID-19 may lead to frequent, serious long-term cardiac sequelae even among people who have had mild infection and are currently asymptomatic.

We wish to emphasize that the prevalence, clinical significance and long-term implications of CMR surrogates of myocardial injury on morbidity and mortality are unknown. Further, it is unclear if the elevated T1 and T2 flagged in these studies are clinically significant, particularly in isolation, if treatment is needed, and, if so, what the management should be. These important questions should inspire future prospective studies.

Nonetheless, these reports have attracted significant media coverage, at times amplified by speculation on possible clinical implications, thus generating substantial anxiety amongst members of the general public. As a result, we are aware that some individuals are seeking CMR testing despite the absence of cardiac symptoms. We believe that, given the preliminary nature and limitations of the current evidence, testing asymptomatic members of the general public after COVID-19 is not indicated outside of carefully planned and approved research studies with appropriate control groups.

In light of your societies' standing in the community and advocacy against low-yield testing and

low-value medical care through your sponsorship of the Choosing Wisely ⁴, Image Wisely ⁵, and other similar campaigns, we request that you offer clear guidance discouraging CMR screening for COVID-19 related heart abnormalities in asymptomatic members of the general public.

Sincerely,
Venkatesh L. Murthy, MD, PhD, FACC, FAHA
Rubenfire Professor of Preventive Cardiology
Division of Cardiovascular Medicine
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Ann Arbor, MI USA

Daniel J Morgan MD, MS, FIDSA, FSHEA
Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health and Infectious Diseases
University of Maryland School of Medicine
Chief Hospital Epidemiologist, VA Maryland Healthcare System
Baltimore, Maryland USA

Vinay Prasad MD MPH
UCSF
San Francisco, CA, USA

Edward J. Schloss, MD, FHRS
Division Chief, Cardiac Electrophysiology
The Christ Hospital
Cincinnati, OH USA

Stephen A. McCullough, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Department of Medicine, Division of Cardiology
Weill Cornell Medicine / NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital
New York, NY USA

Christos Argyropoulos, MD, PhD, FASN
Division Chief, Nephrology,
University of New Mexico School of Medicine,
Albuquerque, NM USA

Ibrahim Halil Tanboga, MD, PhD
Professor of Cardiology and Biostatistician
Nisantasi University & Hisar Intercontinental Hospital, Department of Cardiology, Istanbul
Ataturk University, Medical School, Department of Biostatistics, Erzurum, Turkey

David L. Brown, MD
Professor of Medicine
Washington University School of Medicine
St. Louis, MO USA

Ritu Thamman MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Pittsburgh, PA USA

Zainab Samad, MBBS, MHS
Professor of Medicine,
Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

John Mandrola, MD
Cardiac Electrophysiologist
Baptist Health Louisville
Louisville, KY USA

Ethan J. Weiss, M.D.
UCSF
San Francisco, CA USA

Rohin Francis, MBBS
Cardiology specialist trainee
Essex Cardiothoracic Centre
Basildon, UK

Rory Hachamovitch, MD, MSc, FACC, MASNC
Staff Cardiologist
Cleveland Clinic
Cleveland, OH USA

Jeremy B Sussman
Associate Professor Of Medicine
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI USA

Marcio Sommer Bittencourt MD, MPH, PhD, FACC, FESC, FAHA
Staff Cardiologist
Department of Internal Medicine
University Hospital - University of Sao Paulo
Sao Paulo – Brazil

David J. Cohen, MD MSc
Professor of Medicine
University of Missouri-Kansas City
Kansas City, MO USA

Joshua E. Levenson, MD FACC
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Heart and Vascular Institute
Pittsburgh, PA USA

Benoy N Shah, MD FRCP FESC
Consultant Cardiologist
Southampton General Hospital, UK
President, British Heart Valve Society

Fernando G Zampieri, MD, PhD
Intensivist
Research Coordinator, HCor Research Institute, São Paulo, Brazil

Leticia Kawano-Dourado, MD, PhD
Respiratory medicine physician and researcher
HCor Research Institute, São Paulo, Brazil
Pulmonary Division, Heart Institute (InCor), Medical School of the University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
INSERM UMR 1152 - University of Paris Diderot, Paris, France

João L. Cavalcante, MD, FACC, FSCMR
Imaging Cardiologist and Director of Cardiac MRI and Structural CT Labs
Minneapolis Heart Institute, Minneapolis, MN, USA

Florian Zores, MD
Cardiologist
Specialized Medical Center & Ellipse Center
Strasbourg, France

Adam Cifu, MD
Professor of Medicine
University of Chicago
Chicago Il, USA

Ash Paul MPH, FFPH
Consultant in Public Health
NHS South West London CCG
London SW19 1RH UK

Ashish Aneja MD FACC FASE FSCMR
Staff Cardiologist
Associate Professor of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University
MetroHealth Medical Center
Cleveland, OH USA

David R. Tomlinson BM BSc MD
Consultant Cardiologist and Electrophysiologist and MedRxiv Affiliate
University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust
Plymouth, UK USA

Michael E. Johansen MD MS
Assistant Residency Director
Grant Family Medicine
Columbus, OH USA

Joseph Selvanayagam MBBS (Hons) FRACP DPhil FESC FSCMR
Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, Flinders University
Senior Consultant Cardiologist, Director of Imaging, Flinders Medical Centre
Adelaide, Australia

Brett W. Sperry, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine, University of Missouri - Kansas City
Saint Luke's Mid America Heart Institute
Kansas City, MO USA

Martin Ugander MD PhD
Professor of Cardiac Imaging
University of Sydney
Sydney, Australia

Jason H. Wasfy, MD MPhil
Director, Outcomes Research, Massachusetts General Hospital Heart Center
Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts USA

Constantine Raptis, MD
Director of Thoracic MRI and Co-Director of Emergency Radiology
Associate Professor of Diagnostic Radiology
Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology
Washington University, St. Louis
St. Louis, MO USA

Eric Strong, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Stanford University
Stanford, CA USA

Leon Menezes
BA BM BCh FRCR FRCP
Consultant Radiologist & Nuclear Medicine Physician
UCL Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Barts Heart Centre, London UK
Lead Nuclear Cardiology UCL Partners

Will Watson, MB BChir
Specialist Registrar in Cardiology
Oxford
United Kingdom

Edward J. Miller, MD PhD, FASNC, FACC
Associate Professor of Medicine (Cardiology) and Radiology & Biomedical Imaging
Director, Nuclear Cardiology
Director, Cardiology Fellowship Program
Yale University School of Medicine
New Haven, CT USA

Marc R Dweck MD PhD FRCP FACC
Professor of Clinical Cardiology
University of Edinburgh
United Kingdom

Evelyn M Horn MD
Director Advanced Heart Failure and Pulmonary Vascular Disease
Professor of Clinical Cardiology
Weill Cornell Medicine

Saurabh Jha MBBS MRCS MS
Associate Professor of Radiology,
University of Pennsylvania

Juan C. Lopez-Mattei, MD, FACC, FASE, FSCCT, FSCMR
Associate Professor, Department of Cardiology
Adjunct Associate Professor, Department of Thoracic Imaging
Co-Director, MD Anderson Cardiac Radiology Services
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Dorian L, Beasley, MD, FACC
General and Interventional Cardiology
Indianapolis, Indiana

Erik Schelbert, MD, MS, FACC
Director, Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance
Associate Professor of Medicine
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Bogdan Enache MD
Cardiologist
Princess Grace Hospital
Monaco

David Nunan PhD
Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine, University of Oxford
Oxford, UK
Brahmajee Nallamotheu, MD, MPH
Professor of Internal Medicine
University of Michigan Medical School - Ann Arbor

Yiannis S. Chatzizisis, MD, PhD
Professor of Medicine, Physiology and Engineering
Chief, Interventional Cardiology Section
Director, Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory
Director, Heart and Vascular Unit
Director, Cardiovascular Biology and Biomechanics Laboratory
Cardiovascular Division, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE, USA

Raj Mehta, MD
Family Medicine & Clinical Informatics
Assistant Program Director, Family Medicine Residency
AdventHealth
Winterpark, FL USA

Saurabh Malhotra MD MPH FACC FASNC
Imaging Cardiologist
Director of Advanced Cardiac Imaging and Cardiac Stress Testing Laboratory, Division of
Cardiology, Cook County Health
Associate Professor of Medicine (Cardiology), Rush Medical College
Chicago, IL, USA

Shelby Kutty, MD, PhD, MHCM
The Helen B. Taussig Professor
Director, Pediatric and Congenital Cardiology
Co-Director, Blalock Taussig Thomas Heart Center
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Ali N Zaidi, MD
Director, Mount Sinai Adult Congenital Heart Disease Center
Director, Academic Affairs, Childrens Heart Center, Kravis Children's Hospital
Associate Professor, Medicine and Pediatrics
Ichan School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY

Pamela K. Woodard, MD, FACR, FAHA, FCCP, FSCMR, FNASCI
Hugh Monroe Wilson Professor of Radiology
Professor of Biomedical Engineering
Sr. Vice Chair, Radiology Research Facilities
Director, Cardiac MRI/CT
Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology
Washington University School of Medicine
St. Louis, MO, USA

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