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Statement from the Council of Nordic Consultants regarding Covid-19

In this joint statement, senior hospital doctors from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland identify the most urgent issues when dealing with covid-19.

We are deeply concerned about the Covid-19 situation in our respective countries. Our inhabitants and medical workers have a great burden at the moment. Although having different strategies to manage the coronavirus pandemic, we face the same challenges.

Therefore, it must be ensured that:

- the number of intensive care units (ICUs) is sufficient and functional. The ICUs must be staffed by trained personnel and have adequate equipment. The number of ICUs should be sufficient also in ordinary circumstances.
- patients infected but not in need of intensive care receive appropriate care (i.e. sufficient numbers of intermediate units) isolated from other patients.
- protective equipment is available according to the precautionary principle. The use of protective equipment must follow WHO's directives and respective national health authorities' standards.
- sufficient quantities of pharmaceuticals and protective equipment are at all times available with national coordination, possibility of domestic production and enough national stockpiles administered by the national authorities.
- medical staff that need to be on duty have an adequate rest. The working time and working conditions in all its aspects (schedules, workload, rest periods) need to be regulated by mutual agreement.
- Covid-19 infection is qualified as an occupational injury if the medical worker is infected at work or when travelling to and from the workplace. The burden of proof shall be on the employer and the assessment must be generous in the employee's favor. Family members of medical staff deceased in covid-19 shall be entitled to a survivor's pension.
- Covid-19 tests are available for all medical professionals and their families to be used as often as needed.
- staff working in civic services gets adequate training and protective equipment. Increased presence of doctors in nursing homes and provide better palliative care.
- all inhabitants have access to housing to allow for sanitary and physical distancing. The authorities should arrange temporary accommodations for homeless and immigrants or facilitate other adequate solutions. It is also important to pay attention to issues such as domestic violence.
- there is a plan and resources for taking care of all other patients in need of care, manage the workload caused by postponed treatments and that all persons in need of physical and psychological rehabilitation after Covid-19 receive it. This shall apply both to patients and medical staff.