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## Meet MSD doctor and volunteer Dr. Mo Ali: “We are here to serve the people we look after, I cannot stand by and watch this.”

MSD employee puts work on hold, now helping care for patients in London



MSD’s Dr. Muhammed “Mo” Ali, like so many other doctors, wasn’t a stranger to a new infectious disease. Dr. Ali was with the NHS in 2009 during the swine flu pandemic and as part of that, he had seen the country’s emergency plans.

Fast forward to today, Dr. Ali had left his full-time role with the NHS in 2017 to join MSD. But he was in the UK in February when COVID-19 was spreading across Europe and the UK. He knew this was not a drill. And he knew he had to help.

Usually, Dr. Ali spends most of his weekdays as MSD’s executive director of global market access. At the weekends, he is an active partner and medical doctor at a GP’s office in Harrow, London.

On February 28, Dr. Ali had scheduled one of his recurring visits back to London after having just attended a conference in Switzerland. He could see what was happening. At that point, Dr. Ali made up his mind that he wanted to stay to treat patients. In an email sent February 28, Dr. Ali asked his direct supervisor if he could stay. “Ethically there’s no way I can step away from this now. I can’t leave them at this stage. These are my patients as well.”

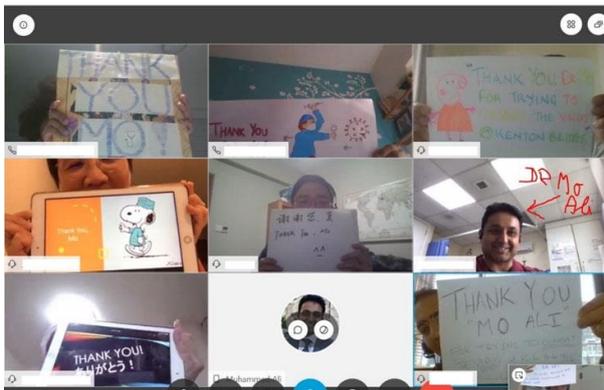


The first week of March, the NHS asked local doctors to pull out their emergency plans. The week of March 9, numbers had accelerated more than expected. Dr. Ali said, “It became very clear that this was headed in the wrong direction.”

Early on, Dr. Ali had some tough decisions to make. He had to quarantine from his parents-in-law and sister-in-law, telling them that “you might not likely survive this, and I can’t be the cause of that.”

The neighbourhood in which Dr. Ali serves is within the epicentre of London right now. The local hospitals ran out of beds right away. The virus has spread so quickly that the health care centre is overwhelmed. However, in one week’s time, a new 4,000 bed ICU is expected to be completed and ready for use. It’s a case of preparing for the worst but hoping for the best.

Dr. Ali wants everyone to know there is a light at the end of this tunnel. He used to see 10% of his patients via video calls and was in the minority. Now the majority operate near 100% digital means. While these may seem like the darkest of days, “This will be the reason behind building a new health care system,” says Dr. Ali. “We’re making history at the moment, just not the history we want to be a part of.” Even so, Dr. Ali sees an opportunity for goodness to rise out of this “to reform, rebuild and regenerate a system fit for the future.”



Dr. Ali’s team sends “thank you” notes via WebEx meeting

In light of the pandemic, MSD has changed its volunteer policy to support employees like Dr. Ali with medical backgrounds. Recognizing the need for additional health care professionals, including doctors, nurses and medical laboratory technicians, to assist in regions where COVID-19 is spreading, on March 21 the company deployed a new program to enable our medically trained employees to volunteer their time to aid their communities while maintaining their base pay.

## **About MSD**

For more than a century, MSD, a leading global biopharmaceutical company, has been inventing for life, bringing forward medicines and vaccines for many of the world's most challenging diseases. MSD is a trade name of Merck & Co., Inc., with headquarters in Kenilworth, N.J., U.S.A. Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies and animal health products, we work with customers and operate in more than 140 countries to deliver innovative health solutions. We also demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to health care through far-reaching policies, programmes and partnerships. Today, MSD continues to be at the forefront of research to advance the prevention and treatment of diseases that threaten people and communities around the world - including cancer, cardio-metabolic diseases, emerging animal diseases, Alzheimer's disease and infectious diseases including HIV and Ebola. For more information, visit [www.msd-uk.com](http://www.msd-uk.com) and connect with us @MSDintheUK on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#).

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