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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The influence of coronavirus disease 2019 on myopia progression

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Dear Editor,

“Myopia (short-sightedness) is the refractive condition of the eye in which the images of distance objects are focused in front of the retina when accommodation is relaxed.”^[1] “Thus, distance vision is blurred.”^[1] “In myopia, the point conjugate with the retina, that is, the far point of the eye, is located at some finite point in front of the eye.”^[1] “It is believed that myopia can be caused by both inherited and environmental factors.”^[1]

Myopia is a significant global public health and socio-economic crisis.^[1,2] East Asia, and other regions of the world to a lesser extent, has been stricken with a growing prevalence of myopia.^[1,2] According to the prevalence data and the corresponding global population trends, more than half of the world population is predicted to be myopic by 2050.^[3]

The overall load of myopia includes many aspects including socioeconomic problem, visual impairment defects, psychological issues, activities of daily living, quality of life, medical, and non-medical burdens.^[1,2]

The world is currently witnessing the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 through which it is enforcing people to

be quarantined indoor.^[4] This accordingly results in home confinement during the pandemic, thereby increasing time spent on near work and increased screen time at home.^[4]

Considering that insufficient time spent outdoor and increased duration and intensity of near work activities have been documented as main environmental risk factors for myopia progression,^[1,2,4,5] home confinement will result in progression of the myopic crisis further.^[1,2,4] This is particularly imperative for young children as their refractive errors are more sensitive to environmental changes than older ages.^[1,2,4] Therefore, the home confinement will impact more on young children.^[1,2]

It is of interest to learn that the great upward tendency for the development of myopia corresponds with the age at which schooling with demanding near work activities begins.^[1,2,5] As a result, it is crucial to reflect on the weight of home confinement in the development of myopia principally in school-aged children while they are in quarantine and then propose protective measures to secure them against the progression of myopia.^[1,2]

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