

May 2, 2020

It is now May 2020, but certainly not the spring we were expecting. In the context of the current pandemic, the World Health Organization has coined the term “infodemic”—referring to the explosion of information we are bombarded with daily. Much of the information is confusing, conflicting, controversial, continually changing, and in some cases openly false. Given the toll of COVID-19 the sense of pressure to do something now is huge. But that must not prompt clinicians to immediately toss aside all the principles of evidence-based medicine. One needs to reflect, and in some cases await further data.

Most patients who develop and recover from COVID-19 infection will develop detectable antibodies in the blood. What we don’t know is if this then protects from re-infection and, if protective, the degree of protection is unknown and could wane over time. According to a recent scientific brief from the WHO, there is currently no evidence to suggest that people who develop antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 are protected against subsequent infection with the virus.

There continues to be an emergence of serologic tests that detect antibodies to COVID-19. These tests need to differentiate between SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID 19, and those caused by the known set of six other human coronaviruses, including four which simply cause the common cold. The NCI, NIAID and the CDC are collaborating with the FDA to determine the sensitivity and specificity of these tests. Please see the April 28 message from the Academy’s COVID-19 Task Force for more insight on this topic. We clearly have much more to learn.

In closing, I hope you are aware that the Joint Task Force on Practice Parameters (comprised of members from the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology and the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology) along with the American Gastroenterological Association have just released for publication a new set of guidelines on the management of eosinophilic esophagitis. I know you get lots of emails, but please stay tuned next for important emails coming from the Academy related to updates on our Virtual Annual Meeting, as well as important advocacy updates.

In the meantime, thanks for listening in and take care.