

2020-2021 REPORT

Hong Kong

57th CMAAO Congress

Major Concerns in 20-21

1. COVID-19 pandemic
2. Electoral reform and the representation of the medical sector
3. The amendment of the Medical Registration Ordinance

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK

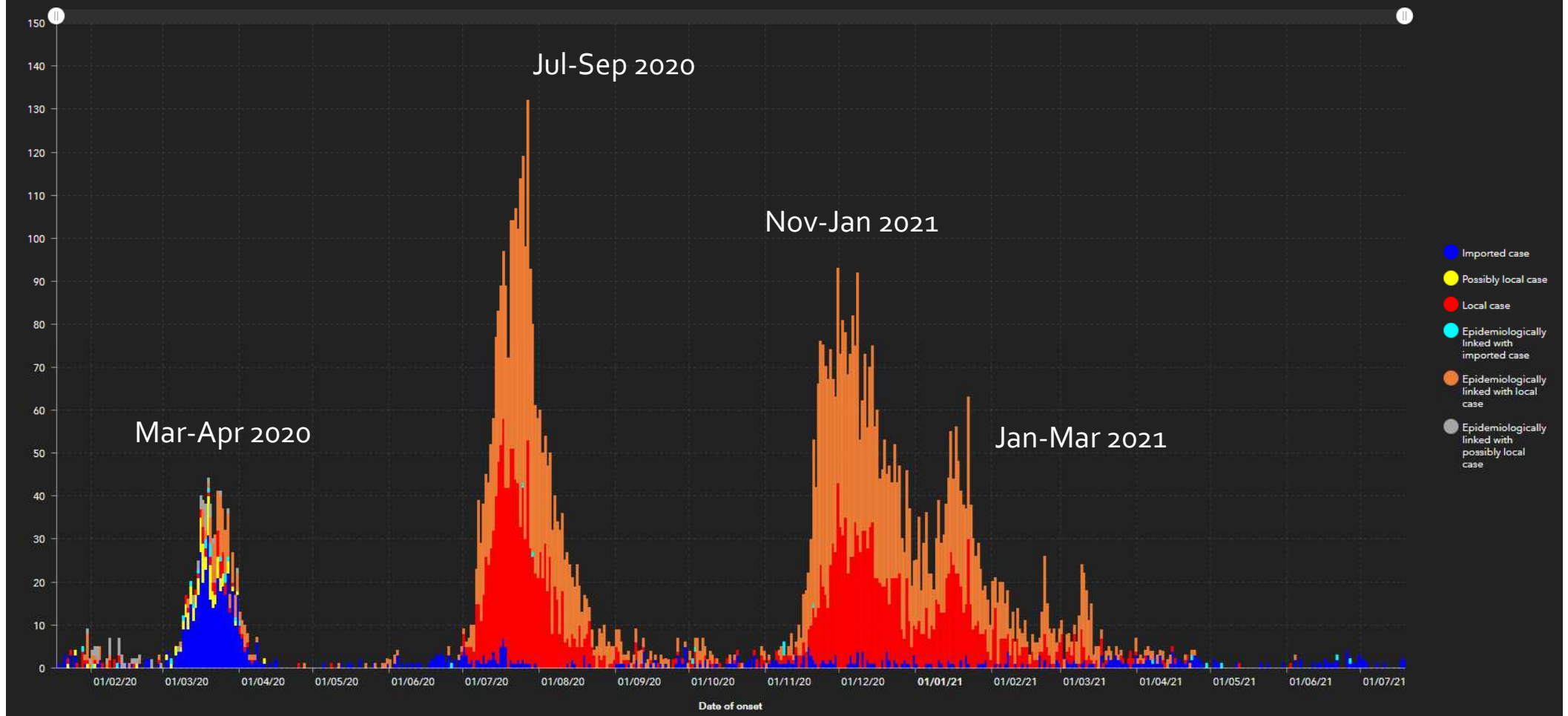
1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



- The global COVID-19 pandemic situation has been evolving, coupled with the continuous mutation of the virus, Hong Kong has experienced 4 major outbreaks in 2020-21.
- With strict applications on masks wearing and social distancing, Hong Kong's COVID-19 cases remained at a low level, yet public hesitation on vaccines has slowed down the progress on reaching herd immunity in the city.
- The most severe outbreak was during July-September 2020, with the highest number of new cases (149) tested on 28 July 2020 since the pandemic.
- As of 11 Aug, the 7 days average of new COVID-19 local cases in HK was 0.

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK

Epidemic curve of confirmed/probable cases of COVID-19 in Hong Kong



Source: <https://chp-dashboard.geodata.gov.hk/covid-19/en.html>

1. CHALLENGES WE FACED IN GLOBAL PANDEMIC

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



- COVID-19 Vaccination scheme started in February 2021, where 2 vaccines (Sinovac & BioNTech) have been administered to all Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above for free.
- Despite being one of the first places in the world to make vaccines available to all adults, as of 25 June 2021, only 20.0% of Hong Kong's population have been fully vaccinated, far behind other Western countries such as the US and the UK.
- According to a local survey [Wang et al. (2021)] conducted between 24 August to 7 September 2020, the reasons behind vaccine hesitancy/refusal included:
 1. **Worried about vaccine safety (78.4%)**
 2. Doubt of vaccine effectiveness (30.4%)
 3. Vaccine is unnecessary (22.2%)

1. CHALLENGES WE FACED IN GLOBAL PANDEMIC

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



- The HKSAR government launched an “Early Vaccination for All” campaign at the end of May 2021 in an attempt to accelerate the pace of vaccination.
- It included rewarding government employees who get vaccinated with one day of vaccination leave, relaxing social distance measures for those who have been vaccinated and organizing lucky draws with the business sector as a reward.
- The Vaccination Scheme **has expanded to aged 12-15** since 11 June 2021 to cover the teenage population.
- On 27 July 2021, the Government launched Walk-in Vaccination Scheme to streamline the reservation process for the elderly.
- The vaccination rate has speeded up with the increased incentives, as of 11 Aug, **52.4%** of the HK’s population have received at least 1 dose of vaccine.

1.1 HKMA: PROMOTING VACCINATION

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



HKMA assisted in promoting COVID-19 vaccination via various channels, including:

1. VACCINATION DEMONSTRATION

- The HKMA's President, Dr. CHOW Kin, volunteered to COVID-19 vaccination to demonstrate that an elderly with chronic illnesses including coronary heart disease and hypertension and on daily injection could safely receive the vaccine.
- Relevant video has been uploaded to HKMA's website and social media platforms.



1.1 HKMA: PROMOTING VACCINATION

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



2. PRESS COVERAGE

- HKMA held and issued the following press conferences and statements to clear the misconceptions around COVID-19 vaccines and promote the importance of vaccination:

Date	Press Conferences / Statements
2021-02-10	The HKMA's Recommendations on COVID-19 Vaccines
2021-05-07	The HKMA's opinions on the prevention of the influx of COVID-19 variant
2021-05-12	HKMA Responds to the Call of Vaccination
2021-06-15	Support Vaccination Together, Build Herd Immunity, Protect Loved Ones

- HKMA's Advisory Committee on Communicable Diseases (ACCD) also featured in numerous media interviews and TV programmes to provide information and insights to the public.

- HKMA Press Conference on COVID-19 Vaccines

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



(Source: HK01)



(Source: TVB News)

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



(Source: RTHK & Now News)

- The ACCD Co-chairman, Dr. TSANG Kay Yan (Specialist in Infectious Disease), on radio & TV interviews about COVID-19 disease.



- The ACCD Co-chairman, Dr. Alvin CHAN, presented in radio programme *Backchat & Letter to Hong Kong*, and interviewed by HKIBC on COVID-19.

1.2 HKMA: ADVISING THE GOVERNMENT

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



- The HKMA continued to play our role to provide professional advice to Government's anti-pandemic policies.
- Discussions with the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) prior to the launch of the universal community testing programme in September 2020.
- Communication with the FHB before and after implementing the compulsory testing, seeking to solve the problems arising from distributing specimen bottles and tracking patients.

1.2 HKMA: ADVISING THE GOVERNMENT

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



- A Zoom meeting between the Centre of Health Protection (CHP) and the ACCD was arranged in April 2021 to discuss anti-pandemic strategies, such as border control, quarantine measures, etc.



1.2 HKMA: ADVISING THE GOVERNMENT

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



- Various submissions and letters were issued to voice out the concerns of the medical professionals:

Date	Submissions / Letters
2020-08-27	HKMA Advices on COVID-19 and Universal Community Testing Programme
2021-04-01	Advisory Committee on Communicable Diseases' Suggestions On Recent Vaccination and Anti-pandemic Strategies
2021-04-28	Letter to the FHB regarding the Interim Guidance Notes on Common Medical Disease and COVID-19 Vaccination in Primary Case Settings
2021-06-08	Letter to the Department of Health regarding the Vaccine Allergy Safety Clinic

1.3 HKMA: SUPPORTING MEDICAL FRATERNITY

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



- The HKMA distributed surgical masks to members from July to September 2020 to help colleagues in the private sector to tide over the shortage.
- Several CME lectures with COVID-19 vaccine manufacturer were arranged to provide the most up-to-date information related to vaccination to fellow doctors.
- Not only supported the local medical sector, but the HKMA also gave its hand to overseas' medical fraternity who were in need. The HKMA has issued an emergency relief to the India Medical Association, aiding their emergency during the pandemic.



1.4 HKMA: EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

- To help the public better understanding the facts of COVID-19, 7 voluntary doctors were invited to take part in a special series of COVID-19 health education.
- A total of 6 videos were produced and discussed general concerns such as the use of face masks and disinfectant products.

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HK



2. MRO AMENDMENT

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- In May 2021, the Chief Executive ordered the Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021 to be introduced into the LegCo to create a new pathway for admission of qualified non-locally trained doctors who are Hong Kong permanent residents to practise in Hong Kong.
- Under the new Amendment, **non-locally trained doctors who hold permanent resident status in Hong Kong and a recognizable qualification can be exempted from the Licensing Examination (LE) and receive full registration after five years of service in public healthcare institutions.**
- Currently, according to the Medical Registration Ordinance (MRO), non-locally trained doctors may apply for full registration after they have passed the LE and has completed the period of assessment (i.e. one year for non-specialists and six months/two days for specialists).

2. MRO AMENDMENT- HKMA'S VIEW

2. MRO AMENDMENT



- HKMA does not oppose the notion of Non-locally trained doctors practising in Hong Kong, but the prerequisite is that they **must pass the LE** to ensure their professional standard.
- The medical sector of Hong Kong has long accepted to consider candidate's individual credentials instead of focusing on overseas medical school accreditation as using **examination** results and not doctor's background **is the best and fair way to assess their ability**.
- HKMA worried the proposed Amendment will compromise Hong Kong's medical standards and the well-being of the public, yet Government has decided to rush through the bill, and no public consultation has been arranged for such an important policy.

2. MRO AMENDMENT- HKMA'S ACTION

2. MRO AMENDMENT



- Press conferences were held in February and April and attempted to explain to the Government and the public what examination exemption would affect the medical standard of HK.



- Meetings and submissions to express our views to the Government and LegCo.

Date	Meetings / Submissions
2021-03-23	Meeting with the Food and Health Bureau on the Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021
2021-04-20	Submission to the Food and Health Bureau
2021-07-08	Submission to the LegCo Bills Committee on Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021

2. MRO AMENDMENT-HKMA'S ACTION

2. MRO AMENDMENT



- An information pack was made by the HKMA to illustrate our points of view and concerns to the general public.



Other Efforts

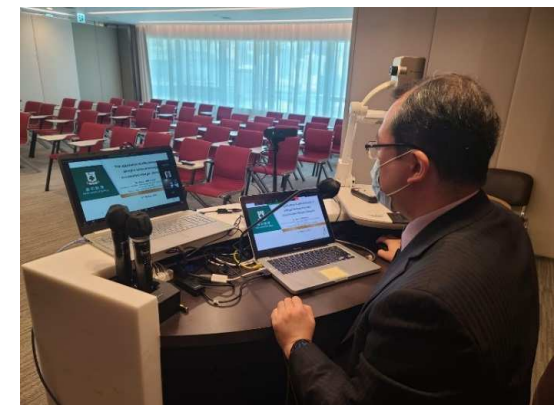
3. Continuous Medical Education (CME) & Public Education
4. Community Service
5. HKMA 100th Anniversary Celebration
6. Other Events

3. CONTINUOUS MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME) & PUBLIC EDUCATION

3. CONTINUOUS MEDICAL EDUCATION & PUBLIC EDUCATION



- Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the HKMA pioneered the CME Live Lectures and has put continuous efforts into exploring new online webinar platforms such as Facebook Live and Zoom, so as to provide high quality and easy-to-access CME Live Lectures to fellow doctors.
- During the period of July 2020 to June 2021, the HKMA has organized more than 164 CME Live Lectures with an average of 400 doctors attending each Live Lecture, which is a fivefold increase compared to physical attendance.
- The HKMA has also launched a Monthly Self-Study Video series on the HKMA website since April 2021, providing an additional pathway for online CME studies.



3. CONTINUOUS MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME) & PUBLIC EDUCATION

3. CONTINUOUS MEDICAL EDUCATION & PUBLIC EDUCATION



- The HKMA also launched series of themed educational programmes to enhance the public's awareness of disease prevention and management.



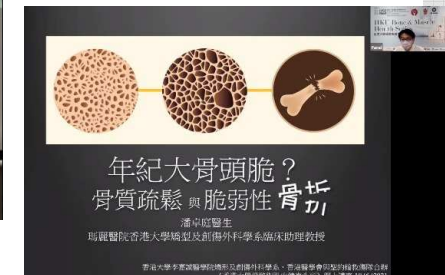
- **HKMA Men Health's Week**: A 6-day event in November 2020 with CME Live lectures and keynote lectures, and 10 sessions of round table discussions and public talks through online platforms. Speakers from various specialities were invited to present on commonly encountered diseases like cancer, BPH, diabetes mellitus, male depression, andropause, male hair loss, hematuria and sport injury.

3. CONTINUOUS MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME) & PUBLIC EDUCATION

3. CONTINUOUS MEDICAL EDUCATION & PUBLIC EDUCATION



- **HKU Bone & Muscle Health Series** (co-organized with the HKU's Department of Orthopaedics & Traumatology and St. John Ambulance): An educational campaign from May to July 2021 with 6 CME lectures and 2 public talk sessions promoting information and concerns regarding bone and muscle health.



4. COMMUNITY SERVICE

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1. Community Elderly Health Academy & Outreach Team

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, elderly not only faced huge challenge in fighting against the disease, but also were unable to get sufficient community support due to the suspension of social services.
- The HKMA Community Service Team arranged anti-pandemic materials delivery to the elderly, with "Call to Care Team" to send love and care through phone calls.
- With the ease of the pandemic, doctor volunteers visited the elderly with special health issues for check-ups and referrals.



4. COMMUNITY SERVICE

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2. Doctors-Units Instant Link Scheme

- To reduce the risk of infection in the elderly or patients with chronic illness, many regular social services or activities were forced to suspend under COVID-19 pandemic which causing some elderly became unable to cope with their health issues, some even unwilling to seek medical help because the fear of being infected.
- In view of this situation, the health consultation of Doctors-Units Instant Link Scheme was fully used during this difficult period, voluntary doctors answered the elders' health questions through doctor's mailbox and reached out to homes of elders with special health problems.

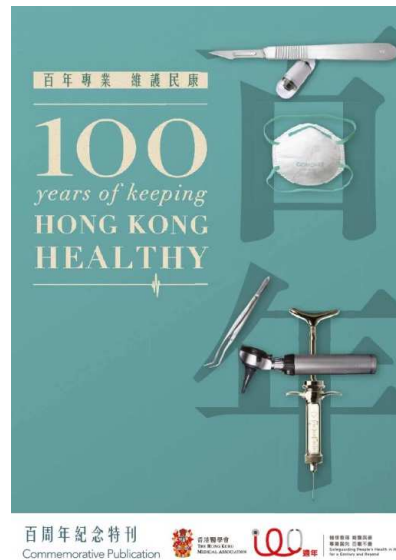


5. HKMA 100th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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- The HKMA turned 100 years old in 2020. However, most of the planned celebratory events were cancelled due to the COVID-19 epidemic.
- Despite this, a commemorative booklet was published, gathering words of congratulation and encouragement from the Government officials, the local medical fraternity and worldwide.
- On 26 May 2021, a book launch cum media reception was held at the HKMA Central Premises.



6. EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

- Exchange programme with secondary school on music and community service.



Training session and school talk

6. EXCHANGE PROGRAMME



Joint music programme of HKMA Orchestra Brass Quintet and the school band. Premiere performance of the wind section of the HKMA song *Give your Heart*.

7. OTHER EVENTS



- Virtual Career Seminar for medical student members

6. OTHER EVENTS



- Revamp of the HKMA Newsletter

REFERENCES

1. Wang, K., Wong, E. L. Y., Ho, K. F., Cheung, A. W. L., Yau, P. S. Y., Dong, D., Wong, S. Y., & Yeoh, E. K. (2021). Change of willingness to accept COVID-19 vaccine and reasons of vaccine hesitancy of working people at different waves of local epidemic in Hong Kong, China: Repeated cross-sectional surveys. *Vaccines*, 9(1), 62.