
World Kidney Day in the midst of COVID-19: perspectives from ISN

ISN

In 2020, World Kidney Day was to be marked on March 12. On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. Where does this leave a health communication campaign?

World Kidney Day (WKD) is an annual global health communication campaign set on changing the course of people's journeys by providing them with information to change their behaviors and ultimately lead a healthier life. The message of better kidney health is conveyed by two main channels: online content and local activities.

In 2020, World Kidney Day, the capstone of a year-long campaign, was to be marked on March 12, but then emerging cases of coronavirus captured the media's attention. The world population's capacity to absorb health information seemed saturated by concerns about the novel coronavirus. Then, on March 11, WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. Larger gatherings, such as public awareness events, were increasingly discouraged.

This posed many challenges, among which:

- What if no one shows up or talks about WKD?
- What if too many show up, potentially putting at risk populations such as people living with Kidney Disease in danger?

Here is what we found: *Adaptation is the key!*

Events, in hotspot countries at the time, were postponed. Others were downsized to smaller activities such as lectures or health checks in hospital settings, which provided a safe environment.

With regards to online content, WKD did not "trend" as it could have been expected; **however, on March 12, WKD content reached 327 million people** and was liked, commented, shared, and clicked 43 thousand times! And #worldkidneyday gained 154 million impressions.

The robustness of our community became evident. World Kidney Day was still marked widely by individuals, stakeholders, regional and local authorities, and by the WHO.

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Not only did the **WKD community continue to grow, it has become more engaged** in the face of global concern and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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