

world is on the rise. The success of preventive measures put forward by every country is mainly dependent upon their ability to anticipate the approaching waves of patients. This will help to properly prepare the health care workers and increase the intensive care unit (ICU) capacity (321). Instead of entirely relying on lockdown protocols, countries should focus mainly on \_ alternative intervention strategies, such as large-scale testing, contract tracing, and localized quarantine of suspected cases for limiting the spread of this pandemic virus. Such intervention strategies will be useful either at the beginning of the pandemic or after lockdown relaxation (322). Lockdown should be imposed only to slow down disease progression among the population so that the health care system is not overloaded. The reproduction number ( $R_0$ ) of COVID-19 infection was earlier estimated to be in the range of 1.4 to 2.5 (70); recently, it was estimated to be 2.24 to 3.58 (76). Compared to its coronavirus predecessors, COVID-19 has an  $R_g$  value that is greater than that of MERS ( $R_0 < 1$ ) (108) but less than that of SARS ( $R_0$  value of 2 to 5) (93). Still, to prevent further spread of disease at mass gatherings,