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Asian American Doctors Unite Against Racial Discrimination

By [Vicky Nguyen](#) Los Angeles

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LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Dr. Micah Yu and Dr. Melissa Mondala earned their long white coats after years of learning and gaining their patients' trust. However, their coats are not protective armor against racially charged hate crimes and incidents.

"I think people think that racism is something that only certain ethnic groups actually experience and within ours, it's just something that we should ignore," said Dr. Melissa Mondala.

Dr. Yu is a rheumatologist and his wife, Dr. Mondala is a family medicine doctor and lifestyle medicine specialist. They say Asian American physicians and other health care workers are becoming targets of discrimination in the age of the coronavirus because some people believe Asian people are responsible for the spread of COVID-19.

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"It's been a challenge, but also a way for us to show people that we still understand the science, we're still treating you as human beings equally," said Dr. Mondala.

The couple joined other doctors on social media to record a video spreading awareness about what Asian American physicians are dealing with on top of exposing themselves to the threat of COVID-19 in order to save lives.

"We have one virus here that we need to attack and that's the coronavirus. We don't need to fight also the racial virus as well," said Dr. Yu.

An ophthalmologist named Dr. Dagny Zhu helped organize the group of doctors who appeared in the video.

“I have been seeing acts of incredible hate and violence against people of Asian descent, and I think of my parents and grandparents...helpless and innocent people who have historically remained silent and cannot defend themselves. We made this video to show that in the end, we are all human. In fact, many of us are on the frontlines saving lives or behind the scenes sourcing donations to help fight this pandemic. People forget that it was a Chinese physician in Wuhan who was one of the first to sound the alarm and warn others about the virus before succumbing to the disease himself,” said Dr. Zhu.

She says the video was produced and edited by Dr. Christina Chen. It features doctors from all over the United States as they wear their scrubs, long white coats and hold signs detailing who they are, how they feel about what’s going on and hateful speech that has been directed towards them.

Dr. Yu and Dr. Mondala say since the outbreak, they haven’t been racially attacked or discriminated against in person, but they’ve gotten comments on social media. However, before COVID-19, the couple says they did receive comments in person about the way they look and questions about whether or not they were actually doctors.

“I have gotten comments like, 'Oh you’re the doctor? You’re kind of young to be a doctor.' I’ve gotten comments on that and sometimes patients, they prefer someone who is not Asian,” said Dr. Yu.

Despite the longer work hours and higher risk of contracting the coronavirus when treating their patients, Dr. Yu and Dr. Mondala remind themselves why they entered the medical field in the first place. They say as cliché as it sounds, they just want to help people, no matter who they are and what they look like.

To watch the video, [click here](#).

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