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# Unusual Diets in A Pandemic Crisis (Editorial Note)

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# Unusual Diets in a Pandemic Crisis

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Conceivably more transmission of viruses between animals and human goes undetected than is brought to social attention; and it usually takes a death toll before the social awareness can emerge. One example is the novel influenza A, or avian flu. The H5N1 and H7N9 subtypes of the avian flu virus normally circulate among birds but were found to infect human and cause death in recent years. The avian flu has yet to cause broad damage because, in its current forms, human-human transmission of the virus is not easy or can be held in check by vaccination. Such is not the case with the novel corona virus behind COVID-19 that was first discovered in the Chinese city Wuhan and then explosively infected the world via human-human transmission since the turn of 2019 [1]. Notably, a serious outbreak of corona virus infection is not new to us. Back in 2002, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) had sickened over 8,000 people and killed 11% of them before it dissipated in the summer of 2003 [2]. After SARS there was the equally alarming Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2012 [3].

COVID-19 impressed the world because it spread so quickly and was much more lethal than the influenzas. By the end of March, or in just about 100 days since the first confirmed case was reported, it had afflicted 180 countries/regions/sovereignties and killed more than 42,107 people (<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>). The occurrence of COVID-19 and its predecessor SARS was thought to be related to unusual diet. Both viruses are hosted by wild mammals such as bats and badger [4], and consumption of these animals by human as a food item has been suggested to be the route of the initial viral transmission to human. If we had not learned from SARS 17 years ago, we should start this time around with COVID-19. Our concern about food safety should no longer be limited to conventional items such as farm-grown animals, sea food, vegetables, processed foods, and so on. Table-served wild animals, though relatively rare, deserve more attention than ever as the world suffered from the consequence of neglect once and again. Eating wild animals is a human behavior that needs to be regulated, if not by a ban, by enforcing a pragmatic protocol of inspecting and handling the animals; and such regulations should be treated as a global health priority. There is no telling how many more novel viruses are going to develop and give us another pandemic. It is for sure that our arsenal in this viral

warfare is lagging behind the evolution of viruses, as evidenced by the fact that COVID-19 has affected even the most technologically advanced countries. Apparently, we need faster and more sensitive methods for the detection of animal-originated viruses in human. The challenge, nevertheless, is how fast such a method can be developed and put to use to stop an epidemic at its early stage. It will take not only better biological and chemical assays but also an infrastructure, including but not limited to scientific and administrative linkages between data base and screening systems, to facilitate the development and delivery of such technologies [5]. We desire and encourage our readers to contribute their scientific endeavors to all these aspects and beyond.

To conclude this Editorial note, I would like to direct our perspective authors to the aim and scope of this journal at <https://www.jresearchvalley.com/journal-of-dietetics-and-food-technology-aimscope-jdft.php>.

We value your contribution of and the opportunity to publish your scientific works. With your support and efficient peer reviews, our editorial members are committed to present to our readers high-impact and forward-looking articles in Dietetics and Food Technology.

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