The Editor

The Times

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Sir

As NHS physicians and supporters of frontline staff opinion, we are grateful that the disproportionate risk from COVID-19 to BAME staff has been recognized. We believe that serious consideration must now be given to addressing vitamin D deficiency in this group of staff, and also in patients from BAME backgrounds.

There is convincing evidence for the role of vitamin D in immune response and there is now emerging evidence that low levels of vitamin D may be linked to severe COVID-19 infection. It is well known that people from BAME backgrounds are frequently deficient in vitamin D. We are urging the UK Health Departments to implement a policy of testing for vitamin D levels in the risk assessments for BAME staff or providing vitamin D supplements as a matter of course. The UK also needs a programme of rapid research into the role of vitamin D in severe COVID-19 disease in a similar way to that for vaccines.

If the UK government is serious in addressing risk to BAME colleagues, they will focus on practical steps that can be taken instead of nebulous actions that are likely to come from any plan developed by NHSE/I.

Yours sincerely

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