



*For Immediate Release*

## **ASM Experts Weigh In on Ensuring High-Accuracy COVID-19 Diagnostics**

**1 April 2020, KUALA LUMPUR** - As COVID-19 continues to terrorise the country, the nation is actively carrying out their duties in mitigating the spread of the virus by practicing good hygiene and social distancing, among other preventive measures.

At the same time, brave and knowledgeable personnel in the medical field are actively dealing with the virus by running diagnostics, administering treatment on patients as well as trying their best to come up with a cure for COVID-19.

Running diagnostics on COVID-19 is by no means an easy task, as it is expensive, requires technical skills, specific conditions and is a time-consuming process; these tests might not work properly when these conditions are not met. Commercial testing kits are available, but the results from these widely available counterparts are by no means more accurate or credible.

Fellows of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, Professor Dr Shamala Devi Sekaran FASc and Professor Datuk Dr Asma Ismail FASc have provided their expert view on COVID-19 Diagnostics. Professor Shamala is an expert in virology and Professor Datuk Dr Asma is an expert in Medical Microbiology.

Through their expert views, Professors Shamala and Asma have provided recommendations on how to obtain better diagnostics results. From the examples given based on several diagnostic methods, they recommended for all testing to be done twice (distanced seven days apart) to verify samples are true negatives.

Additionally, they also recommended for a complementary serological test to detect antibodies that provide evidence of recent infection. Together, these measures would ensure the highest accuracy so the virus can be contained, and patients can be treated in a timely manner.

More insight can be found in the full fact sheet **COVID-19: Know How to Interpret**.



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We have more than 780 experts in the disciplines of Engineering Sciences, Medical and Health Sciences, Biological and Environmental Sciences, Information Technology and Computer Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Earth Sciences, Science Technology and Development Industry, and Social Sciences and Humanities.

Our main activities include conducting foresight and strategic studies and spearheading strategic science-based programmes nationally, regionally, and globally. Our ethos is “Think Science, Celebrate Technology, Inspire Innovation”.

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