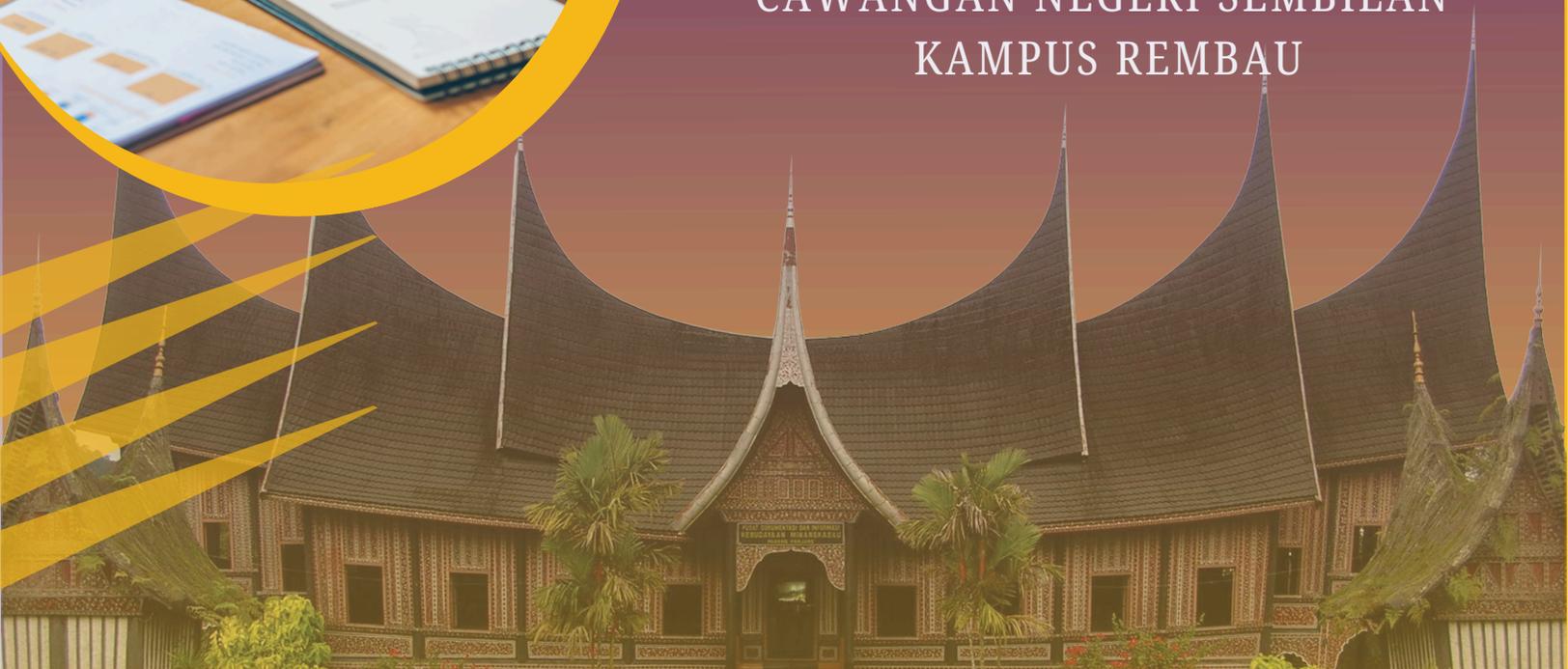


RONA TINTA

EDISI 2025



FAKULTI PENGURUSAN & PERNIAGAAN
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA
CAWANGAN NEGERI SEMBILAN
KAMPUS REMBAU





LEST WE FORGET – THE UNLEARNED LESSONS FROM COVID 19

**Shahrul Amri Ab Wahab &
Noor Azillah Mohamad Ali**

The emergence of Corona Virus Disease 2019 pandemic, or better known as COVID-19, has undoubtedly exposed us all to greater awareness of infectious diseases and their control methods. Throughout the pandemic, the continuous dissemination of information—whether through official channels such as television and radio or informal platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram—enabled members of the general public, many of whom had previously possessed little understanding of disease transmission, to develop greater awareness and adopt more cautious behaviors to reduce the risk of infection.

Then, societies worldwide adopted strict preventive measures such as social distancing, mask-wearing, and quarantine to mitigate the transmission of the virus. These strategies proved highly effective in reducing infection rates and protecting vulnerable populations. However, as the immediate threat of the pandemic subsided, it became evident that many individuals failed to internalize and sustain these critical lessons. The continued neglect of basic public health practices, particularly in the contexts of mask usage and quarantine, raises concerns about societal preparedness for future outbreaks.

One prominent example of this regression is the widespread abandonment of mask-wearing. During the pandemic, empirical evidence demonstrated that masks substantially reduced the transmission not only of COVID-19 but also of other respiratory illnesses, including influenza and the common cold. Despite this, many individuals now disregard mask use, even when experiencing visible symptoms of illness such as coughing or sneezing in public spaces. This behavior is problematic, as masks serve as an accessible and effective barrier against airborne pathogens. The reluctance to maintain mask-wearing practices, even in situations of personal illness, reflects a disregard for communal responsibility and places immunocompromised and elderly individuals at heightened risk.



Equally concerning is the erosion of quarantine practices. At the peak of the pandemic, strict adherence to self-isolation protocols was recognized as a critical strategy in containing viral spread. Nevertheless, post-pandemic behaviors reveal that many individuals no longer observe quarantine when ill. Employees frequently attend workplaces while symptomatic, and children are often sent to schools despite presenting with infectious conditions. Such practices exacerbate the transmission of contagious diseases, undermining collective health and disregarding the well-documented effectiveness of isolation in protecting the wider community.

This failure to sustain preventive practices underscores a broader societal tendency to adopt short-term compliance rather than long-term behavioral change. The perception of pandemic measures as temporary inconveniences, rather than essential norms of responsible public health conduct, has hindered the institutionalization of these practices. As a result, communities remain vulnerable to recurring outbreaks of both novel and familiar infectious diseases. Should another pandemic emerge, the same mistakes are

likely to be repeated, leading to preventable harm and placing renewed strain on health systems.

In a nutshell, while the COVID-19 pandemic provided profound insights into disease prevention, these lessons appear to have been inadequately absorbed. The decline of mask usage and the neglect of quarantine reflect not only individual complacency but also a collective failure to embrace sustained health-conscious practices. To safeguard against future crises, societies must transition from reactive responses to proactive cultural shifts in public health behavior. The enduring lesson of the pandemic should not solely be survival but the adoption of practices that prioritize collective well-being and resilience in the face of future threats.