Coronaviruses belong to the family of viruses such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Particularly, COVID-19 has become known after the outbreak that began in Wuhan, China in December 2019. Due to its unprecedented speed and affecting people across all borders and nations globally, it was declared and acknowledged as a pandemic by WHO in March 2020.

As of today, there is yet no vaccine or standard therapeutics that is specific for COVID-19 and is commonly approved to bring positive results.

In people infected in the current pandemic, the COVID-19 viruses are lodged deep in the lungs since it mainly affects the lower respiratory tract. This severe situation requires the usage of artificial respirators or ventilators to prevent a respiratory arrest and eventually death.

Despite the vital importance, not many OIC countries are capable of producing artificial respirators. As a result, many member countries import them.

The value of artificial respirators imported by the OIC countries in 2019 can be used as a proxy measure to see how well the OIC countries were equipped to provide treatment to people severely infected with the virus.

The imports of artificial respiration, ozone / oxygen / aerosol therapy, and other therapeutic respiration apparatus by the OIC countries group was 457 million USD in 2019. This value was equal to 5.4% of the global imports (8.4 billion USD) of these products during the same year.

The largest imports values of artificial respirators by 10 OIC countries all above 10 million USD in 2019 ranging between 14 million USD (Pakistan) to 72 million USD (Saudi Arabia).

Top 10 OIC countries (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Indonesia, UAE, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Egypt, Kuwait, Bangladesh, and Pakistan) comprised 77% (around 353 million USD) of the total OIC imports of artificial respirators.

On the exports side, the OIC countries share in total exports of these products globally was merely over 1% as only a few OIC countries have the scientific and technological capacity to produce them.

Based on the data available as end of July 2020, only 21 OIC countries exported any of the products classified under the group of artificial respiration, ozone / oxygen / aerosol therapy, and other therapeutic respiration apparatus. Only 8 of them recorded exports values above 100,000 USD in 2019.

Three OIC countries including Malaysia (63 million USD), Indonesia (11 million USD), and Turkey (9 million USD) made up 97.3% of the total OIC countries group exports of the artificial respirators.

Note: Harmonised System code 901920 for ozone therapy, oxygen therapy, aerosol therapy, artificial respiration or other therapeutic respiration apparatus was used for the analysis.

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on data extracted on 28/07/2020 from International Trade Centre (ITC) Trade Map Database. Please visit OIC Statistics (OICStat) Database (http://bit.ly/2F7W8cv) for other Trade indicators.