

# Card game aimed at raising awareness of Covid-19 curbs

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Two researchers from the National University of Singapore (NUS) have created a family-friendly card game to raise public awareness and understanding of Covid-19 public health measures.

In the game, named Lockdown!, players take on the role of government and compete to get as many Covid-19 patients cured as they can while solving problems such as a shortage of front-line workers.

During their turns, players may get patients cured by playing “Patient” cards, or play a “Trouble” card to prevent another player from curing patients.

“Trouble” must be resolved by playing a corresponding “Help” or “Safeguard” card that represents different measures.

For example, imported cases can be resolved by implementing quarantines, while community transmission would require social distancing rules.

There is also an “International collaboration” card that one can use to get other players to help resolve a difficult “Trouble” scenario.

A game lasts about 20 minutes and can involve two to six players or teams.

Lockdown! was designed by Associate Professor Yann Felix Boucher from the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health and Dr Anna Szucs from the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine.

Prof Boucher said he has previously designed simple games to teach microbiology concepts to students, and he came up with the idea of a Covid-19 card game around the start of the pandemic in February and March last year.

“I have always been a fan of board games and card games. I remember saving all the money I made from delivering newspapers as a kid and teenager to buy role-playing games and board games,” he said.

During the circuit breaker period in April and May last year, Prof Boucher created a prototype inspired by French card game Milles Bornes from the 1950s, which he had played as a child.

He then play-tested an early version of Lockdown! with his daughter Anouk, who was five years old at the time.

Prof Boucher later met Dr Szucs while they were both walking their dogs near the NUS campus. They subsequently began working together to refine the mechanics of the game.

Dr Szucs, who is a hobby artist, also created the artwork for the game’s cards, packaging and rule book.

She said the mechanics of the game are simple and can be easily grasped by children.

“We really hope that it can start discussions in some families about things like why we have to wear masks, why we have to do contact tracing or why some people have to go through quarantine when they travel,” she added.

Capital Gains Studio, a local game design studio, helped to further refine the rules and publish the game.

The game is for sale at \$25 on Shopee or at the Capital Gains Studio website at [capitalgainsgroup.com](http://capitalgainsgroup.com)

The sales proceeds will go to The Red Pencil, a registered charity that provides creative arts therapy for less privileged children.

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