

# *Robotics, automation to play increasingly important role in combating COVID-19, says editorial*

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Robotics and automation could play an increasingly important role in combating infectious diseases such as COVID-19, according to an editorial published Wednesday on Science Robotics.

Robots have the potential to be deployed for disinfection, delivering medications and food, measuring vital signs, and assisting border controls, said the editorial written by multiple authors, most of who are professors specialized in robotics-related studies at different universities.

COVID-19 has affected manufacturing and the economy throughout the world. This highlights the need for more research into remote operation for a broad array of applications requiring dexterous manipulation -- from manufacturing to remotely operating power or waste treatment plants, said the editorial.

The authors think robotic technologies could make valuable contributions to disease prevention, screening, diagnosis, patient care and disease management.

With more resources, robots could realize their massive potential for tackling the "dull, dirty and dangerous" tasks in infectious disease management, according to the editorial.

This includes remote collection of data and samples from patients, automated diagnostic and lab testing to minimize exposure risk for medical staff, drones and underground vehicles for transferring samples and delivering medicines and social robots to relieve the isolation of self-quarantine.

The impact of COVID-19 may drive further research in robotics to address risks of infectious diseases, said the editorial.

source: xinhua

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