

Death rates

The official figures for death rates in the UK show that the death rate in 2020 was considerably higher than in recent years. They also show, contrary to some media reports, that the death rate stayed below the higher levels it reached in the years 1999-2004. The overall rate is around 1% per annum, with most of those dying being the elderly. As people are living longer, so the typical age of death has trended upwards over the last half century.

There was a surge of deaths in the spring of 2020 brought on by CV 19 which boosted overall annual numbers. Since then progress with finding a range of treatments and nursing procedures that can cut the death rate from the virus have helped to bring down the numbers dying from the pandemic.

Today there is concern that other causes of death including cancer and heart problems may be boosted by people not seeking the treatment they need with these conditions, or by delays in access to hospital care resulting from the need to create extra capacity in some hospitals to handle covid 19 patients. There is also the double hit to overall NHS capacity that has come from the measures to tackle the virus. There is more social distancing in hospitals to wrestle with infection control, and absences of more staff who either catch the virus or need to self isolate for periods after contact with it.

The NHS management and their Ministerial supporters are concentrating on rolling out the vaccine, with the hope that this will solve the problem of lockdown. It may require more development of vaccines and further vaccination moves should the virus transmute. This important work should not detract from the need to advance in other ways as well. So let us look at other ways we can learn to live with this virus.

1. More medical guidance on ways the rest of us can fend off the virus, using everything from diet to exercise. What is the official view of zinc, Vitamin C, weight loss and other measures in addition to Vitamin D which now has some official support?
2. Are there treatments like Regeneron and chloroquine that can offer some protection?
3. More treatments that can cut the death rate and reduce the severity of viral attacks. The work that has discovered dexamethasone and the anti rheumatoid drugs is welcome. Where are we on Ivermectin and others?
4. More guidance and support for people to convert air flow and heating systems and introduce air cleansing systems within their air systems, to reduce exposure to disease laden air in enclosed rooms and spaces
5. More use of isolation hospitals to cut the spread of disease in health settings and to reduce the numbers of NHS staff at risk