

Some questions on the virus

We are waiting for the science to catch up with events. It is clearly not easy understanding and combatting a new virus in a hurry, when crucial information has to come from patients suffering from the disease willing to submit to various treatments to see what happens. We have, however, had all too many cases and deaths, so soon perhaps more knowledge will be forthcoming.

We need to know, for example, whether any of the proposed existing licenced medicines for other complaints can help alleviate symptoms, ease severity or reduce the time the illness lasts. The UK has now approved remdesivir, but there are other remedies taken on their own or with others that might help. We need an update.

There is the question of the Oxford/Astra Zeneca vaccine. This is going into production before the results of clinical trials. We are told there may be results early autumn. There are also other vaccine hopes around the world.

The UK has now been testing random samples to represent the population as a whole to find out infection rates. This should enable a more accurate R or transmission rate to be calculated. When will we see proper graphs and charts of these numbers with a better evidence base for R? This could be helpful in making decisions about the pace of further easing, which is much needed for the sake of livelihoods.

What is the expert view on why the new case rate and death rate has stayed as high as it has during a strong lock down? Shouldn't they have subsided more. How was the virus being transmitted during this period? Can we now use track and test to head off further localised outbreaks?

Are we now in the position where too many deaths are being attributed to CV 19 when it is not even known whether some had the disease or not, or when they also had other serious conditions that might have been the true cause? How comparable are our figures with other countries, that follow different criteria for reporting deaths?

Much now rests on making a success of test and trace. That requires the willing collaboration of the public, taking tests if and when they develop covid like symptoms they do not normally suffer. It needs the rest to agree to self isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who has the disease.

We cannot keep the whole country in lockdown for more months, with just the NHS and a few basics up and running. It was possible to borrow and print the money for a couple of months, but it does not work if you try to do that as a new lifestyle with no limit on the cash .