

Questioning the evidence base for draconian measures being imposed on 25.4 million Australians re COVID-19

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Dear Mr Malinauskas, what evidence is being used to support the draconian measures being imposed on 25.4 million Australians re COVID-19?

Who is advising our elected representatives on this matter? Who are your advisers and what qualifies them to recommend such drastic measures which are going to impact severely on our economy, our society, our health, our freedom to associate, our very liberty?

I understand a group of eminent Go8 infectious disease researchers has been convened at CMO, Professor Brendan Murphy's request, to discuss and synthesize recommendations of the scope and scale of Social Distancing Measures re COVID.

Who are the members of this group who are influencing policy affecting all of us?

It is understandable to want to protect the vulnerable in our community who might be at risk with the current threat. But the WHO indicates most people will not be too troubled by the novel coronavirus. Is it not better for those at risk to self-isolate, and still provide them with services such as pharmacy deliveries, home library etc, and let others continue with their lives and livelihoods as herd immunity is built up?

My recent rapid response published on *The BMJ (The British Medical Journal)* is relevant, please see below:

BMJ Rapid Response: Is it ethical to impede access to natural immunity? The case of SARS-CoV2

If children, young adults and others can mount their own effective immune response to SARS-CoV2, is it ethical to impede their ability to access natural immunity by interfering with the natural progression of the virus?

According to the WHO, "Illness due to COVID-19 infection is generally mild, especially for children and young adults."^[1]

Is the focus on future fast-tracked vaccine products blocking full consideration of the opportunity for natural herd immunity? Who is Neil Ferguson to say "The only exit strategy [in the] long term for this is really vaccination or other forms of innovative technology that allows us to control transmission".^[2]

In regards to young people's and others' right to natural immunity, it's also vital to consider the startling admission by Heidi Larson, Director of The Vaccine Confidence Project, during the recent WHO Global Vaccine Safety Summit, i.e. "...We've shifted the human population...to dependency on vaccine-induced immunity...We're in a very fragile state now. We have developed a world that is dependent on vaccinations".^[3]

This is a very alarming statement by Professor Larson, particularly with the prospect of other epidemics emerging in the future. We have to learn to deal with epidemics and illnesses as they emerge, it's not feasible to vaccinate the global population against every threat.

In a recent article raising concern about making decisions about this pandemic without reliable data, John Ioannidis notes that "School closures may also diminish the chances of developing herd immunity in an age group that is spared serious disease".^[4] The UK's chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, raised the prospect of developing natural herd immunity^[5], but this idea was subsequently howled down by Matt Hancock, the UK secretary of state for health and social care^[6], and others such as Willem van Schaik, a professor of microbiology and infection, as reported by the Science Media Centre.^[7]

Again, is it ethical to deny children, young people and others their opportunity for natural immunity, and to plan to make them dependent on vaccine-induced immunity, to in effect make them dependent on the vaccine industry?

This is even more serious to consider in light of emerging vaccine product failures, e.g. pertussis and mumps.

The international community must be assured that independent and objective thinkers are carefully considering the way ahead on this matter.

References:

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2. Elisabeth Mahase. Covid-19: UK starts social distancing after new model points to 260 000 potential deaths. *BMJ*2020;368:m1089
3. Heidi Larson. Vaccine safety in the next decade. Why we need new modes of trust building? WHO Global Vaccine Safety Summit, 2-3 December 2019.
4. John P.A. Ioannidis. A fiasco in the making? As the coronavirus pandemic takes hold, we are making decisions without reliable data. *STAT*, 17 March 2020.
5. Coronavirus: 60% of UK population need to become infected so country can build 'herd immunity', government's chief scientist says. *Independent*, 13 March 2020.
6. The UK backs away from "herd immunity" coronavirus proposal amid blowback. *Vox*, 15 March 2020.
7. Expert comments about herd immunity. *Science Media Centre*, 13 March 2020.

Competing interests: No competing interests

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