



International

Latest REACT findings show high number of coronavirus infections across England

Imperial College London

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/205473/latest-react-findings-show-high-number/>

An interim report from the largest community COVID-19 testing programme has found a high infection prevalence and that cases have continued to rise. Results from swab tests carried out by more than 80,000 people out of a total of 150,000, taken between 18th and 26th September, show that infections have increased substantially across all age groups and areas of the country. The research, led by Imperial College London, estimated that over 1 in 200 people across England have the SARS-CoV-2 virus, or 0.55% of the population, compared to 0.13% in the previous round of testing. The biggest rise in cases was found in those aged over 65, which saw seven times as many cases as previously. A similar increase was found in those aged between 55-64. Young people continued to have the highest rates of infection, with 1 in 100 estimated to have the virus. Professor Steven Riley, study author and Professor of Infectious Disease Dynamics at Imperial, said: “These findings highlight that the situation in England is fast-moving, and demonstrate the need for continued engagement from the public to prevent unnecessary hospitalisations and deaths.”

Why we need to keep using the patient made term “Long COVID”

The British Medical Journal (BMJ)

<https://blogs.bmjjournals.com/bmjjournals/2020/10/01/why-we-need-to-keep-using-the-patient-made-term-long-covid/>

The article, authored by researchers across several UK universities, makes the case for using the term “Long COVID” to describe this condition, which can persist in some COVID-19 patients for weeks or months after recovery from the acute stage of the disease or infection. The article argues: 1) long COVID acknowledges that cause and disease course are as yet unknown; 2) long COVID makes clear that “mild” covid-19 is not necessarily mild; 3) long COVID avoids “chronic,” “post” and “syndrome”; 4) long COVID draws attention to morbidity; and 5) long COVID centres disabled people.

Epidemiology and transmission dynamics of COVID-19 in two Indian states

Science

<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/09/29/science.abd7672>

Although most COVID-19 cases have occurred in low-resource countries, little is known about the epidemiology of the disease in such contexts. Data from the Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh provide a detailed view into SARS-CoV-2 transmission pathways and mortality in a high-incidence setting. Reported cases and deaths have been concentrated in younger cohorts than expected from observations in higher-income countries, even after accounting for demographic differences across settings. Among 575,071 individuals exposed to 84,965 confirmed cases, infection probabilities ranged from 4.7-10.7% for low-risk and high-risk contact types. Same-age contacts were associated with the greatest infection risk. Case-fatality ratios spanned 0.05% at ages 5-17 years to 16.6% at ages ≥85 years. Primary data are urgently needed from low-resource countries to guide control measures. The analysis suggests substantial variation in individuals’ likelihood of transmitting: no secondary infections were linked to 71% of cases whose contacts were traced and tested. While the role of children in transmission has been debated we identify high prevalence of infection among children who were contacts of cases around their own age; this finding of enhanced infection risk among individuals exposed to similar-age cases was also apparent among adults. School closures and other non-pharmaceutical interventions during the study period may have contributed to reductions in contact among children. Nonetheless, our analyses suggest social interactions among children may be conducive to transmission in this setting.

Recovering from COVID-19: Lessons from Past Disasters in Asia and the Pacific

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/crisis-prevention-and-recovery/recovering-from-COVID-19-lessons-from-past-disasters-in-asia-pacific.html>

COVID-19 in Asia-Pacific has added to the multitude of risks that the region faces intersecting with natural hazards, conflicts and fragility. More than any previous disaster, the novel coronavirus has exposed underlying risks and vulnerabilities and challenged the traditional notion of risk. The impact on population groups with pre-existing vulnerabilities has been particularly severe especially where the health crisis has turned into a humanitarian and economic crisis. Moreover, national and local crises are currently exacerbated by the simultaneous sufferings of over 200 countries due to COVID-19. As the waves of the pandemic rise and fall, lessons from past disasters and epidemics can offer valuable insights for COVID-19 socio-economic recovery. The study highlights learnings from past disasters and features 10 lessons and good practices from Asia-Pacific: 1) caught unaware: Countries need to anticipate and plan for pandemics and disasters; 2) health first: a faster and stronger health response is critical to contain pandemics; 3) preventing a socio-economic crisis: rapid funding is pivotal to protect the most vulnerable; 4) get the evidence: data and assessments must guide recovery; 5) show me the money: diverse financing arrangements help to sustain long term recovery; 6) be the leader: dedicated national leadership is essential to achieve effective recovery; 7) stronger together: engaging local governments and community for inclusive response; 8) build forward: greener, smarter, better; 9) use the data: disaster data can help countries deal with changing riskscapes; 10) innovate.

Capitalism After the Pandemic

Foreign Affairs

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-10-02/capitalism-after-covid-19-pandemic>

In the months after the virus first surfaced, governments stepped in to address the concomitant economic and health crises, rolling out stimulus packages to protect jobs, issuing rules to slow the spread of the disease, and investing in the research and development of treatments and vaccines. These rescue efforts are necessary. But it is not enough for governments to simply intervene as the spender of last resort when markets fail or crises occur. They should actively shape markets so that they deliver the kind of long-term outcomes that benefit everyone. The article argues that the public sector should use its recovery policies to steer the direction of growth, (bailouts with conditions on the private sector, mandate vaccine availability, and refuse to bailout companies that will not stem carbon emissions). The pandemic provides the opportunity to correct this imbalance in a way that forces a new style of deal making. There are many existing problems: 1) finance is reinvested into finance in the form of stock buybacks, greater executive compensation; and 2) government policies come a little too late and the state is not seen as a partner in creating value, but as a fixer. The author suggests that the definition of value needs to be redefined. Currently value is interchangeable with price and does not reflect societal value that is created collectively.