

be important partners in work to prevent zoonotic transfers into humans and for surveillance of novel outbreaks of infectious diseases in wildlife or domesticated species. An obvious and immediate example of this is the current global outbreak of avian influenza.

86. Every national emergency has knock on effects on citizens lives beyond the immediate impact of the emergency itself - and there is always the possibility that the 'cure' for the specific emergency in terms of the policies and actions directed at stemming the primary damage causes harmful 'side effects'. In the case of a pandemic, lockdowns and quarantining, closing international borders and other restrictions to travel, closing of institutions such as schools and businesses all have serious adverse consequences. This raises important questions for policy makers about how to balance direct harms from the pandemic infection against the adverse consequences of interventions, singly or in combination.
87. Until now SAGE has been constituted solely of researchers with domain expertise in the direct causes and consequences of the pandemic (or other emergency) and the steps that could be taken to manage and mitigate the direct harms. In spite of this specificity, SAGE typically includes researchers and experts with very broad training and background skills, including scientists and engineers, and also social sciences such as behavioural scientists, psychologists, anthropologists and others. It has been suggested on numerous occasions that SAGE should also contain experts and researchers with expertise in all the other areas that could be affected significantly by the effects of the policies introduced to control, for the purpose of this Inquiry, the pandemic.
88. I think this suggestion crosses the line between the role of providing advice and the role of those who receive the advice and have the extremely onerous responsibility for making the ultimate policy decisions - government ministers, working with their policy officials. So, it is extremely important that the policy makers receive advice on what are the potential adverse consequences of, for example lockdowns, on businesses, the economy, education and indeed, other domains of health, including mental health and people potentially not presenting to the health system with other life-threatening conditions. But it is only the policy makers themselves who can ultimately decide on how to make the exceedingly difficult choices between, as a specific and rather pointed example, preservation of the health and lives of the elderly and vulnerable by measures that are likely to damage the economy and disrupt the education of young people.