

SPI-B comments on combined behavioural and social interventions.

1. SPI-B have a consensus view that school closures will be highly disruptive and likely to present an unequal burden to different sections of society. Our understanding of reports from Japan is that there is growing discontent around the policy. Isolation of entire households also poses a substantial, and unequal, burden on those affected.
2. Given this, the combination of interventions most likely to be socially acceptable involves isolation of symptomatic cases and isolation of at-risk members of the public. These are also the most closely targeted, and therefore obviously legitimate, strategies.
3. Following this, social distancing and prevention of public gathering measures are the next 'easiest' to add to the mix.
4. Empirical evidence for the behavioural and social impact of, and adherence to, each of the strategies is limited. We are not aware of any evidence on their interaction. These comments are therefore based on the collated expert opinions of SPI-B participants.
5. Research on the impact of interventions is likely to be underway in Italy, Japan and elsewhere. Access to these results would assist us in testing our assumptions and refining our advice.

Interaction of different strategies

6. As additional policies are added to each other, their impact is likely to become more complex and unintended consequences more likely.
7. If all policies are applied, then the closure of schools, the loss of usual outlets for social interactions, and the absence of grandparents and entire families as a result of isolation might lead to unexpected displacement of activity. For example, house parties, congregation of children in parks, and queues at takeaways. Consideration will be needed as to how to manage these situations without causing confrontation.
8. Applying multiple policies concurrently will also increase the chances that there will be areas or groups who are visibly not complying, or not seeming to comply. It also increases the severity of the inequality of the measures. This will be in terms of financial and social impact but also of the perceived likelihood of contagion if some measures seem impossible to adhere to. This further raises the risk of community tension or disorder.
9. School closure in conjunction with isolation of those aged 65+ will reduce the ability of grandparents to engage in childcare. This may be beneficial in terms of morbidity of those aged 65+, but will reduce the ability for parents to work. This may be particularly problematic for lower income families and single parents. Consideration should also be given to the impact on workers for critical national infrastructure.
10. School closure and isolation of symptomatic cases, will present difficulties for some symptomatic people in terms of their ability to adhere to isolation. For single parents, adherence may become impossible. For poorer families, loss of income and increased