

and behavioural science implications.

5. Adequate seroprevalence data and of behavioural data is required to track and assess effectiveness of these interventions in real time during an outbreak.

6. Social distancing for over-65s is likely to have a significant effect on overall deaths and peak demand for critical care beds, but will not significantly reduce overall transmission. This would be most effective for those living independently; it will be a challenge to implement this measure within communal settings such as care homes.

7. There is currently no evidence that cancelling large events would be effective.

8. There is likely to be geographical variation in the timing of localised peaks of the epidemic.

9. SAGE noted the importance of assessing the wider health implications of these interventions, for example the effect of self-isolation on mental health.

Actions

- SPI-M to provide timings for when interventions should be implemented for next SAGE meeting (5 March 2020)
- SAGE participants to put basic confidence statements today around the evidence available for the impact of potential interventions

Behavioural science considerations

10. Key to minimising barriers and facilitating compliance with the proposed interventions are communication, feasibility and equity.

11. Coherent and unambiguous communication, and suggesting replacement behaviours, will help increase compliance.

12. Encouraging positive behaviours as social norms can be powerful.

13. Many of the proposed measures will be easier to implement for those on higher incomes. Government should address this to avoid tension within communities and detrimental effects on compliance.

14. Unintended consequences should be considered including potential alternative behaviours (for example people congregating elsewhere when events are cancelled).

15. Consideration should be given to how and when measures will be removed, and any impact this may have on the transmission of the disease (for example causing a second peak).

Action

- PHE to begin drafting public guidance on potential interventions, informed by evidence of what constitutes effective guidance (including from behavioural science) and to advise where there are evidence gaps requiring rapid research

Science advice for NHS planning

16. NHS England confirmed it now has sufficient information for operational planning.

17. Singapore have developed a serology test with some cross-reactivity with SARS, meaning a second test for presumptive positives will be required.

18. Serology data from Wuhan will be extremely helpful in planning the UK response to COVID-19.

Actions