



17-03-2020

To the Chief Medical Officer Scotland

Dear Dr Calderwood,

Following our correspondence on 14-03-2020, we decided to write you again to underline our ongoing concerns about the steps taken by the UK government regarding the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak. Although we understand the rationale behind the proposed actions, and we fully acknowledge the tremendous efforts of government and NHS to tackle this outbreak, we are still concerned more actions could help the cause.

Our wonderful health care system is currently working really hard to ensure care is provided where needed; however we are still concerned that the system might ultimately become overwhelmed towards the peak of the epidemic.

This is further supported by the rapidly increasing numbers of concerns that we and others receive from healthcare workers, underwriting there is already now not sufficient personal protection equipment to protect them from protracting the virus. Although we realize the leadership will already have anticipated a possible shortage of equipment in the long term when designing the current policy, given the extend of current worries among our frontline workers, we feel it is necessary to do more to support them and listen to them, ensuring they will stay healthy and effective in the difficult period to come.

In this context, we would also like to advise to immediately implement testing of healthcare professionals showing respiratory symptoms, to ensure that no unnecessary numbers of staff have to self-isolating who otherwise could have help to fight the outbreak. Testing would also help to ensure that those professionals do not feel torn between staying home thus not helping their colleagues with the current workload, versus possibly infecting those same appreciated colleagues at the same time.

Maximum efforts on slowing down and containment of the outbreak would also buy us time to wait for vaccines to arrive on the market; today the first phase 1 clinical trial has started, and experts have acknowledged we might expect a vaccine as early as the summer if all goes well.

WHO including experienced doctors who were involved in fighting the Ebola outbreak have also advised on maximum efforts to contain the outbreak, meaning also testing and tracing as much as possible infected individuals in the community alongside the hospitals. The lack of testing in the community might lead to absence of information regarding speed of spread, the emergence of pockets of infection, and efficacy of measures, which are all extremely valuable data needed to inform anticipated measures downstream.

Furthermore, they advise stringent actions for social distancing, to dramatically slow down the spread of the virus in the community. We are afraid the current mostly voluntary actions

regarding physical distancing will allow more rapid spread of the virus compared to our surrounding countries. First evidence from the Italian situation shows that very early (within days of the first cases)and extensive actions have worked to flatten the curve after two weeks. We are already significantly further in the outbreak, and would like to emphasise that every day counts. Also countries including Singapore and South Korea have shown to be able to contain the virus with the proposed stringent but socially acceptable actions, including maximal physical distancing, continuous case and contact tracing, and self-isolation.

We therefore call upon the Scottish government to take more stringent actions now.

This advice concerns further more stringent social distancing including pubs, theatres and sports facilities to close down, and calling upon the community to limit use of public transportation as well as social mixing at home, during play dates, and gathering of groups of teenagers like they have communicated in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, we feel it is wise to close nursery, schools and universities, with exception of children of healthcare workers, policemen, and other critical professions.

Furthermore, we would strongly advise to put more emphasis to protect the vulnerable population, and therefore ask the chronically ill and elderly population to self-isolate, including working from work, avoiding shops and stores, avoiding direct interaction with young children, and call upon the community to help the vulnerable with delivery of groceries and other necessities and providing social (distanced) support.

Also we would like to advocate that our frontline workers will receive the minimum required PPE needed to protect themselves, and can receive Covid19 testing in case of symptoms, ensuring our healthcare system stays at maximum capacity.

Finally we once again would like to underwrite the necessity to continue community testing, and even tracing and isolation of positive cases in the community where possible, to help slow down the epidemic and to support future decisions.

Sincerely,

Personal Data

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