1		Wednesday, 2 October 2024	1
2	(10	.00 am)	2
3		PROFESSOR KATHRYN ROWAN (continued)	3
4	LA	DY HALLETT: Ms Rowan, I'm so sorry about yesterday	4
5		afternoon and my rapid departure. In over 40 years as a	5
6		barrister and a judge, I've never had to leave a hearing	6
7		in that manner but I'm afraid I had no alternative,	7
8		I was about to be violently sick. So I'm really sorry.	8
9	Α.	That's absolutely fine, my Lady, and I hope you are	9
10		feeling a lot better today.	10
11	LA	DY HALLETT: I'm on the mend, thank you.	11
12		Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY (continued)	12
13	MR	FIREMAN: Professor Rowan, if we could go back to what we	13
14		were discussing briefly yesterday. Just towards the end	14
15		of your evidence yesterday we were discussing the	15
16		concept which you have termed as ICNARC ICU capacity	16
17		strain, and you described the impact during the pandemic	17
18		on what you described as pandemic high and pandemic	18
19		extreme as capacity strain.	19
20		Just in terms of a headline point that we can	20
21		derive from that, is it right, I think that you were	21
22		saying, that that meant that, certainly in the second	22
23		wave, during periods of pandemic high or pandemic	23
24		extreme strain, a patient who went into ICU at that	24
25		time, with all other factors being equal, was more	25
4		from the Ohiof Medical Officer for Evaluated	4
ו ר		Professor Sir Chris Whitty, and he said that yory early	ו ס
2		on in the pandemic it became clear that are was a very	2
J ⊿		high risk factor for Covid 10 infection and admission to	3
4		critical care and death	4
5		ICNARC did their own analysis. Did that align	5
7		with that massage?	7
י 8	۸	Ves it did. What we did with data from the first wave	, 8
a	-	was we did some modelling what we call multivariable	q
10		modelling It's where you're looking at all the	10
11		nossible factors that could impact on hospital death	11
12		and in that analysis, where you allow if you like each	12
13		factor to compete with itself in terms of importance	13
14		age was the most significant factor driving likelihood	14
15		of not surviving in intensive care sorry, not	15
16		surviving to hospital discharge.	16
17	Q.	Is age a significant risk factor with a number of	17
18		different diseases as well?	18
19	Α.	So age is an important factor. When you look at it in	19
20		isolation, obviously as we get older we get frailer we	20
21		get I think what you have to remember is what comes	21
22		with age are comorbidities, chronic conditions. So. vou	22
23		know, looking at age per se alone is it's, sort of.	23
24		almost like a proxy for number of other things and,	24
25		therefore, one of the reasons we build these	25

1		likely to die than had they gone into ICU at another
2		time; is that correct?
3	Α.	Yes. What we showed was that in the second wave
4		patients admitted in pandemic high and pandemic extreme
5		the association with the likelihood of dying before
6		discharge from hospital was greater, absolutely.
7	Q.	In very simple terms, does that demonstrate that
8		capacity is not just a figure or a stat but can have
9		a real clinical impact on outcomes?
10	Α.	l think obviously I do not deliver critical care and
11		my very noble clinical colleagues do and they're
12		probably better able to answer what it's like to work in
13		a very busy unit. But it does suggest that when there
14		is too much going on when there are too many
15		natients and you've not to remember as I said
16		vesterday, there was also those nations being managed
17		outside the critical acre unit that that appears to
10		be appealed with part of patients perhaps not
10		be associated with, sont or, patients perhaps not
19	~	less likely to survive to nospital discharge.
20	Q.	I want to ask you about some of the data surrounding the
21		characteristics of the patients who were actually being
22		admitted to ICU and the messages that we can glean from
23		this.
24		With respect to the first characteristic I want to
25		ask you about, it's age. We heard evidence last week 2
1		multivariable models is to allow all those other things
2		to sort of compete in terms of determining.
3		But age is an important risk factor for survival
4		to hospital discharge for intensive care patients.
5	Q.	For clarity, your multivariable approach, does that
6		strip out some of those other factors?
7	Α.	True. When you do those sort of models, yes, some of
8		them prove not to be statistically significant in the
9		model. So you're looking at the factors that are
10		driving or most impactful on not surviving to hospital
11		discharge. So the ones that are most strongly
12		associated with all the others in the model, and some
13		prove not to be associated
14	0	Can we then look at please age in the context of the
15	ч.	nandemic
16		And can we please go to INO000474239 and this
17		is figure 5
1/ 19		Con Lask you to start placed by just describing
10		what we are in terms of the three lines and what the
19		tell up
∠U 0.4		
21	Α.	Okay. So as yesterday, this graph is set out like the

other graphs. So what you see here is that during the

roll-out of vaccines, patients admitted to critical care

for Covid-19, the orange line, were of a similar age to

4

first two waves of the pandemic and prior to the

(1) Pages 1 - 4

3

is around March or April 2020?

Wave 1 of the pandemic?

And carry on, sorry, I interrupted you.

During wave 1.

a number of factors.

Indeed.

winter pressure?

That is -- I'm just looking at that myself. Yes, it's sort of -- it starts to drop in early March and you can see it coming down and then recovering. So it's sort of March and April and May. So it's during the wave.

So then what I was going to say is obviously, as I said yesterday, the patients who end up in intensive care, the data on patients who end up in intensive care can only tell you who is in intensive care. What changed to the pool of patients, if you like, in the hospital are

So, for example, in wave 1 there was a policy to stop elective work and other things, and that may have impacted on the age of the pool of patients, you know, with other conditions presenting for critical care. If we look, though, at the pre-pandemic period, it's right, isn't it, that the "All other patients" line -of course, there's no Covid-19 at this point, but it is a relatively flat line during the pandemic period?

That would include, wouldn't it, periods of intense

6

Now, whether age alone was the reason for any decision-making or whether a whole number of factors were taken into account in terms of the overall clinical picture of likelihood of benefit and the result of that was those getting into intensive care units were of a lower age, I don't know the answer to that.

Obviously this is an area that is of significant concern to a number of those interested in the Inquiry,

particularly core participants who are concerned about

Are you able to say whether or not, and I imagine from your answer you may not, but are you able to say whether this provides potential evidence that elderly patients were disadvantaged by prioritisation decisions? I think it provides potential evidence, yes. I think one would ask the caregivers about the decision-making

Professor Kevin Fong last week that the whole system was under such strain that perhaps, sort of, more rational decision-making was not possible because of the strain on the whole system. I can only look at the strain in

8

the fact that elderly patients may have been disadvantaged by prioritisation decisions.

that was taking place during that period. And, as you know, we heard from

a possibility -- I can't tell you one way or the other -- some form of conscience rationing.

1		patients admitted for other reasons.	1	
2		During the Delta wave, in mid- to late 2021,	2	Α
3		patients admitted to critical care were younger, and we	3	
4		think that's most likely related to the vaccine policy,	4	
5		where they started the vaccines were the policy	5	
6		for the roll-out of vaccine were to vaccinate the most	6	Q
7		vulnerable, but also starting with the most the	7	Α
8		oldest sort of population.	8	Q
9		During the Omicron wave, patients admitted to	9	Α
10		critical care for Covid-19 were, again, of a similar age	10	
11		to patients admitted for other reasons.	11	
12	Q.	If we now take a look at the dotted black dotted	12	
13		line, that's overall patients.	13	
14	Α.	Yes.	14	
15	Q.	If we could have a look, in terms of the comparison,	15	
16		between the pre-pandemic period and the pandemic period,	16	
17		what notable messages are there in comparison between	17	
18		those two periods?	18	
19	Α.	So really looking at the orange line, that's the Covid	19	Q
20		patients, and the lighter blue line, because obviously	20	
21		the dark dotted line is a combination of the two, you	21	
22		can see a drop in the mean age.	22	
23		Now, what	23	Α
24	Q.	Sorry, just to be clear, do you recall we can't see	24	Q
25		on the zoomed-in version but, I think, is it right, this	25	
		5		
1	Α.	Indeed. I think it would be hard to see dips but I'm	1	
2		just looking at it, maybe slight dips, sort of,	2	
3		November/December/January but they would be hard to see	3	
4		in these data but, yes, we don't see a dip of the same	4	
5		sort of magnitude in the pre-pandemic period.	5	
6	Q.	We then see that dip which you were talking about	6	
7	Α.	Yes.	7	
8	Q.	and you mentioned the potential impact of elective	8	
9		care being suspended. Is a potential other explanation	9	Q
10		something which you touch on in your paragraph 7.6 of	10	
11		your witness statement, that there was potentially	11	
12		evidence from the data of rationing of care going on?	12	
13	Α.	So perhaps I could tackle that paragraph. So I want to	13	
14		just talk about that pool. So what we don't know is	14	
15		what patients or what people are not getting to	15	
16		hospital. We don't know about what people are getting	16	
17		to hospital later than they might have got during	17	
18		outside a pandemic. We don't know what people were not	18	Α
19		getting referred because in a busy hospital and busy	19	
20		critical care, the sort of systems for referral may not	20	
21		have been working the same. We don't know what sort of	21	
22		what I might call subconscious rationing might have been	22	
23		going on, and that's the notion where you know the unit	23	
24		is full, so the patients are not being referred. And	24	
25		then there may have been, there is	25	

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(2) Pages 5 - 8

1	_	intensive care.	1		(
2	Q.	Thank you.	2		1
3		I his particular graph can come down for the	3		(
4		moment.	4		
5		But can I just clarify in terms of the way you	5		
0		the LIK2	0		
/ 0	•	LIE UN?	<i>1</i>		
0	А.	so this is all intensive care units providing level 5	0		
9 10		It's from the joint report that we provided And then	9 1(h	'
11		what you're looking at is for every week in the graph we	11	1	6
12		have basically on a daily basis averaged the patients	12	>	`
13		ages and then averaged it by seven days if that makes	13	3	
14		sense. So it's sort of a weekly daily average, if that	14	1	
15		makes sense.	15	5	
16	Q.	I'm not sure we need necessarily worry too much about	16	3	
17		this precise way	17	7	
18	Α.	It's clear in the beginning of the report if you want me	18	3	
19		to	19	9	
20	Q.	We are clear as to the fact that you have totalled up	20)	
21		the ages	21	1	
22	Α.	Yes.	22	2	
23	Q.	and then you have	23	3	
24	Α.	You can see it as an average of the patients admitted	24	1	
25		that week.	25	5	
		9			
1		at the data on pre-existing chronic conditions and this	1		
2		is at INQ000474239 and figure 7.	2		
3		Can I ask you to, again, explain what this graph	3		
4		shows us?	4		(
5	А.	Absolutely. Forgive me, i'm just trying to find the	5		
0 7		ngnt sneet nere.	0		
/ Q		the emergence of the Omicron variant, patients admitted	/ Q		
0 0		to critical care with Covid-19 are less likely to have	0		
10		any pre-existing advanced chronic condition than	5 1(h	
11		patients admitted for other reasons and then during the	11	1	
12		Omicron wave this pattern reversed and patients admitted	12	>	'
13		with Covid-19 were more likely to have an advanced	13	3	
14		chronic condition.	14	1	
15		So, sort of, what we're sort of looking at here is	15	5	
16		advanced chronic conditions obviously highly, sort of,	16	3	
17		associated or correlated with older age and Covid-19	17	7	
18		prior to vaccination was caused critical illness in	18	3	
19		all patients, sort of, type thing. After vaccination	19	9	
20		had been established and with the Omicron wave,	20)	
21		admission to critical care tended to be for Covid-19	21	1	
22		tended to be associated for patients who had other	22	2	
23		conditions or other things. So more complex patients or	23	3	
24		more patients with greater numbers of comorbidities,	24	1	(
25		Covid was like a tipping point to bring them into 11	25	5	

1	Q.	So a daily figure?
2	Α.	Yes.
3	Q.	That makes sense, thank you.
4		It leads me to my next question, which is really
5		that that doesn't account, does it, for potential
6 7		variability amongst intensive care units because there
/		may well be some where they are admitting older patients
0	•	and some where they are only admitting
9 10	А.	produce figures for individual units
11	Q.	If we could then turn to another aspect, you said that
12	-	age is just one factor and alone it may not tell us that
13		much. We need to look at other data. Another data
14		point that ICNARC has looked at is pre-existing chronic
15		conditions, and going back to your witness statement at
16		paragraph 7.6 you touch on some of the data in relation
17		to pre-existing chronic conditions.
18		You say that:
19		"The peaks of the first two waves of the pandemic
20		were also associated with decreases in the proportions
21		of patients admitted for reasons other than COVID-19
22		that were: aged 75 years or older or (for non-elective
23		admissions) had any prior dependency or any advanced
24		chronic condition."
25		So just with that paragraph in mind, can we look
1		intensive care.
2		Prior to that, Covid-19 itself was serious enough
3	-	to bring you into intensive care.
4	Q.	What we also have to bear in mind, don't we,
5		Professor Rowan, is that this is only telling us about
6 7		patients coming into intensive care, and so it's
/ 0		possible, again and i appreciate that it's just
o Q		evidence of prioritisation decisions being taken isn't
10		it?
11	Α.	I think again if you look at the "All other patients"
12	7.0	that that's the line to look at, which is the light blue
13		one, and that does suggest the percentage with any
14		advanced chronic conditions dipped slightly. So the big
15		dark dotted line I think is driven mainly by the Covid
16		patients, but you do see a dip in the proportion of
17		patients with advanced chronic conditions.
18		Now I go back to that point I made about patients
19		not getting to hospital or getting to hospital late as
20		potentially, sort of, one of the factors that drove that
21		but, with only data on intensive care, it's difficult to
22		understand the pool of patients who would have been in
23	_	the hospital and potentially eligible for critical care.
24	Q.	As you said earlier, the data is just one aspect of the
25		entire picture and there may be a variety of reasons,

12

(3) Pages 9 - 12

1		but is it are some coherent reasons, potentially,
2		just to clarify, the lack of elective care, people
3		self-selecting and staying away from intensive care,
4		people in some cases sadly dying at home rather than
5		coming to intensive care, and also potentially some
6		decisions being taken to prioritise those patients who
7		have the best chance of recovery and those patients
8		being admitted to intensive care. Are all of those
9		reasons plausible?
10	Α.	All of those reasons are plausible in terms of driving
11		that sort of dip of the percentage with advanced chronic
12	_	conditions being admitted.
13	Q.	Just to clarify the point finally, you do note in your
14		witness statement that changes to patient
15		characteristics, in the way that they were during the
16		pandemic, as you have phrased it, that patients who were
17		aged 75 years or older or for non-elective admissions
18		had any prior dependency or advanced chronic conditions
19		making up a smaller percentage of those in intensive
20		care, those changes weren't seen during other winter
21		periods of the
22	Α.	I think that's really important when we go back to just
23		thinking about the strain on intensive care in those
24		first two waves. It was like notning you know, you
25		can't parallel it with our usual winter pressures, 13
1	-	part of the national clinical audit for critical care.
1 2	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that
1 2 3	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19
1 2 3 4	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if
1 2 3 4 5	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the
1 2 3 4 5 6	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you. So this shows us the percentage of patients from
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you. So this shows us the percentage of patients from white ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you. So this shows us the percentage of patients from white ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined by reason for admission and month.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 12	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you. So this shows us the percentage of patients from white ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined by reason for admission and month. What is the message or the messages that are capable of being gloaned from this graph?
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you. So this shows us the percentage of patients from white ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined by reason for admission and month. What is the message or the messages that are capable of being gleaned from this graph? So we've spent a lot of time looking at these data, so perhaps first we might just look at "All other patients" and "(elective)" and "(non-elective)", and you can see during the relevant period that the pandemic there might be a slight downward trend in the per cent from white ethnic groups. We've looked at the date and
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you. So this shows us the percentage of patients from white ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined by reason for admission and month. What is the message or the messages that are capable of being gleaned from this graph? So we've spent a lot of time looking at these data, so perhaps first we might just look at "All other patients" and "(elective)" and "(non-elective)", and you can see during the relevant period that the pandemic there might be a slight downward trend in the per cent from white ethnic groups. We've looked at the data and that seems to be mainly coding of othnicity as pet
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you. So this shows us the percentage of patients from white ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined by reason for admission and month. What is the message or the messages that are capable of being gleaned from this graph? So we've spent a lot of time looking at these data, so perhaps first we might just look at "All other patients" and "(elective)" and "(non-elective)", and you can see during the relevant period that the pandemic there might be a slight downward trend in the per cent from white ethnic groups. We've looked at the data and that seems to be mainly coding of ethnicity as not
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you. So this shows us the percentage of patients from white ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined by reason for admission and month. What is the message or the messages that are capable of being gleaned from this graph? So we've spent a lot of time looking at these data, so perhaps first we might just look at "All other patients" and "(elective)" and "(non-elective)", and you can see during the relevant period that the pandemic there might be a slight downward trend in the per cent from white ethnic groups. We've looked at the data and that seems to be mainly coding of ethnicity as not stated, so more an artefact of the data than sort of any downward decrease in the percentage from white ethnic
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25	Q.	part of the national clinical audit for critical care. I just want to run through some of the graphs that demonstrate the differences in the way in which Covid-19 was affecting patients of different ethnicities, and if we could start chronologically with the first one in the report. This is INQ000480138, and it's figure 29, if this could come on, screen please. Thank you. So this shows us the percentage of patients from white ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined by reason for admission and month. What is the message or the messages that are capable of being gleaned from this graph? So we've spent a lot of time looking at these data, so perhaps first we might just look at "All other patients" and "(elective)" and "(non-elective)", and you can see during the relevant period that the pandemic there might be a slight downward trend in the per cent from white ethnic groups. We've looked at the data and that seems to be mainly coding of ethnicity as not stated, so more an artefact of the data than sort of any downward decrease in the percentage from white ethnic groups. Then it's really looking at the Covid, the patients admitted for Covid, and what you can see is at 15

1		why you know, winter pressures provide or cause some
2		strain on the critical care system that we'd rather
3		avoid. The waves of the pandemic were unlike anything
4		that we'd ever seen and the numbers of patients were so
5		much greater.
6		But yes, we don't see these reductions in usual
7		winter pressures.
8	Q.	That can come down now, thank you.
9		Some of the other work that ICNARC has done
10		looking at patient characteristics involves looking at
11		the ethnicity of patients that were admitted to
12		intensive care units. Just to clarify, I think this is
13		work you undertook as ICNARC but it's not work that was
14		done as a joint effort with SICSAG so I'm just going to
15		ask you about England Wales and Northern Ireland for
16		these purposes.
17	Α.	Indeed, we were one of the few data sets that actually
18		had accurate data on ethnicity which we shared with
19		other groups early on in the pandemic to make sure that
20		data linkage could occur. But yes these were data
21		from the Case Mix Programme
22	0	And this is data that you had prior to the pandemic
22	ω. Δ	So
20	<u> </u>	that you continued monitoring?
25	ω. Δ	Ves we it was part of the dataset that we collect as
20	Α.	14
1		certain periods the per cent from white ethnic groups
2		decreases markedly from a level of about 70% down to 50
3		or even and I'm just reading off the graph here or
4		even yes, the one arrowed is probably about 35/40%.
5		So the converse of that is an increase in non-white
6		ethnic groups.
7		But actually these don't coincide with the
8		pandemic waves They occur just after the sort of the
9		height of the wave if you were to superimpose the
10		wayes the first and second waye. And our hypothesis
11		and it really is only a hypothesis of what might have
12		been going on is that during the waves, at high rates
12		of transmission. Covid was bitting everybody. So
1/		transmission was high and everybody was getting
14		
16		Outside the wayes we might hypothesise that some
10		duside the waves we might hypothesise that some
10		reflected in this graph, as the per cent of notionts
10		who were non white may have been at more with arthly
19		for a whole boot of reasons and more likely to be
20		or a whole host of reasons and more likely to be
21	~	aumilieu ouiside ine waves for Covid-19.
22	ų.	so mere are two messages, are mere, Protessor Rowan,
23		in terms of now this pandemic was affecting white
24		patients? First of all, Covid-19 was perhaps less
25		cangerous for white patients than other conditions may

	have been in terms of admission to ICU based on this	1	
	graph; is that right?	2	
Α.	Let me just I think Covid-19, the per cent of	3	
	patients, white ethnic group patients getting Covid-19	4	
	was lower than other conditions that require admission	5	
	to intensive care.	6	
Q.	Thank you. But also, as you have rightly said, the	7	
	message may be clearer when we look at some of the	8	
	non-white groups	9	A
Α.	Yes, I think it's	10	
Q.	which we are going to do now.	11	
Α.	We also saw this pattern in patients admitted from the	12	
	most deprived quintile, which again, you see this	13	
	post-wave, that patients more deprived were a lot more	14	
	likely to be admitted to	15	
Q.	Could you just explain what you mean by that?	16	
Α.	So one can, by residential postcode and area the patient	17	
	lives, divide postcode areas into the degree of	18	
	deprivation in that area, if that makes sense.	19	
Q.	And the message was what with respect to those patients?	20	
Α.	So, sort of similar to this, which is, in the periods	21	
	inter-wave periods, we saw patients who lived in more	22	
	deprived residential areas more likely to be admitted to	23	
~	Intensive care.	24	
Q.	1 nars clear. 17	25	
	what the reasons are but it does seem that between the	1	
	waves there was a greater vulnerability and it seems	2	
	that patients of an Asian ethnic group were more likely	3	Ç
	to be admitted. There were a greater proportion of them	4	
	admitted to critical care with Covid-19.	5	
Q.	With respect to the blue line, the "All other patients"	6	
	line, horizontal line, would it be right that that	7	
	broadly corresponds to what one might expect to see for	8	
	patients from an ethnic background in terms of the	9	A
	proportion of the population, but if we look at, in	10	
	particular, the period which I think you spoke about	11	
	just before between January 2021 and July 2021, it looks	12	C
	as if there's a much, much, much more significant, quite	13	A
	stark, increase in the number of Asian patients there.	14	
	Is that correct?	15	G
Α.	Yes, indeed, absolutely. So, generally, patients	16	
	admitted to critical care with Covid, there were	17	
	a higher proportion from Asian ethnic groups relative to	18	
	other conditions. The "other conditions" lines, as you	19	
	must imagine, are a whole host of different conditions,	20	
	elective and non-elective, that are reasons for	21	A

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- 22 admission to critical care. So overall Covid, and
- 23 between these waves, there were marked increases between 24 the waves of Covid.
 - I think it's just this notion of these spikes do

19

Could we now look, please, at figure 33. Thank you. This is the percentage of patients from Asian ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined by reason for admission and month. It would be fair to say, wouldn't it, this tells us a very different picture in terms of the impact of Covid-19 on these patients in terms of admission to ICU? So what this suggests is that patients with Covid-19 who come from an Asian ethnic group seemed to be at a higher risk of being admitted to critical care with Covid-19. However, what you also see is, again, there's a sort of fairly steady, when we talk about the first couple of waves, sort of rate at about -- and I'm looking at the graph here, forgive me -- about 15%. But what you can see is between the waves the number, the proportion of patients from an Asian ethnic group actually increases and this is this notion again of between the waves it appears that those who were more vulnerable were the ones who were getting sick, and this might have been an increased exposure to the risk of Covid-19 and again it -- sort of, possibly for multifactorial reasons, including, sort of, potentially health inequalities, barriers to equitable care, uptake of testing, uptake of vaccination. One can't be sure 18 not correspond to the waves -- the first two waves of the pandemic.

- 2. From the analysis that ICNARC has done, am I right that in terms of the proportion of patients, in terms of disproportionate representation in intensive care units,
- Asian patients or patients from an Asian ethnicity were most significantly affected in terms of disproportionate
 - representation in ICU?
- So when we looked at all the prognostic factors for ٩.
- 30-day mortality and critically-ill patients with
- Covid-19, age was by far the most --
- Sorry, just in terms of ethnicity.
- -- significant factor. Asian ethnicity indicated an increased risk too.
- Q. And if we could now look at figure, I think it's 37,
- please, this is the percentage of patients from black
- ethnic groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- combined by reason for admission and month.

What is the message with respect to these patients?

- This is sort of -- at one level it's showing a sort of
- 22 similar pattern but it's quite difficult to interpret
- 23 this one in terms of sort of increased risk. Certainly
- 24 in our multivariable analysis, black ethnicity did not
- 25 shown a statistically increased risk but it is true that 20

1		for patients admitted to intensive care for Covid-19 it
2		sometimes parallels the lines for all other patients,
3		non-elective and elective, but there are definitely
4		periods where black ethnicity is greater, the proportion
5		of patients from black ethnicity is greater for patients
6		admitted with Covid-19. I think that's about all I can
7		say about that.
8	Q.	Thank you, that can come down.
9		Just reflecting on all of the graphs we have seen.
10		it seems that up until the Omicron variant at least it
11		was particularly true that patients from non-white
12		backgrounds were at greater risk of admission to ICU
13		That's a message we can dean from the data is it?
14	۸	It ie
14	<u> </u>	Thank you
10	ω.	Are there any other messages from the data that
10		Are there any other messages from the data that
10		you leel we haven't covered having looked at those
10		graphs which you would like to address?
19	А.	I think when you put all that data together, age,
20		advanced chronic conditions, ethnicities, deprivation,
21		and wider reading of what was going on during the
22		pandemic, it does suggest health inequalities. And
23		health inequalities are, sort of, avoidable, unfair and
24		systemic differences in health between different groups
25		of people, including differences in life expectancy,
		21
1	Α.	So it is true. Would you like me to clarify on why?
2	Q.	Yes, please.
3	Α.	Yes, sure.
4		So clearly when one's looking at trends and
5		statistics on groups, one needs a sample size that one
6		can feel confident that the statistics that one is
7		generating are sort of robust and we awaited the numbers
8		essentially to get to a sufficient sample size so that
9		we could put out what we might call, I think, robust,
10		reliable, statistics on the sort of non-white ethnic
11		groups.
12	Q.	Yes, and this was something that ICNARC introduced sort
13		of your own motion. It wasn't something you were asked
14		to do by the Department of Health or NHS England?
15	Α.	If I'm absolutely honest, like I'm sure others watching
16		TV reporting, one became aware that there was there
17		appeared to be issues around non-white ethnicity the
18		causes being I'm sure many and we wanted to fully and
10		transparently report as best we could and that's why we
20		introduced that reporting
20	0	
22	હ.	Moving on to another tonic, and that's measuring
22 22		critical care capacity
20		ontiour ouro oupdoity.

- 24 Now, in February 2020, ICNARC provided a report
- 25 about potential and available critical care capacity,

1		behavioural risks, access to and availability of health
2		and care services, and the quality and experience of
3		care, and I think it's important for us to really focus
4		on health inequalities, because I think they really
5		come they are really magnified during conditions such
6		as a pandemic.
7	MR	FIREMAN: Professor Rowan, that's all that I want to ask
8		you today. I just want to take the opportunity to thank
9		you on behalf of the Inquiry for the work that you've
10		done putting together these reports.
11		There are some further questions now for you from
12		other core participants.
13	Α.	Thank you very much.
14		Questions from MS HAMMAD
15	MS	HAMMAD: Professor Rowan, I represent the Covid Bereaved
16		Families for Justice UK and I've got a few topics to ask
17		you about. The first one you have already answered
18		most of my questions, and it's about disparities in
19		relation to ethnic groups.
20		Just following on from what you've told us, you
21		said that you're one of the few datasets that had
22		accurate data on ethnicity. Is it right that it was
23		from 5 April 2020 that ICNARC introduced reporting by
24		ethnic group into your weekly reports that you were
25		providing?
		22

1		and is it right that that report looked at the number of
2		available bed days versus the number of occupied bed
3		days and that that analysis was based on the number of
4		physical beds?
5	Α.	So that was based on so we with quarterly
6		submissions to the Case Mix Programme, the national
7		clinical audit, we asked units to give us a number of
8		their, sort of, operational beds, I think would be the
9		way to see it. So we've heard in the Inquiry a lot,
10		it's not just a bed on wheels is a bed, a bed has to be
11		equipped with a ventilator if it's going to provide
12		level 3 care and has to be staffed. So it has to be
13		funded, equipped and staffed with the skilled critical
14		care nurses that deliver skilled intensive care.
15		So it was based on those numbers rather than
16		physical beds per se. So, you know, sometimes there are
17		additional beds in the unit that are not equipped or
18		staffed.
19	Q.	Moving on to how we assess capacity in the future,
20		I think you are listed as a contributor to a report by
21		the Intensive Care Society which was produced in
22		September sorry, in January 2021, and is titled
23		"Co-developing the future".
24		Now, that report recommended that rather than
25		looking at physical beds or occupied beds, a better way 24

1	to understand critical care capacity would be to move to	1		be
2	a classification system based on patient needs for	2		ľv
3	multidisciplinary staffing input. Do you think that	3		bre
4	would be a better way to look at capacity ahead of	4		
5	future pandemics?	5		sa
6	A. So I think obviously, a bed is not a critical care	6		ma
7	bed until a patient is in that bed who is critically	7		de
8	ill. So I think it's a mix of what that bed is being	8	Α.	Sc
9	used for and how that bed is equipped and staffed.	9		yo
10	It's tricky to know exactly the point at which	10		fol
11	a patient becomes critically ill. I think that's really	11	Q.	Do
12	important but I do think our ability to provide quality	12	Α.	Co
13	care, effective, humane, equitable care, to people who	13	Q.	Yo
14	become progressively sicker in the hospital is probably	14		be
15	best done by trying to see to what extent we can meet	15		the
16	the need of those sort of increasing levels of critical	16		on
17	Illness or whatever.	1/		reo
18	MS HAMMAD: I hank you very much. I think my other questions	18		the
19	have been covered. Thank you.	19		
20		20		so
21	LADY HALLETI: Thank you very much.	21	•	do O
22	Who's next? Mis Snephera.	22	A.	Ur Ve
23	MS SHEPHERD: Thank you, my Lady.	23	Q.	re So
24	MS SHEDHEDD: Good morning Professor Rowan Lannear on	24	Α.	be
	25			
1	intensive care and multi-organ support was much greater	1		for
2	proportions than we'd seen normally for patients in	2		mo
3	Intensive care. So that suggests and the word	3		of,
4	"suggests" is important there that the patients who	4		SIC
5	were being triaged into intensive care were those who	5		vv
0	of combinations of educated support which were usually	0		10
/ 0	on, combinations of advanced support, which were usually	/ 0		the
0	considered to be advanced respiratory support, advanced	0		00
9 10	support. And that's just looking at the data of those	9 10	мс	са сн
11	in intensive care and pre-supposing that those with	10	1010	011
12	single-organ support needs and sort of triangulating	12		or
13	that with the data that we know from our clinical	13		de
14	colleagues, so those having single-organ support were	14	Α.	Ye
15	most likely being treated in other areas of the	15		wh
16	hospital, so the non-invasive respiratory support.	16		otł
17	Does that help?	17		ree
18	Q. My question was: is it correct to say that those	18		fin
19	patients who were managed elsewhere saw increases in	19		of
20	predicted and observed mortality?	20		no
21	LADY HALLETT: Do you have the figures for the patients who	21	Q.	My
22	were treated elsewhere?	22		dis
23	A. No. So this is why I'm getting a little bit confused.	23		ad
24	Thank you, my Lady.	24	Α.	Sc
25	So we don't have so what we're saying is the	25	Q.	W
	27			

1		behalf of Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru.
2		I've got one long question to ask you but I am going to
3		break it down into chunks.
4		On the final page of your witness statements you
5		say that data suggests that triage decisions were being
6		made to prioritise admission to critical care of those
1		deemed to require advanced organ support.
8	Α.	Sorry, I'm just trying to find my witness statement if
9		you could just bear with me so I'm with you and then can
10	0	De vou need me te repect env of thet?
11	Q.	Could you repeat. Thank you so much
12	A. 0	You say that data suggests that triage desisions were
10	Q.	being mode to prioritize admission to critical core of
14		these deemed to require advanced organ support. You go
10		on to say that this meant that natients with lower
17		requirements for organ support were managed elsewhere in
18		the hospital: in other words, not in ICU
19		Firstly, did those nations who were managed
20		somewhere other than ICU see increases in predicted and
21		observed mortality?
22	Α.	Okay, so you want me to comment on that statement?
23	Q.	Yes.
24	Α.	Sorry. Yes, so the proportion of patients receiving
25		advanced respiratory support for those patients in
		26
1		for the natients in intensive care, the predicted
2		mortality is a way of sort of assessing their sort
3		of overall severity and that also suggested that the
4		sicker patients were being admitted to critical care.
5		We don't have data on the patients who were not admitted
6		to critical care but by looking at the predicted
7		mortality and the observed mortality it suggests that
8		the sicker patients were being admitted to intensive
9		care.
10	MS	SHEPHERD: Thank you.
11		Might those patients with lower requirements for
12		organ support have been admitted to ICU in times of less
13		demand?
14	Α.	Yes, absolutely, and in that report you referred to
15		where we looked at sorry, you didn't refer to it, the
16		other lady did, we actually did look at patients who
17		received simple organ support, and I'm just trying to
18		find those figures for you to give you a feel, but some
19		of those would be admitted to critical care normally,
20		not necessarily all.
04		My final question: would the older population have been
21	Q.	my mai question. Would the older population have been
21 22	Q.	disadvantaged by triaging decisions which prioritised
21 22 23	Q.	disadvantaged by triaging decisions which prioritised advanced organ support?
21 22 23 24	Q. A.	disadvantaged by triaging decisions which prioritised advanced organ support? Sorry?
21 22 23 24 25	Q. A. Q.	disadvantaged by triaging decisions which prioritised advanced organ support? Sorry? Would the older population have been disadvantaged by

1	triaging decisions that prioritised advanced organ	1	this: d
2	support?	2	try to ι
3	A. No, not necessarily. So triaging on organ support	3	assoc
4	doesn't necessarily correlate with the age of the	4	assoc
5	patient. You could argue that those who were hit	5	depriv
6	hardest by Covid-19 were the oldest population and	6	mortal
7	possibly those who may have needed advanced organ	7	A. Sorry,
8	support. All we've got is the data on the patients who	8	Q. Do you
9	got into intensive care. We don't know, if you like,	9	A. I heard
10	about the patients who were not admitted.	10	Q . It's wh
11	Is that helpful?	11	charao
12	MS SHEPHERD: Yes, thank you very much, Professor Rowan.	12	particu
13	Thank you, my Lady.	13	A. So in t
14	LADY HALLETT: Thank you, Ms Shepherd.	14	factors
15	Mr Odogwu.	15	model
16	Questions from MR ODOGWU	16	associ
17	MR ODOGWU: Thank you, my Lady.	17	a grou
18	Good morning, Professor Rowan. I represent the	18	analys
19	Federation of Ethnic Minority Healthcare Organisations,	19	numbe
20	which advocates for healthcare workers from ethnic	20	small
21	minority backgrounds who are disproportionately impacted	21	statisti
22	by the pandemic.	22	
23	My question relates to health inequalities and	23	langua
24	builds on some of the answers that you gave earlier this	24	you kr
25	morning to Counsel to the Inquiry. And my question is 29	25	that so
1	doesn't mean that we don't think it's important.	1	
2	Q. Absolutely. My question really goes to whether or not	2	Profes
3	there was any correlation that you saw between any	3	help.
4	characteristics which were drivers for high mortality	4	inform
5	and not any particular ethnic minority group but just	5	again
6	ethnic minorities in general. Was there any correlation	6	today.
7	between the two?	7	
8	A. So the way that we might have looked at that was to put	8	
9	ethnicity into a model as non-white so sort of grouping	9	MS CAREY
10	all the ethnic groups together. We haven't done that to	10	-
11	look at it in totality.	11	Summ
12	Q. Okay. But were you nonetheless able to identify from	12	a mon
13	your analysis any contributory factors which led to	13	
14	there being a disproportionate number of both Asian and	14	
15	black patients in intensive care?	15	
16	A. So the mechanisms by which non-white ethnic groups of	16	
17	people of non-white ethnicity, sort of, becoming	17	MS CAREY
18	intected with Covid-19 was obviously outside the remit	18	
19	of what we could do. We reported as transparently as	19	please
20	possible as we could that certain ethnic groups seemed	20	a profe
21	to be at a higher risk, to be more vulnerable to	21	the Vie
22	becoming critically ill with Covid-19.	22	Institu
23	MR ODOGWU: Okay, thank you very much.	23	correc
24	Thank you, my Lady.	24	PROFESSO
25	LADY HALLETT: Thank you very much. 31	25	MS CAREY

1		this: did ICNARC ever undertake any bespoke analysis to
2		try to understand whether there was a link or
3		association between any of the characteristics
4		associated with high mortality, for example, the social
5		deprivation which you mentioned earlier and higher
6		mortality in those from particular ethnic minorities?
7	Α.	Sorry, I missed the last bit of that.
8	Q.	Do you want me to repeat the whole question?
9	A.	I heard the initial bit. Just
10	Q.	It's whether there's a link between any higher risk
11		characteristics such as social deprivation and any
12		particular ethnic minorities
13	Α.	So in that paper where we looked that prognostic
14		factors we included ethnicity and deprivation in those
15		models to look at whether they were drivers of
16		association with 30-day mortality. We didn't select
17		a group a specific ethnic group and repeat those
18		analyses, mainly because one wants to look at a large
19		number of factors and the numbers become very, very
20		small in terms of being able to conduct those
21		statistical analyses
22		But bearing in mind. I'm verv conscious of mv
23		language here, each number is a person and a family and,
24		you know, I just want to, you know, have you understand
25		that sometimes what we're not able to do analytically
		30
1		I think that completes the questions for you
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1 2 3		I think that completes the questions for you, Professor Rowan. Thank you very much again for all your
1 2 3 4		I think that completes the questions for you, Professor Rowan. Thank you very much again for all your help. You have been extremely co-operative and really informative so we're really grateful to you. Sorry
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(8) Pages 29 - 32

1	you spent 50% of your time undertaking clinical practice	1
2	in intensive care medicine?	2
3	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: I do.	3
4	MS CAREY: And indeed you returned in February 2020 to	4
5	full-time NHS clinical service for 14 months, leading	5
6	the Addenbrooke's Hospital critical care response for	6
7	the pandemic?	7
8	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: I did.	8
9	MS CAREY: You have a number of other qualifications which	9
10	I won't read out but they are in your report for those	10
11	who'd like to read them.	11
12	Dr Suntharalingam, you are a full-time active duty	12
13	ICU consultant at London North West University	13
14	Healthcare NHS Trust; is that correct?	14
15	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: That's right.	15
16	MS CAREY: You too have a number of posts, voluntary, either	16
17	elected or appointed, and in particular, I think between	17
18	2018 in December and December 2020, you were the	18
19	president and chair of the board of trustees of the	19
20	Intensive Care Society?	20
21	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: That's correct.	21
22	MS CAREY: And, indeed, as we're going to come on to	22
23	consider this morning, you participated in the clinical	23
24	prioritisation tool that we briefly examined with	24
25	Professor Whitty when he gave evidence last week.	25
1	heard and a number of statements that you have read in	1
2	preparing your report that I hope we can draw together	2
3	some of the strands of evidence.	3
4	Clearly one of those matters will also be about	4
5	how the stretching of ratios and the like impacts on the	5
6	care that is received by the patients in ICU. I'd also	6
7	like to consider with you advance care planning for	7
8	those who are critically unwell and are likely to die,	8
9	I want to look at critical care transfers we've heard	9
10	a little bit about that and indeed the long-term	10
11	impact on those that work in ICU.	11
12	So that's the rough framework of where we're going	12
13	to go today. But can I start, please, with just you,	13
14	Professor Summers and a very briefly introduction to how	14
15	Covid affects the body to such an extent that we had so	15
10	many people ending up in ICU.	10
17	If it neips you, Protessor, I think we are in	17
10	paragraphs 2 to 3 of your report, because it isn't just	10
19		19
20	correct?	20
21	RUPESSUR SUMMERS: I Hat S absolutely correct.	21
22	that causes disruption of multiple organ systems, as of	22
∠3 24	the lunge with respiratory foilure and blood elete	23
24 25	altered neurological status, which is things like	24 25
/0	andreu neurological status, which is things like	∠5

ry	2 October 2024
DR SU	NTHARALINGAM: That's right. It was the guidance
	Deutrent rather than just a tool.
	Left: Fou also have a number of other appointments and
qu ve	alinications, which are also set out in your report,
VVI	her is dated July 2024. It's in inquoto474200, and
	New Preference/Dester, there are a number of areas
	Now, Professor/Doctor, there are a number of areas
di	vide them up between you and les far as possible, sen
	a stick to that division. But equally, if there is
vve	point that officer of you would like to make that you
a thi	ink is important for bor Ladyship to consider plaase
un de	wit fool produced from jumping in but please
uc	st to oversnook; it dooon't help me or the
nc	
Ste	Can Livet give you, though, an idea of the themes
01	dan i just give you, inough, an idea of the memory
ai	ally taken from your even summary but clearly we need
to	consider ICLL capacity and the sufficiency of it or
tu oti	
01	You know I have that we've already beard from
Dr	rou know, mope, that we ve already heard from
Г I +	bick you are also aware of the evidence we heard last
	nink you are also aware of the evidence we near last
vve bo	bekaround and indeed the other ovidence that we've
De	34
sti	rokes, bleeding in the brain and delirium, altered
kio	dney function, cardiovascular compromise. Every
sir	ngle organ system can be affected as a consequence of
be	ing infected acutely with this virus.
MS CA	REY: And when the pandemic struck, were ICU
co	onsultants, doctors, nurses and the like aware that it
Wa	as going to have that multi-organ effect or was it
pr	edominantly thought it was going to affect the lungs
in	the first instance?
PROFE	ESSOR SUMMERS: So when the pandemic struck, this was
a	novel virus that people had not encountered before.
W	e were learning all the time. The first cases in the
Ur	nited Kingdom occurred in January, there or
th	ereabouts, 2020, and that that point we had some
ev	vidence because there had been spread across the world,
bu	it we were still very much learning exactly what it
lo	oked like and the multisystem nature of it, and indeed
ab	oout the longer-term consequences that I know you heard
fro	om Professor Evans and Professor Brightling about.
AI	l of that unravelled over time.

- 21 MS CAREY: Yes.
 - 2 I think, though, you make clear in your report
- that in relation to pregnant women there were initially
- 24 concerns raised about the impact of Covid on pregnant
- 25 women. I'm at your paragraph 6. But did the data in

(9) Pages 33 - 36

1	fact bear out that there was an increase of pregnant
2	women in ICU who had Covid?
3	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So actually the data helpfully provided
4	by ICNARC and SICSAG relating to intensive care shows
5	that broadly and they used a fairly broad definition
6	of pregnancy or pregnancy-related complications
7	broadly the number of people admitted was not much
8	different to would have been expected.
9	MS CAREY: Now, we've got to be clear we are always talking
10	about the admissions into ICU. It's not to suggest that
11	pregnant women didn't catch Covid and/or were treated in
12	other areas of the healthcare system.
13	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Absolutely right.
14	MS CAREY: And that is a caveat, I suspect, that applies to
15	much of the evidence that you are going to give.
16	Given the multi-organ impact that Covid has on us,
17	the kind of treatments that are required clearly
18	there was respiratory support, but what else did the
19	body need to try to fight off the disease?
20	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So intensive care in all its forms but
21	particularly in Covid is a package of care that aims to
22	support multiple organ systems. We support lungs with
23	mechanical ventilators, we support kidneys when they
24	fail with renal replacement therapies, we support blood
25	pressure and the cardiovascular systems with various
	37
1	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So both can be provided in ICU. Most
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1 2 3	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So both can be provided in ICU. Most commonly, high-flow nasal oxygen systems are provided in intensive care but in some hospitals and some settings
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different medications, we support cognitive impairment in various different ways. So it was complex care provided for multi-organ dysfunction in patients with Covid that were admitted to the intensive care unit.
MS CAREY: Can I ask for your help, though, please, in understanding the different ways that oxygen was delivered to patients, because the oxygen supply or the lack thereof is a matter that the Inquiry is concerned about, but can I ask you to talk us just slowly through the different types of oxygen that is provided and then which oxygen is provided in intensive care or critical care units.
PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So oxygen can be provided in a number of

ways to hospitalised patients. So it can be provided in what we term low-flow systems, which are often simple

face masks or nasal specs, cannulae, little tubes that

There are high-flow oxygen systems that, again,

go up your nose, that produce oxygen, up to about

are little tubes that usually go up your nose that can

so much higher fractions of inspired oxygen.

are referring to intensive care, critical care,

MS CAREY: Just pausing there, are low-flow or high-flow

intensive treatment units I think there is also. Help

us with the terminology. Is there any real difference

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: I think for this mode it's pretty much

for the purposes that the module is looking at?

produce up to about 70 litres a minute worth of oxygen,

normally delivered within ICU or is that what you might

15 litres per minute.

get on a ward?

interchangeable. There are nuances and differences. "Intensive care" is a kind of -- historically, more of a UK term, hence the name of the bodies, Intensive Care Society, et cetera, et cetera. We -- talk about intensive care nurses. Outside the UK people talk about critical care. There's been a bit of an evolution towards greater use of "critical care" because it implies that it's delivered outside the ICU as well, which is true. And other organisations, for example, the British Association of Critical Care Nurses, so -but essentially they are interchangeable for the purposes of the discussion. MS CAREY: All right. PROFESSOR SUMMERS: But I think important to clarify that

- 20 not all critically ill people are inside critical care
- 21 or intensive care units, whatever you call them; the two
- 22 things are not synonymous.
- 23 MS CAREY: Yes, I think we're going to look at some data
- 24 that might bear that out, and certainly that was a point
- 25 that Professor Rowan was making, that there might be

1	a great number of people receiving critical care outside	1	MS CAREY: And then invasive mechanical ventilation
2	of ICU that aren't, therefore, captured in the	2	I suspect we know what it is, but could you just tell
3	ICNARC/SICSAG data. All right. Understood.	3	us, please.
4	Help us, please, with non-invasive ventilation,	4	A. Invasive mechanical ventilation involves the patient not
5	Professor.	5	being conscious, or certainly being at least to a degree
6	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So, non-invasive ventilation also uses	6	sedated, and a tube passed through their airway down
7	a tight-fitting mask either over your nose or your mouth	7	into their lungs and a machine being responsible for
8	and nose and provides one level of pressure when you're	8	their breathing. You can have that in a way that
9	breathing out and a higher level of pressure to support	9	supports your only patient-initiated breath but also in
10	you breathing in. So it's bi-level pressure as opposed	10	a way where the machine takes over all of the breathing
11	to CPAP that's just one continuous level of pressure.	11	and your spontaneous attempts to breath are abrogated.
12	MS CAREY: And does it did follow that non-invasive	12	MS CAREY: That requires a ventilator
13	ventilation is ordinarily provided within critical care	13	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: It does.
14	settings?	14	MS CAREY: and a degree of specialised care being
15	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So not in all settings Non-invasive	15	provided to monitor
16	ventilation is used for the treatment of patients with	16	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So CPAP non-invasive ventilation and
17	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease usually under the	17	invasive ventilation all require specialist teams to
18	care of respiratory physicians in respiratory wards, so	18	support the delivery and care
19	not always in intensive care, but it is a therapy that	19	MS CAREY: Thank you
20	can be used outside of COPD in intensive care	20	And we've heard it mentioned something called
21	MS CAREY: Should I take that that if you are on	21	FCMO Can you belo us with what FCMO is please
22	non-invasive ventilation, the patient may well be still	27	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: It's extracorporeal membrane
23	conscious at that stage?	23	oxygenation It is a type of oxygenation of the blood
24	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Absolutely. You have to be conscious to	24	that involves taking the blood outside the body through
25	receive that treatment	25	a machine that oxygenates it and then the blood back
20	41	20	42
1	into via another pipe into the circulation and is	1	had clinical evidence that it was of benefit but the
2	used for a small subset of people whose lungs are unable	2	evidence has accumulated during the pandemic to show
3	to oxygenate the blood.	3	it's of benefit.
4	MS CAREY: I think you say that is provided in specialist	4	For patients who are invasively mechanically
5	centres.	5	ventilated when they are proned, it requires a team of
6	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: It is. There are specialist	6	six or eight people, depending on the individual
7	commissioned centres in the UK to which people are	7	patient, to be at the bedside to carefully manage all
8	transferred to receive that therapy. It is not	8	the lines and tubes so that nothing is displaced and the
9	available outside those specialist centres.	9	patient to be very carefully turned face down. And
10	MS CAREY: Can I ask you about one other treatment that	10	usually they're left lying on their tummies for 16 hours
11	we've heard about, which is proning. Obviously, that	11	or so and then turned back for a period of time and
12	became something we learnt about in particular during	12	a decision made about whether their oxvgenation is such
13	the pandemic but what is it and how long does it take	13	that they are required to be reproned or turned
14	and how many people does it take to prope a patient?	14	tummy-down again. It is a hugely labour and
15	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So proving which means turning	15	resource-intensive thing to do
16	a patient face down as opposed to lying face up is	16	MS CAREY: Yes So six to eight people per patient Just
17	a treatment that we have known to be of benefit to	17	roughly is there any average of number of beds within
18	people who have severe respiratory failure for some	18	an ICU?
10	vears. There was randomised control trial evidence	19	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Intensive care units are of varving
20	nublished in 2013 that showed in a subset of	20	different sizes from you know 100 beds to 10 beds
20	mechanically ventilated natients it was of henefit	20 21	It very much depends
21 22	In the nandemic it was used much more widely both	2 I 22	MS CAREY: Can Liust look at some pharmacological
22	in neonle who were mechanically ventilated but also in	22	treatments with you
20	neonle who were awake and spontaneously ventilating, and	20 24	And could we have on screen page 14 of your
24	it was used outside the settings in which we initially	24	renort
20	43	20	44

(11) Pages 41 - 44

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1	I'm not going to go through them all, Protessor,
2	but there are some which with which I suspect we are
3	familiar, and I think a number of milestones, you
4	describe them as, relevant to treatments.
5	So there we are on 19 March, just before the
6	country went into lockdown, and the RECOVERY Trial
7	opened to recruitment. What was the RECOVERY Trial?
8	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So I think the thing it's important to
9	remember, particularly as we are talking about intensive
10	care, is that intensive care provides supportive care
11	for people. It is not a disease-modifying therapy in
12	and of itself. And so what was required was research
13	and studies to try to find therapies, such as vaccines
14	and drug therapies, that would change the trajectory of
15	the pandemic whilst we were desperately trying to look
16	after people.
17	The RECOVERY Trial was one such thing. It was
18	a national clinical trial that looked to find therapies
19	to improve the 28-day mortality of hospitalised patients
20	with Covid-19. It opened to recruitment, as I've shown
21	here, on 19 March, and by 5 June it had shown that
22	nydroxychioroquine, a therapy that at the time was being
23	advocated for by many people, was not effective at
24	improving the mortality, by 28 days, or hospitalised
25	people, but that dexamethasone was shown and it was
1	48 hospitals in the NHS and aimed to say if we use
2	standard care, so conventional oxygen therapy of the
3	low-flow type, or high-flow nasal oxygen, or CPAP, which
4	of those reduced the chances of you progressing to need
5	invasive mechanical ventilation or death and showed that
6	actually CPAP was of benefit and was better than
7	high-flow nasal oxygen or conventional care at
8	preventing escalation to invasive mechanical ventilation
9	or death.
10	MS CAREY: So quite an important discovery there.
11	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: It was.
12	MS CAREY: Help me, these are obviously particular to Covid
13	but is there the ability to sort of use these again in
14	the event of a pandemic that's a respiratory virus?
15	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So the answer is we don't know. It
16	depends on the virus. So in the case of dexamethasone
17	there was pre-existing data from a clinical trial in
18	a broader group of patients with very severe respiratory
19	failure who were mechanically ventilated that had
20	actually been published in early 2020, a study called
21	DEXA-ARDS that had shown that dexamethasone may be of
22	benefit. So there is a reason to suspect that it may be
23	of benefit but the trial evidence is generated in the
24	setting the trial was done and it's important not to
25	extrapolate from one setting to another.
	47

1	announced on 16 June that people who were receiving
2	oxygen of the various different types that we've just
3	discussed had a mortality benefit at 28 days from
4	receiving dexamethasone treatment.
5	MS CAREY: Pausing there, within three months the RECOVERY
6	Trial had enabled us to work out that dexamethasone did
7	in fact reduce mortality. And it may not be obvious,
8	but what is dexamethasone?
9	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid tablet
10	or intravenous injection that has been widely used for

other things, other types of inflammation, other types of disorders, that's a commonly available generic, so

not under patent with a pharma company, therapy that

could be available cheaply across the world. So it was

a huge finding in terms of improving the worldwide

MS CAREY: Can I move to the other end of the milestone figure and 4 August. There's reference there to CPAP

was shown to reduce mortality or intubation compared

Just put that into lay speak for me, if you will,

PROFESSOR SUMMERS: The RECOVERY respiratory support (so

I suppose it does show, though, the ability for the RECOVERY Trial to actually have real practical

PROFESSOR SUMMERS: It shows the importance of research

embedded in care to change the trajectory of what we

RECOVERY-RS) randomised control trial took place at 46

with conventional oxygen therapy or high-flow nasal

oxygen in a RECOVERY trial.

benefit across a number of areas.

Professor.

MS CAREY: Okay.

were all facing.

outcomes from hospitalised patients with Covid.

- MS CAREY: My Lady, I'm going to move on to how intensive care treatment is organised. I can deal with that topic now or if that's a convenient moment for a break.
 LADY HALLETT: Certainly, we can break now. 11.25, please.
 MS CAREY: Thank you, my Lady.
 (11.10 am)

 (A short break)

 (11.25 am)
 MS CAREY: Dr Suntharalingam, can I turn to you, please, to help with the organisation of intensive care treatment,
- 18 and I'm at your paragraph 28 onwards in the report. But
- 19 I think we've heard some evidence about there are
- 20 different levels of care provided in acute hospitals and
- 21 I wonder if you could just talk us slowly through the
- 22 various levels starting, please, with level 0 and

23 level 1.

- 24 **DR SUNTHARALINGAM:** So in an acute hospital setting where we
- 25 start with is really ward-level care which is what you'd 48

(12) Pages 45 - 48

1	see in a standard ward, whether medical or surgical or
2	any area. I'm going to focus initially on the numbers
3	of people because that will be relevant later, and it is
4	the people that then determine the equipment and the
5	interventions that you do safely and it's not just
6	furniture or bits of kit.
7	So on a ward you might have one trained staff
8	nurse per eight or so patients. That is the goal, but
9	sometimes it can be more diluted even in day-to-day
10	life, going up to and level 1 includes slightly more
11	enhanced levels of care where you might be up to one
12	trained nurse to every four patients.
13	Supplementing that, there are medical staff, where
14	the ratios vary according to what team they're in and
15	what they are covering and, importantly, there are also
16	pharmacists and allied health professions, which
17	includes physios, speech and language, therapists,
18	occupational therapists and sometimes clinical
19	psychologists. So there's a range of staff
20	LADY HALLETT: Slow down.
21	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Those staff, relatively small in number
22	and cover multiple areas of the hospital whereas we
23	entitled to focus on nurse ratios in particular because
24	they are very closely associated with the bed numbers
25	and the beds.
	49
1	MS CAREY: What's the difference between level 2 and
1 2	MS CAREY: What's the difference between level 2 and level 3?
1 2 3	MS CAREY: What's the difference between level 2 and level 3?DR SUNTHARALINGAM: It's really a numeric one, so level 2
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1	So that's the default.
2	MS CAREY: Just pause. So that's level 1; is that correct?
3	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Level 0
4	MS CAREY: Zero or 1
5	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: these days is just ward-level care,
6	and then level 1 is an enhanced level which can be
7	spread around the hospital in different specialty areas
8	or can be put together in designated level 1, so we are
9	talking about enhanced care, and that's a greater
10	nursing ratio of 1:4.
11	MS CAREY: In short, is it as we get more severely unwell in
12	theory the ratio should get better in terms of the
13	number of trained staff looking after a patient; is that
14	the general trajectory?
15	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: That's the general pattern, and as well
16	as the amount of human attention they are getting, if
17	you like, it also enables lower levels of care and
18	interventions which become safer, for example, lines and
19	so on, that forms the respiratory management that my
20	colleague has commented on and for those you need
21	a higher level of staffing in order to safely deliver
22	those.
23	MS CAREY: Levels 2 and 3, is that what would be considered
24	to be dedicated intensive care units?
25	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Generally, yes.
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1	requirements might change and their physical position
2	may change or it may be just changing the number of
3	the amount of staff and equipment around them within
4	that unit.
5	I think one thing I would like to highlight is the
6	sort of vertical arrows with the ward level care below
7	and really it is a pyramidal graph, so obviously there
8	are a larger number of general wards than there are
q	critical care units and that highlighted part there is
10	just to highlight there's actually a decision-making
11	process there as well
12	MS CAREY: We're going to come on to that
13	Can Livet ask you this though We've heard
14	a number of chief nursing officers apock about changing
14	a number of chief hursing oncers speak about changing
16	from the output, why is it deemed necessary to have one
10	aritical care reurse to one nations if they are on
17	childal care nurse to one patient if they are on
10	
19	not on a ventilator and it is really reflection the
20	not on a ventilator and it is really reflecting the
21	patient and their needs and their condition, so if they
22	are in a condition where they are high-sizely

- 23 physiologically, very vulnerable, their condition can
- 24 change minute to minute and, in addition, the amount of
- 25 the treatments they are getting are -- require 52

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move someone up to ICU taken?

hospital and home.

the process of delivering that.

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: So, firstly, it's about picking up the fact they are deteriorating, and the earlier that's done

the better, and the earlier you can have those

illness early, including at the front door of the

conversations and decisions the better, so there's

a whole layer of thinking about how to detect critical

agree with what the Professor said that -- certainly in the case of Covid, intensive care is a supportive

process not disease altering, but it is actually a set

of interventions and treatments in itself, as well, in

The decision to escalate them. So I completely

So we are delivering treatments to people in the

same way, as an analogy, of offering chemotherapy or

doing major surgery, and so there needs to be, firstly,

way, I should say. Secondly, what they need. Thirdly,

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: So once you get to level 2 and 3 care,

these are intensivist-led and the evidence is that is

intensive care consultant but in discussion with the 54

how things work best. So the decision is made by an

MS CAREY: Do they have to be made contemporaneously or is

that something that could be written up at the end of

a shift or in a downtime moment if, indeed, there were

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Really contemporaneously but even in

normal times, and especially in a pandemic, obviously

there may be a lot going on at the same time, including stabilising the patient. There are also a lot of people

involved, so it should be possible to document near

MS CAREY: We have heard from the chief nursing officers

a critical care nurse were stretched to potentially as high as 1:6 patients, clearly with other supporting

Can I just ask you about those that were redeployed. How easy or otherwise was it, in your

experience, for them to take up the mantle of providing

critical care in terms of, firstly, how they looked

after the patient, but also the impact on the staff

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real-time but it may not be feasible to do it right

that during the pandemic, the nursing ratios of

there and then but really they should be.

staff and, indeed, redeployed staff.

having to teach the critical care staff?

do they need it, and picking that up early, in a timely

whether it's the right thing for them and --MS CAREY: And who makes the decision?

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes, that is right.

any in the pandemic?

1	attention. So you may have pumps going well, you
2	will have pumps going, you may have ventilators, you may
3	have kidney machines, those themselves need monitoring
4	for safety and to make them operate, but it's really
5	about the patient and the fact their condition can
6	change really second to second or minute to minute.
7	MS CAREY: We're familiar with the changing in nursing
8	ratios in the pandemic and I might come back to that in
9	a moment, but just what about consultants, how many
10	consultants would one expect there to be take this as
11	an example for level 3, if there's eight beds there?
12	How many consultants would there be in an ICU?
13	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: For that group of patients you would
14	expect about one and in larger units, you, certainly
15	during the day, have greater numbers of consultants. It
16	can vary 1:8, 1:12, and at night, again, you need enough
17	people to cover safely, but there may be one consultant,
18	certainly overseeing care of a larger number but with
19	backup if required.
20	MS CAREY: And then ECMO, as we know, delivered in the very
21	specialist centres that Professor Summers told us about.
22	Now, you were going to come on to tell us about
23	how the decision is taken to move someone from ward
24	level to critical care, and I'm in your paragraphs 30
25	and 31, Doctor, but essentially how is the decision to
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1	people referring or to the patient themselves and their
1 2	people referring or to the patient themselves and their families and with supporting staff. But there is
1 2 3	people referring or to the patient themselves and their families and with supporting staff. But there is a gatekeeping process.
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DR SUNTHARALINGAM: In terms of dividing this between what happens normally and how things changed in the pandemic,

(14) Pages 53 - 56

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1	I'll pass that to the Professor and then I can it	1	nhones, somehody needs to make sure the records, all the
2	might tie into later discussions as well	2	things that you need arrive and that somebody receives
3	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: I think it should be recognised that it	3	those
4	was extraordinarily difficult and that staff from across	4	All of the teams that we use and I think we've
5	roles in the NHS did an amazing thing when they agreed	5	listed on page 61 just the clinical staff, occupational
6	to be redeployed to intensive care units to support us	6	therapists speech and language therapists dietitians
7	They were walking into a situation where many of them	7	physiotherapists pharmacists it is an enormous package
8	were rightly fearful of what they were going to face	8	of care. Every time we opened an intensive care unit we
9	often outside the kind of environments that they had	9	stretched what we had further and further and further
10	chosen to work in. There's a reason they didn't work in	10	and drew in more and more resource from elsewhere in the
11	intensive care for many of them and suddenly we were	11	hospital and diluted what we already had.
12	asking them to do things, and it wasn't just clinical	12	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Absolutely.
13	staff, it was administrative staff, support staff,	13	And just to add to that, so as well as people
14	who I can think of a ward clerk from a day hospital	14	doing, sort of, their jobs, but in an intensive care
15	who came to be one of the ward clerks, one of the	15	environment, there were people working firstly, they
16	intensive care, at my hospital. They did an amazing	16	were being exposed to things which they wouldn't
17	thing and they absolutely did their very best under	17	necessarily be in their normal jobs, people
18	extraordinarily difficult situations.	18	deteriorating and dving in front of them, the emotional
19	MS CAREY: Pausing there, what kind of duties would a ward	19	distress of that, and I think that's well worth
20	clerk who's been redeployed to critical care actually	20	recognising, and also people who weren't in a position
21	perform?	21	to come and staff intensive care unit, because they had
22	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So they were dealing with all the	22	other jobs to do, or non-clinical also came to help with
23	records and the administration. We were opening new	23	activities such as proning, so we had dedicated trained
24	intensive care units. You cannot do that without	24	proning teams who might come from dental staff or admin
25	administrative support. Somebody needs to answer the	25	staff, and they were voluntarily entering into the
	57		58
1	really quite frightening environment of intensive care	1	MS CAREY: Whilst looking at stretching further and further,
2	unit to help with individual interventions as well, so	2	can I ask you please about the measuring of ICU capacity
3	all of it was very much appreciated.	3	and the ways it is differently measured across the UK.
4	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Helping us with putting on PPE and	4	Can we perhaps start with how it is measured in
5	making sure we were safe, and that we actually got	5	Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and then look at
6	access to food and water, that families were phoned.	6	the position in England.
7	A whole host of support.	7	Is this you, Dr Suntharalingam, who can help with
8	MS CAREY: Notwithstanding the efforts of those that came	8	this?
9	and were redeployed and did their best, does it follow,	9	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes.
10	though, that when one stretches the critical care ratios	10	MS CAREY: I would like to look at the figure 5, please, on
11	to 1:6 that there is inevitably going to be a compromise	11	page 22 of the report.
12	in the amount of care that a patient receives?	12	And although we're looking at a graph relating to
13	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Yes, unquestionably. It takes years to	13	Scotland, I just want to understand how intensive care
14	train specialist critical care staff. We entered the	1/	capacity is measured in Scotland. Northern Ireland and
A -		14	
15	pandemic with a number of critical care trained staff	15	Wales, and this, I hope, graph will help us understand
15 16	pandemic with a number of critical care trained staff that we had and recognising, as is recognised in some of	15 16	Wales, and this, I hope, graph will help us understand it.
15 16 17	pandemic with a number of critical care trained staff that we had and recognising, as is recognised in some of the evidence from the nursing associations in critical	15 16 17	Wales, and this, I hope, graph will help us understand it. DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes. So just, if I may, rewind a little
15 16 17 18	pandemic with a number of critical care trained staff that we had and recognising, as is recognised in some of the evidence from the nursing associations in critical care, there was a 10% critical care nurse vacancy when	15 16 17 18	Wales, and this, I hope, graph will help us understand it.DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes. So just, if I may, rewind a little bit. So measuring capacity across all intensive care
15 16 17 18 19	pandemic with a number of critical care trained staff that we had and recognising, as is recognised in some of the evidence from the nursing associations in critical care, there was a 10% critical care nurse vacancy when we went into the pandemic. We can't just magic up	15 16 17 18 19	 Wales, and this, I hope, graph will help us understand it. DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes. So just, if I may, rewind a little bit. So measuring capacity across all intensive care units across all four nations is, in a way, the same.
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(15) Pages 57 - 60

1	and the patients in them, which change minute by minute.	1
2	So it's not as simple as you might think.	2
3	I think, to go back to your question, in this	3
4	graph, the Scottish government figures quoted in BBC	4
5	Scotland during the pandemic show the live numbers of	5
6	occupied beds. They also show, and I think this is	6
7	where the important difference is, the line there shows	7
8	the normal capacity of the entire system	8
9	MS CAREY: The purple line is, what, about 175 or	9
10	thereabouts?	10
11	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes. And then the higher line shows	11
12	right up at the top there, shows the theoretical surge	12
13	capacity if every unit went to the maximum dilution at	13
14	the time, 1:6, let's say, and it gives a sight of	14
15	where how close things are to total saturation but,	15
16	as we've said, that's delivering really quite diluted	16
17	care in which the details are diluted where the skill	17
18	mix is boosted with redeployed people and although we	18
19	may have numbers of hands and bodies, the familiarity	19
20	and the skill mix is different. So you are delivering	20
21	a different form of care.	21
22	MS CAREY: Pausing there, if one takes this graph, by some	22
23	point between 27 March and 28 April 2020, ordinarily ICU	23
24	capacity was exceeded in Scotland	24
25	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes.	25
	61	
1	MS CAREY: Pause there while we get the England figure up,	1
1 2	MS CAREY: Pause there while we get the England figure up, please. It just takes us a moment to flip between the	1
1 2 3	MS CAREY: Pause there while we get the England figure up, please. It just takes us a moment to flip between the graphs.	1 2 3
1 2 3 4	MS CAREY: Pause there while we get the England figure up, please. It just takes us a moment to flip between the graphs. Perhaps can we expand it, please.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4 5	MS CAREY: Pause there while we get the England figure up, please. It just takes us a moment to flip between the graphs. Perhaps can we expand it, please. Let's just explain the graph and then you can come	1 2 3 4 5
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1	MS CAREY:	when they went over 200-odd beds even though
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in theory they have got 175 in normal times.

3 DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes.

- PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Just to remind that not all of those
- 175 beds would be level 3 beds necessarily in normal --
- some of them would not necessarily be staffed for the
- kind of patients that they happened to have in them when
- 8 they had those 200 or so patients.
- 9 MS CAREY: So that is a, sort of, easy to understand diagram
- 10 of how intensive care capacity was measured in Scotland
- and similar measurements are taken in Wales and Northern
- 2 Ireland. Can I contrast that now with the position in
- 13 England, and it might be easy to understand by reference
- 14 to figure 6 at page 39 in your report.
- 15 DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Can I, while this graph is up --
- 16 MS CAREY: Yes.

regions --

- 17 **DR SUNTHARALINGAM:** -- the bit where the -- sorry, my fault.
- 18 Just that little bit where it blips over the
- 9 normal line it shows that it's over 100% of normal
- 20 capacity, which I think you have already mentioned. So
- just to contrast that. And then the next graph. And
- this is really not so much about how it is measured but
- how it's expressed, I think. So due to, kind of, the
- 24 size and complexity of England in terms of the

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1	to 1:6 and more.
2	MS CAREY: So if we look at the black line and then look at
3	the figures above it, from about 15 March, or
4	thereabouts, onwards this ICU was operating at either
5	twice or nearly three times its normal baseline
6	capacity.
7	Now, help us with how it's differently expressed
8	in England, if I may ask you.
9	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: So a decision early on which is
10	explained in NHS England's statement is to, firstly, ask
11	each hospital what it could surge up to because that
12	gives you a maximum figure, and that is logical, it
13	shows when you are in danger of reaching saturation
14	point locally and nationally. I think the difference is
15	that that's how it's expressed and then communicated,
16	not through any kind of ill intent but I think because
17	of the way internal communications and assessment
18	worked, became what was then put out nationally in media
19	and so on, and it is just a very different way of
20	looking at it.
21	So looking at percentages of all surge beds gives
22	you, you know, what can be a lower percentage well,
23	obviously, is a lower percentage occupancy than if you
24	are measuring it against a standard capacity.
25	MS CAREY: So if we go to the end of this graph and look at 64

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but I can't.

experience of the staff at the bedside.

PROFESSOR SUMMERS: That's the critical bit.

MS CAREY: I wanted to come on to that because when you are

staff in terms moral distress and moral injury? And we haven't actually defined those phrases, so perhaps we

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: So moral distress is if you -- when you

should be doing and what you could be doing to do the

have the skills and the knowledge to know what you

best for the person in front of you -- and that's not

just in healthcare, it can be in teaching or any other

whether due to resources or the workload or anything

essentially, that says: I should have been doing this

Where that then becomes moral injury is when it's

accumulated over time, there's a crescendo effect, and

it can lead to long-lasting psychological effects.

MS CAREY: And what this graph, just finally dealing with 66

endeavour -- but if you then are unable to do it,

else, that sets up a conflict in your brain,

So that's moral distress.

running at double or even, now, perhaps, triple the capacity that was usually at, what is the impact on the

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Absolutely.

ought to deal with that first.

What is moral distress?

1	April into May, it is suggesting there that there are up
2	to nearly 50 beds available of which, if we look at the
3	blue line, perhaps just under 40 are taken up and the
4	proportion of those of Covid. It's giving the
5	impression there that there may be ten beds available,
6	or so, that day but it doesn't reflect the fact that you
7	are already running at double the capacity you would
8	have ordinarily run at in non-pandemic times.
9	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes, and when it comes to an individual
10	hospital that information is obviously well known, can
11	be communicated easily, planned around. When you map
12	that up to regions and nations, then it looks as the
13	risk is it looks as if you've got lots of spare capacity
14	in the system at all times.
15	That wasn't the intent of the way it was used but
16	there's a difference between how things are seen within
17	the system by people that know what it means versus how
18	it then gets interpreted later on or more externally.
19	MS CAREY: So although you make the point that's not the
20	intent, it is potentially misleading if people don't
21	understand that the baseline capacity is significantly
22	less than the surge capacity.
23	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes.
24	MS CAREY: Right.
25	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: I think it doesn't reflect the
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1	this graph, what this graph doesn't show us is what the
1 2	this graph, what this graph doesn't show us is what the kind of dilution of the nursing ratios were going
1 2 3	this graph, what this graph doesn't show us is what the kind of dilution of the nursing ratios were going through March into April into May 2020 in this
1 2 3 4	this graph, what this graph doesn't show us is what the kind of dilution of the nursing ratios were going through March into April into May 2020 in this particular hospital. So it's not just about the beds,
1 2 3 4 5	this graph, what this graph doesn't show us is what the kind of dilution of the nursing ratios were going through March into April into May 2020 in this particular hospital. So it's not just about the beds, it's about the number or staff available to care for the
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1	naving localised notspots was potentially narmful and
2	there was a greater understanding of the need for
3	earlier decompression. Conversely, that meant some of
4	the other sites got busier because people had been moved
5	into them.
6	MS CAREY: Well, shall we look at actual critical care
7	transfer since you mention decompression there? And
8	obviously we've heard from Professor Rowan on that, and
9	I think if you turn to your paragraph 75 onwards in your
10	report there are some diagrams and documents that may
11	help us deal with critical care transfers. But do
12	I understand this, that transferring a patient from one
13	critical care unit to another ought to be a transfer of
14	last resort?
15	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes, in the sense that it's not directly
16	in the patient's interest, so in an ideal world, whether
17	in pandemic or not, every patient should have access to
18	critical care where they need it, which they do, but in
19	some cases it may involve having to move them elsewhere.
20	Normally, you would want to transfer people for clinical
21	benefit, so not every hospital can offer every service,
22	whether it's surgery or ECMO or anything else, so
23	escalating somebody and moving them elsewhere for care
24	they can't deliver is appropriate clinical transfer.

25 MS CAREY: Fine.

68

(17) Pages 65 - 68

1	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Moving them closer to home or somewhere	1
2	for rehabilitation after that is also kind of	2
3	appropriate and in their interests.	3
4	What we call a capacity transfer, which does	4
5	happen in day-to-day life as well, but nothing on like	5
6	the same scale, is something that you would prefer to	6
7	avoid if you can, both for	7
8	MS CAREY: So, pausing there, because we saw some graphs	8
9	dealing with repatriation because it's nearer to the	9
10	patient's home, for example, and take moving a patient	10
11	perhaps to an ECMO unit or a baby that requires	11
12	specialist care out of it, I just want to focus on the	12
13	capacity transfers, and you say they do happen in	13
14	non-pandemic times and we've seen some graphs dealing	14
15	with the scale of them.	15
16	But the mechanisms in place I think vary across	16
17	the UK and I think you said in your report that in	17
18	Northern Ireland there is a Northern Ireland specialist	18
19	transfer and retrieval system to help move patients,	19
20	babies, paediatrics and adult transfers, 24/7; is that	20
21	right? That's a service available all the time.	21
22	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes. So this is this is a clinical	22
23	need that was identified before the pandemic. Various	23
24	bodies, scientific papers, and editorials all	24
25	recommended it. Okay, there were resource issues in it.	25
	69	
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And different nations had different, not so much
different approaches but different abilities to deliver
that depending on the scale. So the Northern Ireland
NISTAR system you will have to excuse me. I have lost
my place
MS CADEV: Deregraph 92
DE SUNTHADALINGAM. Thenk you just to make ours last
 DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Thank you. Just to make sure I get my so the Northern Ireland system is fully funded for 24/7 from 2017 onwards, organised from Belfast but with in coalition with the ambulance service and are able to pick up and deliver patients and deliver care, obviously, during the transfer in a variety of settings. So that's that example. MS CAREY: So they had a system that had been in place for at least three years by the time we started the pandemic. In Scotland you say there is the Emergency Medical Retrieval System, EMRS, that has existed since 2008. And help us with that, please, Doctor. DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Again, this is from reading and conversations, so not my personal experience, and also I think some of the variation is partly geographic, so in Scotland you obviously have the central belt with large population areas, more rural areas, and smaller
hospitals, and less hospital cover in other areas. 70
this as well before the pandemic.
LADY HALLETT: Could you slow down, please. I am sorry.
The stenograph is struggling and I am afraid I am too.
DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Sorry, okay, apologies.
So Wales, I think is for a while was not an
operational network but more clinical collaboration but
now certainly fits into that category.
In England these were in some regions the
network activity paused and came back but now there are
operational delivery networks across the country, across
the nation, these were all in place before the pandemic.
They were there to help units collaborate with each
other. Not all of them, in fact probably a minority,
had transfer systems running. Everyone wanted to but
the resources weren't there, prior to the pandemic, and
that has changed since then.
MS CAREY: Pausing there, different systems in different
countries but all essentially able to do the same thing
if there is a need for a critical care transfer for

capacity reasons; is that what it comes to?

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: That's what it should come to. They weren't all there before. They are coming into place now and as you've touched on, it is not so much about --I mean, there are special service specifications for these, they do differ a bit between the nations, but

72

(18) Pages 69 - 72

1	what it comes down to, fundamentally, is everyone
2	getting access to the treatment they need and if it's
3	not where they are that they should be able to be safely
4	transported to where they can get it and that's the
5	goal.
6	MS CAREY: We've seen this graph before but can we put up
7	figure 9, please, on page 41.
8	This is data provided by ICNARC and SICSAG,
9	dealing with the average daily number of ICU transfers
10	between critical care units across the UK from both
11	pre-pandemic and <i>(unclear)</i> . We looked at it, I think
12	yesterday afternoon, with Professor Rowan.
13	But there we can see that if you take March into
14	April 2020 they jump to 60 daily transfers between
15	critical care units across the UK and if you go on to,
16	then, just after Christmas of 2020, we can see a jump
17	there again to potentially over 80 patients a day being
18	transferred.
19	So that just gives a sort of grounding in what was
20	happening UK wide. I actually want to look at figure 7
21	in the report now, please, and the transfers into and
22	out of Northwick Park, just to take that hospital again
23	as an example.
24	I think you've provided there it's on page 40.
25	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes.
	73
1	a collaborative approach amongst all the hospitals and
1 2	a collaborative approach amongst all the hospitals and joint transfer education and shared equipment packages
1 2 3	a collaborative approach amongst all the hospitals and joint transfer education and shared equipment packages and an approach to transfer that enabled a spontaneous
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1	MS CAPEY: Just pause there while we bring it up on the
2	screen Doctor Thank you
3	There we have "Daily admissions to and transfers
4	out from Northwick Park" This is all in 2020: is that
5	correct?
6	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: That's right.
7	MS CAREY: So just starting that beginning of the graph.
8	1 March, in that week there were a relatively low
9	number, three or four, ICU admissions steadily rising as
10	we approach lockdown. And if we take the week of
11	15 March, there are already a few numbers of transfers
12	out that then tends to grow as we go through March and
13	into April.
14	Even in that early stage can you help why there
15	were transfers out in the week of 15 March?
16	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: So that was very early. The so, just
17	for clarity, the reason this is here is because it's
18	publicly available, it's published as a you know,
19	a scientific journal regarding the transfer mechanisms
20	and very much around wave 1.
21	It was also published as an example of network
22	activity. So the Critical Care Network in this area
23	which, for transparency, I've been involved in since
24	it's been there was active. It didn't have a funded
25	24/7 transfer team. It does now. But there was
	74
1	work, and how they did work, as the pandemic evolved in
2	other places.
3	MS CAREY: If we look, then, at figure 8, which is just
4	below this graph on page 40, and the circular
5	I hesitate to use that word
6	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Spider web.
7	MS CAREY: diagram. Take Northwick Park there at the
8	top. I'm not going to go through all the hospitals but
9	one can see there the number of patients transferred out
10	to a number of hospitals in and around that region, and
11	indeed to some the Nightingale hospital, once it was

12 opened. It's quite a complicated --

13 DR SUNTHARALINGAM: It is.

- 14 **MS CAREY:** -- picture that is being painted there.
- 15 DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes, absolutely. So I think it shows
- 16 that, firstly, it's not -- although Northwick Park was
- 17 the predominant -- a hotspot right in the early days,
- 18 but it -- things evolved very quickly. Some of those
- 19 hospitals didn't -- don't have A&Es and were, therefore,
- 20 in a better position to take in, but they do have their
- 21 own specialist workloads. And as you've seen, there are
- 22 patients moving in all directions --
- 23 MS CAREY: Well, quite, I was going to say. So, I mean, if
- 24 you take Chelsea and Westminster and Hammersmith,
- 25 they're going -- there's backwards and forwards
 - 76

have been different.

every stage.

report.

impact:

And obviously we don't want to be repeating each

other's testimony, but Professor Fong's statement was very powerful last week and he spoke for all of us, but one of the things he mentioned was around going to an isolated site and hearing them saying, "Well, we didn't know if we were doing the right thing", but equally that will apply to transfers and so on as well. You know, I can't tell you whether everyone that was under this level of pressure got this level of mutual support at

MS CAREY: It does bring me on though to the outcomes and

lessons learned regarding the critical care transfers.

I think you make the point that: "Assessing the ... impact of critical care

transfer on a patient's eventual outcome ..."

to survive the transfer to the new hospital.

And we can take that figure 8 down, and can I ask you, please, Doctor, about paragraph 90 onwards in your

Because we've heard it's a risky procedure, that you take normally the most stable patient who's likely

You say it's difficult to assess the overall

"... as the transfer is a relatively short time 78

caveats or the limitations of that study might be

1	transfers between those two hospitals.	1
2	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes, and some of it may be, sort of,	2
3	appropriate repatriation, some of it may bearing in	3
4	mind this was over a period of time, and even this was	4
5	only in a fairly small, sort of, capsule of time, in	5
6	wave 1, in one area, so as things evolved there would be	6
7	different hotspots, different hospitals needing	7
8	assistance or to move people back. And although here	8
9	the out-of-network transfers are shown to the	9
10	Nightingale at the time, in fact as the pandemic	10
11	evolved, there were much more wide-ranging transfers to	11
12	other areas of London and between regions, particularly	12
13	by the time of wave 2.	13
14	MS CAREY: Right. Well, I was going to ask, perhaps. This	14
15	is in a metropolitan area, where there's a number of	15
16	hospitals nearby or within a number of miles, do you	16
17	know what the position was in perhaps a more rural	17
18	hospital, where there are many miles between it and its	18
19	next neighbouring intensive care unit?	19
20	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: I don't know for sure because I mean,	20
21	this was a paper that's put together by people involved.	21
22	There isn't the same data in this form for other areas.	22
23	And obviously geographical distances and, sort of, if	23
24	you like, cultural isolation, in terms of not having	24
25	their regular contact, means that it may well not	25
1	interval in an ICU stay [that can be] days or weeks."	1
2	But help us with the study that was done of the	2
3	137 ICU transfers in North London. What was	3
4	demonstrated by that small study?	4
5	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Again, it was this was by another	5
6	group, but in that same patch actually, so fairly	6
7	short-range transfers among academic and other	7
8	hospitals	8
9	MS CAREY: So do you mean within a few miles of each other?	9
10	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Although the message may be	10
11	transferable, just as a sort of note of caution, and	11
12	again	12
13	MS CAREY: Slowly, please.	13
14	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: But what it showed is that in this	14
15	case they looked specifically at respiratory function	15
16	and the gas exchange in the lungs and whether the	16
17	process of disconnecting, moving to a transport	17
18	ventilator, moving the patient between sites, whether	18
19	that affected that particular parameter, and they showed	19
20	that compared to transfers within the same hospital,	20
21	between different units, there was a greater impact	21
22	temporarily but that within 24 hours that had	22
23		
~ 1	disappeared. That's only looking at one aspect of that	23
24	patient group.	23 24

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a better way of putting it, and I think there was
another one done in Scotland that used data from
108 patients admitted to a unit in Scotland in the
second wave, and there, even when they made adjustments
for confounding factors, they found no significant
difference in mortality rates for patients who were
transferred for capacity reasons; is that correct?
DR SUNTHARALINGAM: That's correct, as far as we can
understand it from the data available. And as the
authors themselves said, there may be patterns in that
but the numbers just haven't been large enough to show.
So there was evidence of patients staying in hospital
a bit longer, being on ventilator longer, but didn't
translate to mortality difference.
I think an overarching I'm just if I may go
back just to your point about it being last resort,
because I think that it's true, but I think tying that
to the development of transfer teams, I think what
one thing we'd learnt or to learn from new but
reinforced is that having organised, funded retrieval
and transfer teams, which have drilled together,
practised together, in the same way as the helicopter
emergency services, for example, in another setting, it
can it is safe to do transfers, particularly with
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periods, having to then move them somewhere where you

they've been moved, you know, possibly hundreds of miles

don't see them again, and usually they're moving the

more stable patients, so you don't get there recovery part of it. And as you have mentioned, the patients

themselves will wake up in a different hospital and

away, is very emotive, and we fully understand that.

MS CAREY: Is there any lesson learnt, do you think, from

the number of transfers out and the way in which it happened that could be usefully utilised again in the

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: I think there was learning during the pandemic even within the relevant period between the

start from the point that everyone should go to 1:6 and

but then when it -- once it becomes apparent there are

geographic hotspots, depending on local population --

the learning between the two waves was you can make

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: So you might, rather than having one

decompress the busier hospitals, there was generally,

hospitals. So obviously they need the resources to cope

quite -- I wouldn't say the converse but there were some

MS CAREY: Can I stick with you, Doctor, please, and look at

what are called CRITCON levels, the UK Critical Care

is about how a hospital conveys to NHS England in this

particular example about their state of overwhelmedness,

Now, I just want to understand: is CRITCON

currently only used in England; is that correct?

MS CAREY: Can we have a look at the levels and then we'll

look at what hospitals declared. Perhaps the easiest

way to do this is look at INQ000409921 behind your

These are the Covid-19 pandemic CRITCON levels.

tab 5, if you're using the tabs, or on screen.

Readiness Condition (or CRITCON, as it's known) and this

So, for them, wave 2 was, in a way, more stressful

transfer safer but also there's a clinical need to

well. So the centres that did take in more to

I think, a flow from small and medium to larger

that wave 1, whereas for other places it was not

cope as best you can, which was appropriate at the time,

waves, as I've sort of touched upon. I think if you

event of a pandemic?

decompress earlier.

with that as well.

mitigation of the initial shock.

for want of a better phrase.

DR SUNTHARALINGAM: It is, yes.

MS CAREY: Yes

their families, even if it's by virtual and iPads and

not being allowed to visit, the fact that knowing

1	a good system. And it provided a role during the
2	pandemic which does map across to normal life as well,
3	where setting these things up means the risks of
4	transfer are lower, and the benefits may be of what we
5	might call load balancing, ensuring patients do get the
6	right care rather than being in an over a busy
7	hospital where they decisions may be different or
8	where they don't have access to everything.
9	So I don't want to, sort of, in a way, inverse
10	caveat it by saying transfers can be made incrementally
11	safer and the transfer teams are a way of doing that.
12	MS CAREY: I suppose the point I wanted to make was there
13	was no evidential or study done that suggests that
14	transferring people out had a greater impact on their
15	mortality, but that's not to ignore the impact it had on
16	them, their loved ones and, indeed, the staff left in
17	the unit perhaps caring
18	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Absolutely.
19	MS CAREY: for the most sick who may have then ended up
20	going on to, sadly, die.
21	A. Yes, and I know that's been mentioned in earlier
22	testimony and there's the moral injury aspect of that.
23	And actually if you are a critical care healthcare
24	worker of any sort, but particularly the nursing and
25	other staff who are by the bed of that patient for long
	81
1	hospital at 1:6 staffing ratios and somewhere else with
2	more capacity, if you decompress earlier, at say 1:4,
3	there's less impact on staff, the patients may do
4	better. So the later transfers the ability to do
5	transfer safely and to be at a lower threshold in fact
6	and to decompress was part of the learning within the
7	pandemic, and I think that is transferable to future
8	ones as well.
9	Load balancing as a term sounds a bit, sort of,
10	non-humane.
11	MS CAREY: It does.
12	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: This is not about cargo but as a sort of
13	technical term, and we don't tend to talk about that day
14	to day, but it's about evening out the dilution and the
15	workload under overwhelming conditions, and I think
16	that doing that more readily was an important part of
17	the learning process.
18	MS CAREY: Yes, if I understand what you are saying
19	correctly, that this was a very reactive need to
20	transfer out when it got too bad and, if I understand
21	what you are correctly saying, there might be a lesson
22	learned to be more proactive and transfer out before you
23	get to that state of overwhelming pressure?
24	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes, and then there's something around
25	getting the preparations right at the receiving end as

(21) Pages 81 - 84

1	impact on other services. Normal winter levels of
2	noncritical care transfer and other overflow activities.
3	So the ICU is operating as normal: is that what that
4	means?
5	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Essentially, and this is there have
6	been different iterations of this. This originates back
7	from H1N1 and swine flu, when it was created for
8	a similar purpose, and reflects conditions at the time
9	where a bad winter is sort of within the normal range.
10	But things that were unprecedented would include working
11	in other areas, which at the time of the pandemic
12	obviously became almost standard.
13	So there's a slight historical lag in the
14	definitions and that's been addressed by revisions since
15	then.
16	MS CAREY: All right. Then we've got there CRITCON 1 is
17	what is described as a bad winter. CRITCON 2:
18	"Medium surge, unprecedented, the usual funded
19	critical care capacity is full, overflow into
20	quasi-critical care areas (theatre, recovery, other
21	acute care areas) and a high level of non-clinical
22	transfers. Trusts beginning mutual aid."
23	What does that mean in reality? Try and give us
24	a picture of what does a hospital or an ICU look like at
25	CRITCON2?
	85
1	escalation. It's a way for hospitals, for frontline
2	clinicians, to escalate to their management within their
3	region and nationally to say, "Okay, we're now in
4	unprecedented territory". And then, as you get to
5	CRICON3, you're approaching a situation where the
6	hospital may become overwhelmed, and you're doing that
7	using how it feels subjectively but trying to put some
8	objective handles on to it to enable that to happen.
9	MS CAREY: So when you move from 2 to 3, there's expansion
10	now into noncritical care areas, wards or using
11	paediatric facilities, the trust is operating at or near
12	maximum physical capacity. There is maximum mutual aid
13	between the trusts with the network and the regional
14	NHSE co-ordination. The prime imperative in CRITCON3 is
15	to prevent any single trust entering CRITCON4.
16	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes.
17	MS CAREY: That sounds. as described there, as full stretch.
18	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes.
19	MS CAREY: Is that really there's no other bed available or

20 we might only have one bed available today? Is that

21 what we're looking at.

- DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes, basically, and bearing in mind even
 the one bed is inadequate, so in the height of the
- 24 pandemic, if you're admitting four or five or six
- 25 patients a day, or more in the larger places, then it's,

87

1	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: So if I can sort of connect this to a	
2	later discussion we will come to but also a relevant	
3	originally discussed in 2009 for swine flu which is	
4	tying it actually to decision-making and what happens	
5	when a hospital gets overwhelmed. Is there a risk that	
6	individual clinicians will start making decisions about	
7	admissions which are limited by resource rather than	
8	only what's best for the patient, and how do we avoid	
9	that	
10	This shared escalation ladder, shared language, is	
11	a way of avoiding that. So CRITCON in that context was	
12	meant to represent not only numerical bed numbers from	
13	sort of spreadsheets, if you like, but also a stress	
14	gauge. It's how it feels to that hospital.	
15	So the definitions were designed to paint	
16	a picture of at t might look like. That picture already	
17	mutated during pandemic because almost all of us were	
18	already in non-traditional areas by the time the	
19	pandemic started, because that was part of the planning.	
20	But this is saying there CRITCON2 is something that	
21	isn't just a bad winter and, in a rising tide event such	
22	as flu that's creeping up and getting worse, it was	
23	meant to pick up that this is starting to happen.	
24	Clearly, in the case of the pandemic we knew what	
25	was coming and there was much more accelerated	
	86	
1	you know, it's difficult to put numbers on but then	
2	that's why this is meant to be deliberately a little bit	
3	subjective in that it's how it is affecting that site	
4	that day. And it's an alarm bell really.	
5	MS CAREY: Then CRITCON 4: The ICU is in an emergency, it's	
6	overwhelmed, there is a possibility of triage by	
7	resource (non-clinical refusal or withdrawal of critical	
8	care due to resource limitation).	
9	Help us, please, what does "triage by resource"	
10	mean?	
11	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: It means deciding who comes to intensive	
12	care, not only I mean, it remains important to do it	
13	with the patient's perspective but also where there may	
14	be limitations based on the fact you have become	
15	overwhelmed and you can't admit everyone you might	
16	otherwise have done. Again, this discussion arose in	
1/	2009 when there was planning for, at that stage, the	
18	HINI pandemic. There were models circulating at the	
19	time of deciding whose comes to ICU based on their	
20	privsiological state, and saying some people are too	
21	sick. I hat was not adopted in the UK. Instead, at that	
22 22	staye, and i was involved with this at the time, there	
23 24	the shared escalation the mutual aid with any	
<u>~</u> +	and online occuration, the mutual and, with any	

25 discussion of triage in order that the latter could be 88

1	deferred and averted by maximising mutual aid before	1	implemented on a national directive from NHSE, and
2	there was any such discussion.	2	I think, indeed, you've seen a statement from
3	And secondly, to make sure that was done only on	3	NHS England, from Dr Michael Charles Prentice who
4	national authorisation so it	4	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Perhaps, can I comment on that, on the
5	MS CAREY: I am going to come to how it is authorised in a	5	origin of this.
6	moment, but does this envisage, I put it no higher than	6	MS CAREY: Yes, certainly.
7	that, that potentially if an ICU were in or a trust	7	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: So this was the early draft, and I keep
8	were declaring CRITCON 4, they could withdraw critical	8	saying that. So the when they said actually
9	care due to resource limitation?	9	probably the wording could have been better at the time
10	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: I think it's envisaging that that might	10	because the "this must only be implemented" meant the
11	start to be to feel or be necessary but also but	11	triage.
12	to try and ensure that isn't the case. So every other	12	MS CAREY: Yes.
13	hospital that can help would then would be coming to	13	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: So any hospital can say this is
14	their aid. And, again, this is an early version before	14	CRITCON 4, because that's the alarm bell, but if they
15	the sort of infrastructure that we now have was	15	want to start saying, actually, we're now going to start
16	envisioned. Now it would be even more so, but you would	16	restricting our admissions to a different threshold,
17	want to be averting it before we get to that stage and	17	that needs to be externally authorised. So that was the
18	maximising mutual aid within regions and across nations,	18	vision in 2009. I think I'd say that is still true, but
19	really.	19	the wording so it isn't that they can't say they are
20	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: The point of it was to make sure that	20	CRITCON 4.
21	nobody fails unless everybody fails.	21	MS CAREY: No, I follow what you are saying. You are saying
22	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes.	22	that if a hospital got to the stage where they thought
23	MS CAREY: We've heard that and we'll look at that in a	23	they might have to refuse a patient or, indeed, withdraw
24	moment.	24	critical care, they would have had to have declared it
25	It says basically that CRITCON 4 must only be	25	and, indeed, that decision-making be authorised by NHSE
	89		90
1	in accordance with the national guidance. So not to do	1	triaging, it meant they were either in error or as
2	it on their own and then say. "We've done it "	2	heing at the extremes of CRITCON 3 they were
2	DP SI INTHADAL INGAM: No exactly absolutely right	2	triggering, and what should then happen, that should set
4	MS CAREY: I want to just look before at CRITCON levels	4	un a red light and there should be questions asked about
5	in April 2020 and can I have up on screen please		do you need help, is there anything we can do is this
6	INO(000226890, 27) Because we now knowing what the	5	an accurate definition
7	CPITCON levels are, we can see here on any given day	7	So those black blobs don't mean at those sites
י פ	throughout April, and I think we should say that CPITCON	7 Q	triage was happening (Unclear) should happen anywhere
0	lavels are reported twice daily is that right at 8 am	0	thage was happening. (<i>Unclear)</i> should happen anywhere.
9 10	levels are reported twice daily, is that right, at 6 and	0	But it meant the alarm hells were going on sometimes
10	and 9 nm, or thorophouto?	9 10	But it meant the alarm bells were going on, sometimes
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(23) Pages 89 - 92

1	nations and it is largely one of scale and levels of
2	organisation, I think, and direct contact with senior
3	people, but in an England context, certainly during the
4	pandemic, you had regional medical officers, so there
5	should be awareness at the regional medical office
6	level, there should be awareness of what it means, and
7	there was some variation in whether there was enough
8	sort of critical care input in the various regions at
9	that level, but people should know what it means, what
10	it represents in terms of what's happening on the sites
11	and there should be support measures put in place and,
12	again, I can't tell you if that's what happened
13	everywhere.
14	To sort of put a human face on it, if I can just
15	refer back to Professor Fong's testimony, the sort of
16	sites where he described where really extreme scenarios
17	were happening, that's in a way that's what this
18	looks like and what should happen with a CRITCON 4 or
19	CRITCON 3 declaration, in a word, is really what you
20	would want to happen when things like that are happening
21	on your watch of the type that he describes and it's a
22	way of trying to put a number and a flag on that in
23	a way that brings help.
24	MS CARET: II I understand it correctly, where a nospital degleres CRITCON 4. NHS England context the begritel to
25	93
1	But I think, you know, we've got named hospitals
1 2	But I think, you know, we've got named hospitals and I think it is important to emphasise that for you
1 2 3	But I think, you know, we've got named hospitals and I think it is important to emphasise that for you know, there will be people listening whose families were
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1	find out what's going on; whether they are truly at		
2	CRITCON 4; what steps can be taken to help alleviate the		
3	pressure on any given hospital; and, indeed,		
4	Dr Prentice's statement sets out the steps that		
5	NHS England took to identify if they were correctly		
6	reporting CRITCON 4 and what steps were taken to help		
7	the unit.		
8	Even if it was incorrect declaration, either by		
9	pressing the wrong button or in fact there was still		
10	a bed available in a neighbouring hospital, do you think		
11	this is an indication of the pressures that the hospital		
12	themselves felt even if technically CRITCON 4 wasn't		
13	made out?		
14	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: Yes, and without sort of stretching		
15	analogies too far, it's a little bit like a smoke alarm		
16	or a fire alarm: you want it to go off occasionally in		
17	error because it shows it's working and that people are		
18	looking. And, you know, if it's dealt with and we said,		
19	okay, we can stand down on this occasion, that's fine		
20	so a few erroneous triggers. In a way what you want if		
21	there's nothing happening, it means that perhaps the		
22	reports aren't getting through or it's not sensitive		
23	enough. So I think it does reflect pressure and I think		
24	the number of CRITCON 3s you can see shows the pressure		
25	that leads to this.		
	94		
1	So I think the reason CRITCON isn't sort of		
1			

2	necessarily it wasn't adopted wholesale from 2009
3	onwards was because on a national four nation scale
4	outside England there was perhaps arguably less need for
5	it.
6	On the other hand, it means that there isn't
7	a commonality of language. So if you're comparing
8	what's at and particularly when it comes to mutual
9	aid across border in a way, you really ideally would
10	want (and this comes on to the recommendations) you
11	really want Scotland to be saying, you know, we've got
12	one region on CRITCON 3 or the country as a whole is
13	getting into CRITCON 4 in order to trigger mutual aid
14	discussions.
15	And as a lot of those didn't happen or wouldn't
16	happen, but there's an argument that sharing the
17	language makes that discussion easier, particularly when
18	it gets to, sort of, political level when you can look
19	across the board.
20	MS CAREY: So you would advocate for a similar CRITCON-style
21	reporting system across the entire UK?
22	DR SUNTHARALINGAM: I would and I think also partly to
23	reassure people that the lack of it or the absence of it
24	this time doesn't mean that that information wasn't
25	passing up. So as the Intensive Care Society, of which 96

1	I was president at the time, is a four nations body and	1
2	we were in contact with colleagues in all of those	2
3	and this is anecdotal but from conversations, I am	3
4	sort of they felt able to escalate their bed	4
5	situation, their strain, in a way that was sort of	5
6	parallel to the CRITCON system.	6
7	MS CAREY: I might give our stenographer a break and turn to	7
8	you, Professor Summers. And I don't mean that rudely,	8
9	Dr Suntharalingam.	9
10	But let's change the topic slightly and change the	10
11	questions. I would like to ask you just a little bit,	11
12	perhaps before we take our lunch break in a moment or	12
13	two's time, about some shortages or reported shortages	13
14	of oxygen, dialysis machines, ventilators, medicines,	14
15	and the like.	15
16	Professor, can I turn to you, please, at	16
17	paragraph 167 in your report. I think it's fairly well	17
18	publicised that there was a shortage of mechanical	18
19	ventilators, both invasive and non-invasive, in the	19
20	early stages of the pandemic; is that correct?	20
21	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So I think the situation was twofold.	21
22	we went into the pandemic without anyone being 100%	22
23	NHS It was not a part of pro pandomia planning to know	23
24	that the entire NHS had this number of ventilators that	24
	97	
4	using devices such as the useful taxe that suc	4
ו כ	ordinarily attached to anaesthetic machines and other	1
2	devices that were not familiar to the staff for their	2
4	everyday work NHS England it should be recognised	3
5	provided training packages for unfamiliar devices and	5
6	did what they could to support but the fact was we did	6
7	not have enough ventilators of the type we routinely use	7
8	in intensive care units to support our patients	8
9	available for the number of patients that required them.	9
10	MS CAREY: Are you able to help me, Professor, how long did	10
11	it take to get someone up to speed with a new type of	11
12	ventilator? Is it a day or actually a few minutes?	12
13	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: It depends on the device and the	13
14	experience of the person doing it. Actually, sometimes	14
15	to use an anaesthetic machine to provide mechanical	15
16	ventilators, which is very different to routine	16
17	practice, actually required additional staff. So	17
18	particularly operating department practitioners would	18
19	come from the operating theatres and help with that and	19
20	a whole host of other staff were needed to train, in	20
21	addition to providing the care for the already increased	21
22	number of people. So it was a significant burden.	22
23	MS CAREY: In addition, then, to not enough ventilators	23
24	and/or ventilators that were unfamiliar, can I ask you	24
25	about oxygen?	25

1	were capable of this type of support. So very rapidly
2	that data had to be obtained, and a decision was made
3	that what the modelling suggested might be the number of
4	patients who were going to require those devices was not
5	matched by the number of available devices.
6	MS CAREY: Yes I think NHS England and Improvement
7	certainly put out requests to the trusts in England in
8	late February that revealed there was only 7 357 devices
q	available, and that was including naediatric devices
10	and for example ventilators that might be used in an
11	ambulance and the like
12	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Yes
13	MS CAREY: And the modelling as at that time suggested we
14	might need 59 000 as against what was it 7 500 that
15	were actually just under 7 500
16	PROFESSOR SIMMERS: By the middle of March the realisation
17	had hit that there was a huge disparity between what was
18	notentially going to be needed and what was available
10	MS CAREY: Now your report sets out the various workstreams
20	that were ongoing. I'm not going to ask you about those
20	or indeed the ventilator challenge, but did it by spring
21	2020 mean that there were a number of ventilators coming
22	into ICI is that weren't the usual nieces of equipment
20	that staff were used to working on?
24 25	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Absolutely So in spring 2020 we were
20	98
1	I think you make the point there that supply of
2	oxygen for critically ill people is clearly one of the
3	most essential treatments that they require
4	We've heard a little bit about oxvgen shortages
5	and the like but how did it play out on the ground
6	Professor? What was done to try and ensure that all the
7	patients had the oxygen that they required?
8	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So there were multiple steps that were
9	taken both organisationally so alerts were put out to
10	all NHS trusts saving "Please make sure you understand
11	the oxygen capacity of your individual hospital Please
12	make sure that you have consulted with your estates team
13	and the oxygen engineers"
14	MS CAREY: Can Liust pause you there is that something
15	that isn't done routinely in non-pandemic times?
16	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: I think it probably is but I suspect
17	it's been many years since we put so much strain on the
18	oxygen capacity on some somewhat elderly estate across
19	the NHS
20	MS CAREY: So they were the estates effectively were
21	asked to make sure they had they understood what

- their capacity was. In the event that they did not have
- 23 capacity, are you able to help as to what steps were
- taken to try and ensure that there was still capacityfor oxygen?
 - 100

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1	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: A huge programme of attempting to make	1	us
2	sure that everybody was very careful what we called	2	he
3	"oxygen stewardship" and that oxygen was used to the	3	dr
4	amount required. Some devices require a fixed flow	4	be
5	rate, for example, 15 litres per minute. Make sure that	5	ha
6	you are setting at 15 litres per minute, not at 20 to	6	MS CA
7	make sure. And then making sure that you are putting	7	by
8	a number of devices on to a particular bit of oxygen	8	ne
9	infrastructure that will not exceed the delivery	9	PROFE
10	capacity of that, and also alterations in the oxygen	10	to
11	saturation targets which I'm sure we're going to	11	MS CA
12	discuss.	12	ох
13	MS CAREY: I would like to ask you that, please. You say in	13	be
14	your paragraph 177:	14	be
15	"There were modified (reduced) peripheral oxygen	15	We
16	saturation targets proposed."	16	PROFE
17	So, what, a reduction in the amount of oxygen a	17	as
18	patient received. How did that come about? Did that	18	a
19	come into force and how did it affect the patient.	19	ar
20	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So professional societies issued	20	ha
21	guidance suggesting that the safe oxygen saturation	21	
22	measured by pulse oximetry or arterial blood gas	22	of
23	analysis was 92% for the majority of people. There are	23	im
24	other people who have respiratory diseases and other	24	wł
25	chronic health issues for whom 92 is higher than the	25	pe
	101		
1	saturations over-estimated by the devices meaning that	1	ne
2	92% oxygen saturations for them may actually be	2	tra
3	considerably lower. It varies from device to device and	- 3	th
4	there is ongoing research to assess the extent of this	4	CO
5	and the impact that's happening in the UK at the moment	5	de
6	funded by NIHR, but is undoubtedly the case that some of	6	th
7	the devices that were in use were not accurately	7	pu
8	measuring in people with darker skin tones.	8	us
9	MS CAREY: We're going to hear more about that, I think,	9	MS CA
10	next week from a witness and I have no doubt, in due	10	th
11	course, from NHS England and other like bodies.	11	a
12	Can I ask you just briefly about renal support	12	PROFE
13	equipment. Clearly, you've told us that Covid affecting	13	cir
14	multi-organs affected the kidneys. What was the	14	MS CA
15	position? Do we have enough dialysis machines and the	15	th
16	like to support the patients that required renal	16	ec
17	support?	17	pr
18	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: We did not. So there was an issue in	18	PROFE
19	that we have admitted a large number of people to	19	MS CA
20	intensive care units who had multi-organ dysfunction, so	20	as
21	there was an increased burden of requirement for renal	21	it f
22	replacement therapies, but at the same time there were	22	af
23	difficulties with the supply lines.	23	th
24	So whilst we might have had machines, what we	24	PROFE
25	didn't have were the fluids and the consumables that are 103	25	hi

1	usually recommended oxygen capacity. But for a fit and
2	healthy person, normally we say greater than 94; it was
3	dropped to greater than 92 because that was thought to
4	be safe. I could find no evidence to suggest that that
5	had done any harm at any point during the pandemic.
6	MS CAREY: Can I just ask you this: is there any harm done
7	by giving someone higher oxygen saturation than they
8	need?
9	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: Yes, there most certainly is. Oxygen
10	toxicity is something that worsens lung inflammation.
11	MS CAREY: I think, though, you go on to say that whilst the
12	oxygen lower saturation targets may not themselves have
13	been harmful, there was concern about the equipment
14	being used. Can you explain to us, please, what you
15	were concerned about there.
16	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So oxygen status of a patient is often
17	assessed using peripheral pulse oximetry. So it is
18	a probe that gets attached to someone's finger usually
19	and measures through the skin how red or not their
20	haemoglobin is using a series of lights.
21	There is emerging evidence that suggests that some
22	of the devices that are in clinical use actually are
23	impacted by the colour of the skin tone of the person
24	who is having the device used upon them, such that
25	people with darker skin tones may have their oxygen
	102
1	needed. A mutual aid system, in the same way as
1 2	needed. A mutual aid system, in the same way as transferring patients, was put in place for that but
1 2 3	needed. A mutual aid system, in the same way as transferring patients, was put in place for that but that was undoubtedly impacted in places not having or
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104

(26) Pages 101 - 104

2

1	we were all trying to contribute to understanding Covid,
2	finding treatments, and working out the best supportive
3	care to give. There was a limit to the research
4	capacity alongside the extended clinical care, I think,
5	at the time. So that didn't get addressed.
6	MS CAREY: One other topic, please. You refer in your
7	report to medicine shortages. What kind of medicines
8	are we talking about here?
9	PROFESSOR SUMMERS: We have had shortages during the
10	pandemic period of the Inquiry's focus and subsequently
11	of a variety of medicines in the pandemic.
12	Particularly, we were running short of the medicines
13	required to keep people sedated and on mechanical
14	ventilators; we ran short of different types of
15	painkillers; we ran short of, as I said, the fluids for
16	some of there renal replacement therapy. The shortages
17	were ever-changing and, as I say, have not entirely
18	disappeared since the pandemic has eased.
19	MS CAREY: Can I ask you that it sounds like we might be
20	missing some basic and if that's wrong, I'd like you
21	to set me straight because if we're talking about a very
22	highly specialised piece of medication, one might
23	understand why there aren't vast numbers of supplies.
24	But if we're talking about something that helps sedate
25	people in ICU or painkillers, it sounds that that ought

105

1	on Thursday, 2 October 2024)	1	
1	on Thursday, 3 October 2024)	1	
2		2	
3		3	PROFESSOR KATHRYN
4		4	Questions from COUI (continued)
5		5	Questions from MS H
6		6	Questions from MS S
7		7	Questions from MR C
8		8	
9		9	(affirmed)
10		10	DR GANESH SUNTHARA
11		11	
12		12	
13		13	
14		14	
15		15	
16		16	
17		17	
18		18	
19		19	
20		20	
21		21	
22		22	
23		23	
24		24	
25		25	
	107		

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Why are we running out of what, my term, a more

3 basic types of medication?

- 4 PROFESSOR SUMMERS: So I think part of the issue is to think
- 5 about where are those medicines produced. Lots of those
- 6 medicines are not manufactured in the United Kingdom, so
- 7 we are relying on supply chains from outside the
- 8 United Kingdom which were impacted for a whole variety
- of reasons over that period. So it was unlikely that 9
- 10 the supply chains were going to be as robust and we
- 11 don't routinely keep big stockpiles. We keep stockpiles
- 12 of those things for everyday care, but suddenly
- 13 everybody in the world wanted them all at the same time
- 14 in increased numbers.

MS CAREY: Are these the types of medications that have a 15

- 16 shelf life?
- 17 PROFESSOR SUMMERS: They do.
- MS CAREY: So you can't keep thousand or millions of --18
- 19 PROFESSOR SUMMERS: You couldn't keep them for 20 years just
- 20 in case, no.
- 21 MS CAREY: My Lady, would that be a convenient moment to 22 take lunch?
- 23 LADY HALLETT: Certainly. I shall return at 1.35.
- 24 (12.33 pm)

25

(The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am 106

2	INDEX	
3	PROFESSOR KATHRYN ROWAN (continued)	1
1	Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY (continued)	1
)	Questions from MS HAMMAD	22
7	Questions from MS SHEPHERD	25
, ,	Questions from MR ODOGWU	29
))	PROFESSOR CHARLOTTE SUMMERS (affirmed)	32
0	DR GANESH SUNTHARALINGAM (sworn)	32
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
~		

108

	106/17 106/19	2021 [4] 5/2 19/12	80 [1] 73/17	22/22 92/6
DR	1	19/12 24/22	82 [1] 70/6	accurately [1] 103/7
SUNTHARAI INGAM	<u> </u>	2024 [3] 1/1 34/5	٩	across [22] 9/6 36/15
· [85] 33/15 33/21	1 March [1] 74/8	107/1	3	46/14 48/4 57/4 60/3
34/1 40/5 48/24 49/21	1.35 [1] 106/23	21 [1] 51/17	90 [2] 78/15 79/25	60/18 60/19 67/24
50/3 50/5 50/15 50/25	10 [2] 44/20 59/18	22 [3] 60/11 63/13	92 [4] 101/23 101/25	67/25 69/16 71/19
51/3 51/25 52/19	10.00 [2] 1/2 106/25	67/7	102/3 103/2	
53/13 54/2 54/22	100 [3] 44/20 62/19	24 hours [1] /9/22	94 [1] 102/2	73/15 81/2 89/18 96/9
55/10 55/24 56/1 56/6	9//22 109 patiente [1] 80//	24/7 [3] 69/20 70/9	Α	96/19 96/21 100/18
56/24 58/12 60/9	100 patients [1] 00/4	74/20	abilities [1] 70/2	
60/17 61/11 61/25	11.10 [1] 40/10 11 25 [2] 48/11 48/15	27 [1] 91/0 27 March [1] 61/23	ability [5] 25/12	75/21
62/3 62/15 62/17	12 33 pm [1] 106/24	27 Walch [1] 01/23	47/13 48/2 83/4 104/4	75/24
63/14 63/19 63/22	137 [1] 79/3	20 [2] 40/24 40/10 28 Δnril 2020 [1]	able [14] 2/12 8/14	active [2] 33/12
64/9 65/9 65/23 66/2	14 [1] 44/24	61/23	8/15 30/20 30/25	74/24
66/11 67/7 67/14	14 months [1] 33/5	28 days [1] 46/3	31/12 70/11 72/18	activities [2] 58/23
67/23 68/15 69/1	15 [1] 18/15	28-day [1] 45/19	73/3 75/21 84/25 97/4	85/2
69/22 70/7 70/20	15 litres [3] 38/18	29 [1] 15/7	99/10 100/23	activity [2] 72/9
71/13 72/4 72/21	101/5 101/6	2	about [86] 1/4 1/8	74/22
75/16 76/6 76/13	15 March [3] 64/3	3	2/20 2/25 7/6 7/14	actual [2] 60/25 68/6
76/15 77/2 77/20 70/15	74/11 74/15	3 October 2024 [1]	7/16 8/11 8/19 9/16	actually [31] 2/21
79/10 79/14 80/9	16 hours [1] 44/10	107/1		14/17 16/7 18/18
81/18 82/14 82/25	16 June [1] 46/1	30 [1] 53/24	14/15 16/2 16/4 18/13	28/16 37/3 47/6 47/20
83/12 83/24 84/18	167 [1] 97/17	30-day [2] 20/10	18/14 18/15 19/11	48/3 52/10 54/12
85/5 86/1 87/16 87/18	175 [2] 61/9 62/2	30/16	21/0 21/7 22/17 22/18	55/11 57/20 59/5
87/22 88/11 89/10	175 beds [1] 62/5	31 [1] 53/25	25/25 29/10 35/4	60/21 66/8 71/13
89/22 90/4 90/7 90/13	1//[1] 101/14	33 [1] 18/1	36/2/ 37/10 38/0	73/20 75/24 79/6
91/3 91/17 91/21	19 [31] 3/4 4/25 5/10	35/40 [1] 16/4	38/17 38/21 39/6 /0/0	81/23 86/4 90/8 90/15
92/24 94/14 95/14	0/21 10/21 11/9 11/13	37 [1] 20/13	40/10 43/10 43/11	98/15 99/12 99/14
96/22	16/15 16/21 16/21	39[1] 02/14 3e [1] 0//2/	43/12 44/12 45/9	99/17 102/22 103/2
LADY HALLETT:	17/3 17/4 18/7 18/9	<u>35 [1]</u> 34/24	48/19 50/9 52/14 53/5	104/10 actually did [1] 28/16
[10] 1/4 1/11 25/21	18/11 18/22 19/5	4	53/9 53/14 53/21	actually ulu [1] 20/10
27/21 29/14 31/25	20/11 21/1 21/6 26/1	4 August [1] 46/18	53/22 54/2 54/6 55/16	51/21 85/21
48/11 49/20 72/2	29/6 31/18 31/22	40 [4] 16/4 65/3	55/21 56/18 60/2 61/9	acutely [1] 36/4
106/23	45/20 45/21 84/23	73/24 76/4	62/22 64/3 67/4 67/5	ad [1] 75/9
MR FIREMAN: [2]	19 March [1] 45/5	40 years [1] 1/5	67/17 72/23 78/15	add [1] 58/13
1/13 22/7	1:12 [1] 53/16	41 [1] 73/7	80/17 83/12 83/13	Addenbrooke's [1]
	1:3 [1] 63/25	48 hospitals [1] 47/1	83/14 84/13 84/14	33/6
29/17 31/23 MS CADEV: [426]	1:4 [2] 50/10 83/2	5	86/6 92/4 97/13 98/20	addition [4] 32/25
	1:6 [6] 56/16 59/11		99/25 100/4 101/18	52/24 99/21 99/23
22/15 25/18	61/14 64/1 82/17 83/1	5 April 2020 [1]	102/13 102/15 103/9	additional [2] 24/17
MS SHEPHERD: [4]	1:8 [1] 53/16	ZZ/ZJ E June [4] 45/21	103/12 105/8 105/21	99/17
25/23 25/25 28/10	2	5 June [1] 40/21	105/24 106/5	address [1] 21/18
29/12		50 [5] 10/2 55/1 05/2	above [1] 64/3	addressed [2] 85/14
PROFESSOR	2 October 2024 [1]			105/5
SUMMERS: [54]	20 [1] 101/6	6		adjourned [1] 106/25
32/24 33/3 33/8 35/21	20 years [1] 106/19	60 [2] 63/18 73/14	2/6 11/5 19/16 23/15	
36/10 37/3 37/13	200 [1] 62/8	61 [1] 58/5	28/14 31/2 35/21	auminicitization [4]
37/20 38/13 39/1	200-odd [1] 62/1	7	37/13 41/24 57/17	57/23
39/23 40/19 41/6	2000 [2] 71/11 71/17	<u> </u>	58/12 66/2 76/15	administrative [2]
41/15 41/24 42/13	2008 [1] 70/18	7,357 [1] 98/8	81/18 91/3 98/25	57/13 57/25
42/16 42/22 43/6	2009 [4] 86/3 88/17	7,500 [2] 98/14 98/15	academic [2] 32/25	admission [12] 3/4
43/15 44/19 45/8 46/9	90/18 96/2	7.6 [2] 7/10 10/16	79/7	11/21 15/11 17/1 17/5
40/24 47/11 47/15	2013 [1] 43/20	70[1] 10/2	accelerated [1] 86/25	18/5 18/8 19/22 20/18
4010 0110 01122 09/4 50/13 6011 65105 6610	2017 [1] 70/9	75 [1] 68/0	access [5] 22/1 59/6	21/12 26/6 26/14
80/20 07/21 02/20 00/3	2018 [1] 33/18	75 veare [2] 10/22	68/17 73/2 81/8	admissions [7] 10/23
98/16 98/25 99/13	2020 [17] 6/1 22/23	13/17	accordance [1] 91/1	13/17 37/10 74/3 74/9
100/8 100/16 101/1	23/24 33/4 33/18	78 beds [1] 95/16	according [1] 49/14	86/7 90/16
101/20 102/9 102/16	50/14 4//20 01/23			admit [2] 55/9 88/15
103/18 104/12 104/18	03/10 07/3 73/14 73/16 77/7 01/5 01/12	8		admitted [36] 2/4
104/24 105/9 106/4	98/22 98/25	8 pm [1] 91/10	accurate [3] 14/18	2/22 4/24 5/1 5/3 5/9
				5/119/24 10/21 11/8

(28) DR SUNTHARALINGAM: - admitted

Α	88/24 89/1 89/14	alterations [1]	appear [1] 25/25	102/6 103/12 105/19
admitted [26] 11/11	89/18 96/9 96/13	101/10	appeared [1] 23/17	asked [4] 23/13 24/7
11/12 13/8 13/12	104/1	altered [2] 35/25 36/1	appears [2] 2/17	92/4 100/21
14/11 15/25 16/21	aimed [1] 47/1	altering [1] 54/12	18/19	asking [1] 57/12
17/12 17/15 17/23	aims [1] 37/21	alternative [1] 1//	applies [1] 37/14	aspect [4] 10/11
18/11 19/4 19/5 19/17	airway [2] 39/7 42/6	although [8] 39/14	apply [1] 78/8	12/24 / 9/23 81/22
21/1 21/6 28/4 28/5	alarm [7] 55/18 88/4	00/12 01/18 05/19		assess [3] 24/19
28/8 28/12 28/19	90/14 91/24 92/9	10/10 / //8 / 9/10	appointments [1]	78/23 103/4
29/10 37/7 38/4 80/4	94/15 94/10	95/10 alwaya [2] 37/0 /1/10	34/3 approciato [1] 12/7	
103/19	alert [1] 90/0	aiways [2] 51/3 41/13 am [15] 1/2 20/3 26/2	appreciate [1] 12/7	78/18
admitting [3] 10/7	alerting [1] 55/15	32/24 39/19 48/13	appreciated [1] 55/5	assessment [1]
10/8 87/24	alerts [1] 100/9	48/15 67/16 72/2 72/3	74/10 75/1 75/3	64/17
adopted [2] 88/21	align [1] 3/6	72/3 89/5 91/9 97/3	approaches [1] 70/2	assistance [1] 77/8
96/2	all [70] 1/25 3/10 4/1	106/25	approaching [1] 87/5	associated [8] 2/18
adult [1] 69/20	4/12 6/20 9/6 9/8	amazing [2] 57/5	appropriate [4] 68/24	4/12 4/13 10/20 11/17
advance [1] 33/7	11/19 12/11 13/8	57/16	69/3 77/3 82/18	11/22 30/4 49/24
11/10 11/13 11/16	13/10 15/15 16/24	ambulance [2] 70/10	approval [1] 92/19	association [4] 2/5
12/14 12/17 13/11	19/6 20/9 21/2 21/6	98/11	April [12] 6/1 6/5	30/3 30/16 40/15
13/18 21/20 26/7	21/9 21/19 22/7 28/20	among [2] 71/21 79/7	22/23 61/23 63/18	associations [1]
26/15 26/25 27/7 27/8	29/8 31/10 32/2 36/12	amongst [2] 10/6	65/1 67/3 73/14 74/13	59/17
27/8 28/23 29/1 29/7	36/20 37/20 40/18	75/1	91/5 91/8 91/12	assume [1] 51/22
advising [1] 95/24	40/20 41/3 41/15	amount [6] 50/16	April 2020 [4] 6/1	at [166]
advocate [1] 96/20		52/3 52/24 59/12	73/14 91/5 91/12	attached [2] 99/2
advocated [1] 45/23	48/7 57/22 58/1 58/4	101/4 101/17	ARDS [1] 47/21	102/18
advocates [1] 29/20	59/3 00/ 18 00/ 19 60/22 62/4 64/24		are [169]	attacking [1] 35/19
affect [2] 36/8 101/19	65/11 60/21 60/21	99/15 analogios [1] 0//15	17/10 /0/2 7//22 77/6	attempting $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \end{bmatrix}$ 101/1
affected [5] 20/7 36/3	71/15 71/25 72/11	analogy [1] 54/16	77/15	attention [2] 50/16
79/19 103/14 104/22	72/13 72/18 72/22	analyses [2] 30/18	areas [18] 17/18	53/1
affecting [4] 15/4	74/4 75/1 75/8 75/19	30/21	17/23 27/15 34/7	audit [2] 15/1 24/7
16/23 88/3 103/13	76/8 76/22 78/4 84/25	analysis [8] 3/6 3/12	37/12 48/4 49/22 50/7	August [1] 46/18
affects [1] 35/15	85/16 86/17 97/2	20/3 20/24 24/3 30/1	70/24 70/24 70/25	authorisation [1]
	100/6 100/10 104/25	31/13 101/23	77/12 77/22 85/11	89/4
afraid [2] 1/7 72/3	105/1 106/13	analytically [1] 30/25	85/20 85/21 86/18	authorised [3] 89/5
after [7] 11/19 16/8	All-Wales [1] 71/15	anecdotal [1] 97/3	87/10	90/17 90/25
45/16 50/13 56/22	alleviate [1] 94/2	announced [1] 46/1	aren't [3] 41/2 94/22	authors [1] 80/11
69/2 73/16	allied [1] 49/16	another [10] 2/1	105/23	availability [1] 22/1
afternoon [2] 1/5	allow [2] 3/12 4/1		arguably [1] 96/4	available [20] 23/25
73/12	allowed [1] 82/7	43/1 47/25 68/13 79/5	argue [1] 29/5	
again [27] 5/10 11/3	almost [5] 3/24 63/23	80/3 80/24	argument [1] 96/16	63/18 65/2 65/5 67/5
12/7 12/11 17/13	0//10 03/12 00/17	answer [5] 2/12 0/0	arose [1] 00/10	09/21 74/10 00/10 97/10 97/20 04/10
18/12 18/18 18/22	10/12	answered [1] 22/17	23/17 50/7 52/3 55/14	98/5 98/9 98/18 99/9
32/2 32/5 38/19 44/14	alongside [2] 39/13	answers [1] 29/24	55/19 65/11 74/20	106/1
47/13 53/16 70/20	105/4	anv [40] 8/3 10/23	75/8 75/16 76/10 78/5	average [4] 9/14 9/24
73/17 73/22 75/17	already [9] 22/17	10/23 11/10 12/13	83/24 91/14	44/17 73/9
19/5 19/12 82/2 82/12	34/21 58/11 62/20	13/18 15/21 21/16	arrive [1] 58/2	averaged [2] 9/12
10/10/09/14/95/12	65/7 74/11 86/16	26/11 30/1 30/3 30/10	arrowed [1] 16/4	9/13
against [3] 34/24	86/18 99/21	30/11 31/3 31/3 31/5	arrows [2] 51/22 52/6	averted [1] 89/1
64/24 98/14	also [46] 2/16 5/7	31/6 31/13 40/3 44/17	artefact [1] 15/21	averting [1] 89/17
age [20] 2/25 3/3	10/20 12/4 12/8 13/5	49/2 51/8 55/21 56/5	arterial [1] 101/22	avoid [3] 14/3 69/7
3/14 3/17 3/19 3/22		64/16 66/15 67/7	as [128]	86/8
3/23 4/3 4/14 4/25		81/24 82/10 87/15	Asian [10] 18/3 18/10	avoidable [1] 21/23
5/10 5/22 6/17 8/3 8/8	35/6 39/4 40/2 41/6	88/24 89/2 90/13 91/7	18/17 19/3 19/14	avoiding [1] 86/11
10/12 11/17 20/11	42/9 43/23 49/13	94/3 102/5 102/5	19/18/20/0/20/0/20/13	awaited [1] 23/7
21/19 29/4	56/0 56/22 58/20	anvono [1] 97/22	ack [27] 2/20 2/25	aware [1] 43/24
aged [2] 10/22 13/17	58/22 61/6 63/9 63/23	anything [4] 14/3	4/18 8/19 11/3 14/15	34/23 36/6 104/24
ages [2] 9/13 9/21	67/23 69/2 70/21 71/7	66/17 68/22 92/5	22/7 22/16 26/2 32/14	awareness [3] 75/22
agree [1] 54/10	71/25 74/21 75/18	anywhere [1] 92/8	38/5 38/9 43/10 52/13	93/5 93/6
agreed [1] 5//5	82/22 86/2 86/13	apologies [1] 72/4	56/18 60/2 64/8 64/10	away [2] 13/3 82/9
aneau [1] 20/4	88/13 89/11 91/23	apologise [1] 26/10	77/14 78/14 97/11	
aiu [3] 00/22 01/12	96/22 101/10	apparent [1] 82/19	98/20 99/24 101/13	

(29) admitted... - babies

В	25/6 25/7 25/7 25/8	25/15 54/24 57/17	35/14 103/12	caregivers [1] 8/19
baby [1] 69/11	25/9 49/24 81/25	59/9 66/14 71/19	Brightling [1] 36/19	Carey [1] 32/7
back [14] 1/13 10/15	86/12 87/19 87/20	82/18 86/8 105/2	bring [6] 11/25 12/3	cargo [1] 83/12
12/18 13/22 32/5	8//23 94/10 9//4	better [13] 1/10 2/12	32/5 32/12 74/1 78/12	caring [1] 81/17
42/25 44/11 53/8 61/3	Deas [31] 24/4 24/8	24/25 25/4 47/6 50/12	Drings [1] 93/23	carry [1] 0/8
72/9 77/8 80/17 85/6	24/10 24/17 24/20	34/4 34/3 / 0/20 00/2 83/4 84/15 00/0	broad [1] 40/15	case [11] 14/21 24/0
93/15	24/23 44/17 44/20	03/4 04/13 90/9	broad [1] 37/3	47/10 51/5 52/19 57/11 70/15 86/27
background [2] 19/9	60/20 60/23 60/23	5/17 18/16 18/19 19/1	broadly [3] 19/8 37/5	89/12 103/6 106/20
34/25	60/24 61/6 62/1 62/5	19/12 19/23 19/23	37/7	cases [3] 13/4 36/12
backgrounds [2]	62/5 63/13 63/18	21/24 30/3 30/10 31/3	broken [1] 63/9	68/19
21/12 29/21	63/18 63/20 63/24	31/7 33/17 34/9 51/1	brought [3] 71/19	catch [1] 37/11
backup [1] 53/19	64/21 65/2 65/5 67/4	51/18 51/24 56/24	104/14 104/16	categorical [1] 55/13
bad [6] 67/20 67/21	67/6 95/16 95/21	61/23 63/2 65/16	build [1] 3/25	category [1] 72/7
83/20 85/9 85/17	bedside [2] 44/7 66/1	71/22 72/25 73/10	builds [1] 29/24	cause [1] 14/1
86/21	been [39] 7/21 7/22	73/14 77/1 77/12	burden [2] 99/22	caused [1] 11/18
bags [1] 104/12	7/25 8/12 11/20 12/22	77/18 79/18 79/21	103/21	causes [3] 23/18
balancing [3] 71/25	16/12 16/19 17/1	82/15 82/21 87/13	busier [2] 68/4 84/2	35/22 35/23
81/5 83/9	10/21 20/19 20/12	98/17 hover 11 67/16	DUSINESS [1] 84/24	caution [1] 79/11
barriers [1] 18/24	20/21 20/23 32/3 34/0		7/10 81/6	81/10
barrister [1] 1/6	16/10 17/20 57/20	bi lovol [1] /1/10	hut [160]	cavoate [1] 80/1
based [7] 17/1 24/3	63/25 66/19 67/10	big [2] 12/14 106/11	button [2] 92/20 94/9	cent [4] 15/18 16/1
24/5 24/15 25/2 88/14	68/4 70/14 74/23	biologically [1] 52/22		16/18 17/3
88/19	74/24 78/1 80/12	bit [17] 27/23 30/7	<u>C</u>	central [3] 70/23 71/6
	81/21 82/8 85/6 85/14	30/9 35/10 40/11	call [8] 3/9 7/22 23/9	75/14
basic [2] 105/20	90/9 100/17 102/13	60/18 62/17 62/18	40/21 51/4 55/9 69/4	centrally [1] 97/23
106/3	104/19	66/3 72/25 80/14 83/9	81/5	centres [6] 43/5 43/7
basically [4] 9/12	before [15] 2/5 19/12	88/2 94/15 97/11	called [5] 39/6 42/20	43/9 53/21 71/6 84/1
75/6 87/22 89/25	36/11 45/5 69/23 72/1	100/4 101/8	4//20 84/11 101/2	certain [3] 16/1 31/20
basis [1] 9/12	72/11 72/22 73/0	DITS [1] 49/0	camo [6] 57/15 58/22	9//23
BBC [1] 61/4	89/17 91/4 97/12	20/24 21/4 21/5 31/15	59/8 72/9 75/6 75/8	20/23 40/24 42/5
be [151]	beginning [3] 9/18	63/11 64/2 91/16	can [127]	48/11 53/14 53/18
be the [1] 55/10	74/7 85/22	91/18 92/7	can't [12] 5/24 8/1	54/10 72/7 90/6 93/3
Dear [4] 12/4 20/9	behalf [2] 22/9 26/1	bleeding [1] 36/1	13/25 18/25 59/19	98/7 102/9 106/23
bearing [3] 30/22	behavioural [1] 22/1	blips [1] 62/18	66/20 68/24 78/9	cetera [2] 40/9 40/9
77/3 87/22	behind [1] 84/21	blobs [1] 92/7	88/15 90/19 93/12	chains [2] 106/7
became [5] 3/3 23/16	being [37] 1/25 2/16	blood [7] 35/24 37/24	106/18	106/10
43/12 64/18 85/12	2/21 7/9 7/24 12/9	42/23 42/24 42/25	cannulao [1] 37/24	chair [1] 33/19
because [40] 5/20	18/11 23/18 25/8 26/5	43/3 101/22 hlup [1] 5/20 12/12	canable [2] 15/12	chance [1] 13/7
7/19 8/24 10/6 22/4	26/14 27/5 27/15 28/4	19/6 65/3	98/1	chances [1] 47/4
30/18 35/18 36/15	28/8 30/20 31/14 36/4	board [2] 33/19	capacity [43] 1/16	change [10] 45/14
38/7 39/16 39/20	42/5 42/5 42/7 42/14	96/19	1/19 2/8 23/23 23/25	48/6 51/13 52/1 52/2
40/12 49/3 49/23 51/15 58/21 50/20	45/22 58/16 73/17	bodies [4] 40/8 61/19	24/19 25/1 25/4 34/19	52/24 53/6 61/1 97/10
60/23 64/11 64/16	76/14 80/14 80/17	69/24 103/11	60/2 60/14 60/18 61/8	97/10
66/4 68/4 69/8 69/9	81/6 82/7 92/2 97/22	body [4] 35/15 37/19	61/13 61/24 62/10	changed [5] 6/12
74/17 75/9 77/20	102/14	42/24 97/1	62/20 63/8 63/15 64/6	56/25 63/15 67/24
78/20 80/18 86/17	Belfast [1] 70/9	boosted [1] 61/18	65/24 65/7 65/13	72/16
86/19 90/10 90/14	believe [1] / 1/4	border [1] 96/9	60/13 71/7 72/20 80/8	changes [2] 13/14
91/6 92/14 94/17	bell [2] 00/4 90/14	104/10	83/2 85/19 87/12	13/20 changing [4] 52/2
95/19 96/3 102/3	below [2] 51/25 52/5	hoth [9] 31/14 32/14	88/23 100/11 100/18	52/14 53/7 105/17
105/21	belt [2] 70/23 71/6	34/6 39/1 43/22 69/7	100/22 100/23 100/24	characteristic [1]
become [7] 25/14	benefit [11] 8/6 43/17	73/10 97/19 100/9	101/10 102/1 105/4	2/24
30/19 50/18 87/6	43/21 44/1 44/3 46/3	brain [2] 36/1 66/18	capsule [1] 77/5	characteristics [6]
becomes [3] 25/11	47/6 47/22 47/23 48/4	break [6] 26/3 48/10	captured [1] 41/2	2/21 13/15 14/10 30/3
66/22 82/19	68/21	48/11 48/14 97/7	cardiovascular [3]	30/11 31/4
becoming [2] 31/17	benefits [1] 81/4	9//12	21/9 30/2 31/25	Charles [1] 90/3
31/22	Dereaved [2] 22/15	breathing [4] 42/9 42/11		Charlotte [3] 32/10
bed [18] 24/2 24/2	besnoke [1] 30/1	41/10 42/8 42/10	carefully [2] 44/7	cheaply [1] 46/14
24/10 24/10 24/10	best [11] 13/7 23/19	briefly [4] 1/14 33/24	44/9	Chelsea [1] 76/24
1			I	1 1

(30) baby - Chelsea

С	collaboration [2]	71/17	contributory [1]	5/10 5/19 6/21 10/21
chemotherapy [1]	71/23 72/6	compromise [2] 36/2	31/13	11/9 11/13 11/17
54/16	collaborative [1]	59/11	control [2] 43/19	11/21 11/25 12/2
chief [3] 3/1 52/14	75/1	concentrate [1]	46/25	12/15 15/3 15/24
56/13	colleague [1] 50/20	91/18	convenient [2] 48/10	15/25 16/13 16/15
chosen [1] 57/10		concept [1] 1/16	106/21	16/21 16/24 17/3 17/4
Chris [1] 3/2	2//14 9//2			10/7 10/9 10/11 10/22
Christmas [1] 73/16	colour [1] 14/23	102/13	40/20 47/2 47/7	19/3 19/17 19/22
chronic [15] 3/22	combination [1] 5/21	38/8 102/15	54/5 70/21 07/3	22/15 26/1 20/6 31/18
10/14 10/17 10/24	combinations [1]	concerns [1] 36/24	converse [2] 16/5	31/22 35/15 35/22
	27/7	condition [8] 10/24	84/8	36/24 37/2 37/11
	combined [3] 15/11	11/10 11/14 52/21	Converselv [1] 68/3	37/16 37/21 38/4
13/11 13/18 21/20	18/5 20/18	52/22 52/23 53/5	conveys [1] 84/13	45/20 46/16 47/12
41/17 101/20	come [23] 9/3 14/8	84/12	COPD [1] 41/20	54/11 63/11 65/4
	15/8 18/10 21/8 22/5	conditions [20] 3/22	cope [2] 82/18 84/4	84/23 103/13 105/1
chunks [1] 26/3	33/22 39/18 52/12	6/18 10/15 10/17 11/1	copy [1] 34/6	Covid-19 [30] 3/4
circuits [1] 104/13	53/8 53/22 58/21	11/16 11/23 12/14	core [2] 8/11 22/12	4/25 5/10 6/21 10/21
circular [1] 76/4	58/24 63/5 66/4 72/21		coronavirus [1]	11/9 11/13 11/17
circulating [1] 88/18	86/2 89/5 92/25 95/7	16/25 17/5 19/19	35/22	11/21 12/2 15/3 16/15
circulation [1] 43/1	99/19 101/18 101/19	19/19 19/20 21/20	correct [14] 2/2	16/21 16/24 17/3 17/4
clarify [6] 9/5 13/2	65/0 72/20 72/4 00/44	22/0 00/10 00/0	13/10 21/10 32/23 33/11 32/21 25/20	10/1 10/9 10/11 10/22
13/13 14/12 23/1	88/19 96/2 96/10	confident [1] 30/20	35/21 50/21 33/20 35/21 50/2 71/5 20/2	26/1 20/1 21/1 21/0
40/19	coming [8] 6/4 12/6	conflict [1] 66/18	80/9 84/17 97/20	45/20 84/23
clarity [2] 4/5 74/17	13/5 72/22 86/25	confounding [1] 80/6	correctly [4] 83/19	CPAP [9] 39/7 39/8
classification [1]	89/13 98/22 104/4	confused [1] 27/23	83/21 93/24 94/5	39/15 39/24 41/11
25/2 clear [9] 2/2 5/24	comment [2] 26/22	connect [1] 86/1	correlate [1] 29/4	42/16 46/18 47/3 47/6
0/18 0/20 17/25 36/22	90/4	conscience [1] 8/2	correlated [1] 11/17	created [1] 85/7
37/9 67/18	commented [1]	conscious [4] 30/22	correlation [2] 31/3	creeping [1] 86/22
clearer [1] 17/8	50/20	41/23 41/24 42/5	31/6	crescendo [1] 66/23
clearly [9] 23/4 34/18	commissioned [1]	consequence [1]	correspond [1] 20/1	CRICON3 [1] 87/5
35/4 37/17 56/16 71/7	43/7	consequences [1]	corresponds [1] 19/0	84/12 84/16 84/23
86/24 100/2 103/13	96/7	36/18	46/9	84/24 85/16 85/17
clerk [2] 57/14 57/20	commonly [2] 39/2	consider [4] 33/23	could [35] 1/13 3/11	86/11 88/5 89/8 89/25
Cierks [1] 5//15	46/12	34/12 34/19 35/7	5/15 7/13 10/9 10/11	90/14 90/20 91/4 91/7
8/5 15/1 24/7 27/13	communicate [1]	considerably [2]	12/8 14/20 15/5 15/8	91/8 91/15 91/19 92/2
33/1 33/5 33/23 44/1	95/22	63/16 103/3	17/16 18/1 20/15 23/9	92/11 92/15 92/17
45/18 47/17 49/18	communicated [2]	considered [2] 27/8	23/19 26/9 26/12 29/5	92/21 92/22 93/18
57/12 58/5 58/22	64/15 65/11	50/23	31/19 31/20 42/2	93/19 93/25 94/2 94/6
68/20 68/24 69/22	95/19	53/17 54/25	56/3 59/25 64/11	96/1 96/12 96/13
	communications [1]	consultants [5] 36/6	66/13 72/2 82/12	96/20 97/6
88/7 102/22 105/4	64/17	53/9 53/10 53/12	88/25 89/8 90/9 99/6	CRITCON 0 [1] 84/24
	comorbidities [2]	53/15	102/4	CRITCON 1 [1] 85/16
close [2] 61/15 104/4	3/22 11/24	consulted [1] 100/12	couldn't [1] 106/19	CRITCON 2 [1] 85/17
closely [1] 49/24	company [1] 46/13	consumables [2]	COUNSEL [3] 1/12	CRITCON 3 [1] 92/2
closer [2] 69/1 71/24	compared [2] 46/19	103/25 104/13	29/25 108/4	CRITCON 4 [2] 90/14
clots [1] 35/24	/9/20	contact [4] 77/25	countries [1] /2/18	91/15
co [3] 24/23 32/3	comparing [1] 90/7	93/293/2397/2	71/10 72/10 75/16	06/20
87/14	5/17	[21 56/2 56/6	96/12	CRITCON2 [2] 85/25
Co-developing [1]	compete [2] 3/13 4/2	context [4] 4/14	couple [2] 18/13	86/20
24/23	completely [1] 54/9	86/11 92/24 93/3	59/22	CRITCON3 [1] 87/14
co-ordination [1] 32/3	completes [1] 32/1	continued [5] 1/3	course [4] 6/21 59/24	CRITCON4 [1] 87/15
87/14	complex [2] 11/23	1/12 14/24 108/3	92/12 103/11	critical [90] 2/10 2/17
coalition [1] 70/10	38/2	108/4	cover [3] 49/22 53/17	3/5 4/24 5/3 5/10 6/18
coding [1] 15/20	complexity [1] 62/24	continuous [3] 39/7	10/20	1/20 11/9 11/18 11/21
cognitive [1] 38/1		contrast [2] 62/12	25/10 3//8	12/23 14/2 13/1 18/11
coherent [1] 13/1	complications [1]	62/21	covering [1] 49/15	23/23 23/25 24/13
coincide [1] 16/7	37/6	contribute [1] 105/1	covers [1] 67/19	25/1 25/6 25/16 26/6
	Comprehensive [1]	contributor [1] 24/20	Covid [55] 3/4 4/25	26/14 28/4 28/6 28/19

(31) chemotherapy - critical

С	24/3 45/24 46/3 50/5	deliver [8] 2/10 24/14	46/9 47/16 47/21	79/23 105/18
critical [61] 33/6	76/17 79/1	50/21 68/24 70/2	diagram [2] 62/9	discharge [5] 2/6
35/9 38/11 39/14	deal [3] 48/9 66/9	70/11 70/11 104/5	76/7	2/19 3/16 4/4 4/11
39/16 39/16 40/1	68/11	delivered [5] 38/7	diagrams [1] 68/10	disconnecting [1]
40/11 40/12 40/15	57/22 66/25 60/0	30/24 40/13 33/20 71/10	103/15 101/11	/9/17 discovery [1] /7/10
40/20 41/1 41/13 51/5	69/14 73/9	delivering [1] 54/14	did [3/1] 3/6 3/6 3/8	discuss [1] 4//10
51/9 51/11 51/23 52/9	dealt [1] 94/18	54/15 61/16 61/20	3/8 3/9 20/24 26/19	discussed [3] 46/3
52/15 52/17 53/24	death [4] 3/5 3/11	delivery [5] 42/18	28/16 28/16 30/1 33/8	67/15 86/3
54/6 55/6 55/13 55/20	47/5 47/9	71/10 71/16 72/10	36/25 37/18 41/12	discussing [2] 1/14
57/20 50/21 50/23	December [3] 7/3	101/9	46/6 57/5 57/16 57/17	1/15
59/15 59/17 59/18	33/18 33/18	Delta [1] 5/2	59/9 67/20 71/24	discussion [8] 40/17
59/22 66/3 68/6 68/11	December 2020 [1]	demand [1] 28/13	75/23 76/1 84/1 98/21	54/25 86/2 88/16
68/13 68/18 71/3	33/18	demonstrate [3] 2/7	99/6 99/6 99/10 100/5	88/23 88/25 89/2
71/10 71/18 71/18	aeciaing [2] 88/11	15/3 51/18	100/22 101/18 101/18	90/17 diaguagiana [2] 57/2
71/20 71/21 72/19	decision [1/1] 8/4	79/ <i>A</i>	didn't [11] 28/15	96/14
73/10 73/15 74/22	8/19 8/24 44/12 52/10	dental [1] 58/24	30/16 37/11 57/10	disease [4] 37/19
78/13 78/18 81/23	53/23 53/25 54/9	department [2] 23/14	74/24 76/19 78/6	41/17 45/11 54/12
84/11 84/25 85/19	54/21 54/24 64/9 86/4	99/18	80/14 96/15 103/25	disease-modifying
03/20 00/1 09/0 90/24	90/25 98/2	departure [1] 1/5	105/5	[1] 45/11
critically [7] 20/10	decision-making [6]	dependency [3]	die [3] 2/1 35/8 81/20	diseases [2] 3/18
25/7 25/11 31/22 35/8	8/4 8/19 8/24 52/10	10/23 13/18 51/4	dietitians [1] 58/6	101/24
40/20 100/2	86/4 90/25	depending [5] 39/11	differ [1] 72/25	disorders [1] 46/12
critically-ill [1] 20/10	decisions [12] 8/13	44/6 51/19 /0/3 82/20	difference [8] 40/3	disparities [1] 22/18
cultural [1] 77/24	8/17 12/9 13/0 20/5	depends [3] 44/21	51/1 61/7 64/14 65/16 20/7 20/15 02/25	disparity [1] 98/17
currently [1] 84/17	20/13/20/22/29/1 34/3	47/10 99/13 doprivation [5] 17/10	00/7 00/15 92/25	displaced [1] 44/0
Cymru [1] 26/1	declaration [2] 93/19	21/20 30/5 30/11	21/24 21/25 40/6	20/5 20/7 31/14
D	94/8	30/14	95/14	disproportionately
Dahdaloh [1] 32/21	declarations [5]	deprived [3] 17/13	different [33] 3/18	[1] 29/21
daily [7] 9/12 9/14	91/11 91/15 92/15	17/14 17/23	15/4 18/6 19/20 21/24	disruption [1] 35/23
10/1 73/9 73/14 74/3	92/19 92/22	derive [1] 1/21	37/8 38/1 38/2 38/6	distances [2] 71/25
91/9	declared [3] 84/20	describe [1] 45/4	38/10 44/20 46/2	77/23
danger [1] 64/13	90/24 92/17	described [5] 1/17	48/20 50/7 61/20	distress [5] 58/19
dangerous [1] 16/25	declares [2] 92/22	1/18 85/17 87/17	61/21 64/19 70/1 70/1	66/7 66/10 66/11
dark [2] 5/21 12/15	93/23 declaring [1] 80/8	93/10 describes [1] 03/21	70/270/272/1772/17	00/21 divida [2] 17/18 3//0
darker [2] 102/25	decompress [5]	describing [1] 4/18	81/7 82/5 85/6 90/16	dividing [1] 56/24
103/8	75/11 82/23 83/2 83/6	designated [1] 50/8	99/16 105/14	division [1] 34/10
6/11 7/4 7/12 0/6	84/2	designed [1] 86/15	differently [2] 60/3	do [53] 2/10 2/11 4/7
10/13 10/13 10/16	decompression [2]	desperately [1] 45/15	64/7	5/24 12/16 13/13
11/1 12/21 12/24	68/3 68/7	details [2] 61/17	difficult [8] 12/21	17/11 19/25 23/14
14/17 14/18 14/20	decrease [1] 15/22	92/15	20/22 57/4 57/18	25/3 25/12 26/11
14/20 14/22 15/14	decreases [2] 10/20	detect [1] 54/6	60/21 78/23 88/1	27/21 30/8 30/25
15/19 15/21 21/13	10/2 dedicated [2] 50/24		104/23	31/19 33/3 44/15 49/5
21/16 21/19 22/22	58/23	dotormino [1] /0//	diluted [5] /10/0 58/11	57/12 57/24 58/22
	deemed [3] 26/7	determining [1] 4/2	61/16 61/17 63/25	66/13 66/16 68/11
27/13 28/5 29/8 36/25	26/15 52/16	developing [1] 24/23	dilution [3] 61/13	68/18 69/13 72/18
67/18 73/8 77/22 80/3	default [1] 50/1	development [1]	67/2 83/14	72/25 75/13 75/14
80/10 98/2	deferred [1] 89/1	80/19	dip [4] 7/4 7/6 12/16	76/20 77/16 79/9
dataset [1] 14/25	defined [2] 66/8	device [4] 99/13	13/11	80/25 81/5 82/10 83/3
datasets [1] 22/21	75/20	102/24 103/3 103/3	dipped [1] 12/14	83/4 84/21 86/8 88/12
dated [1] 34/5	definitely [1] 21/3	devices [13] 97/23	dips [2] //1 //2	91/1 92/5 92/5 94/10
dates [1] 92/16		98/4 98/5 98/8 98/9	dire [1] 91/19 direct [1] 93/2	95/10 95/12 103/15 106/17
day [18] 20/10 30/16	92/0 definitions [2] 85/14	101/8 102/22 103/1	direct [1] 93/2 directions [1] 76/22	doctor [8] 34/7 53/25
45/19 49/9 49/9 53/15	86/15	103/7	directive [1] 90/1	55/4 67/11 70/19 74/2
5/20 5/20 0/20 41 / 15 73/17 75/20	degree [3] 17/18 42/5	DEXA [1] 47/21	directly [1] 68/15	78/15 84/10
83/14 87/25 88/4 91/7	42/14	DEXA-ARDS [1]	director [1] 32/20	doctors [1] 36/6
99/12	deliberately [2] 88/2	47/21	disadvantaged [4]	document [2] 34/2
days [8] 9/13 24/2	88/23	dexamethasone [7]	8/13 8/17 28/22 28/25	56/10
	delirium [1] 36/1	45/25 46/4 46/6 46/8	disappeared [2]	documents [1] 68/10

(32) critical... - documents

D	drilled [1] 80/22	39/9 41/7 64/4 92/1	environment [2]	87/22 89/16 94/8
does [26] 2/7 2/13	driven [1] 12/15	94/8	58/15 59/1	94/12 95/24
4/5 10/5 12/13 19/1	arivers [2] 30/15	elderly [3] 8/12 8/10	environments [1]	evening [1] 83/14
21/22 27/17 41/12	driving [3] 3/14 4/10	elected [1] 33/17	envisage [1] 89/6	86/21 100/22
	13/10	elective [11] 6/16 7/8	envisaging [1] 89/10	eventual [1] 78/19
48/2 59/9 69/4 71/11	drop [2] 5/22 6/3	10/22 13/2 13/17	envisioned [1] 89/16	ever [3] 14/4 30/1
81/2 83/11 85/23	dropped [1] 102/3	15/16 15/16 19/21	equal [1] 1/25	105/17
85/24 88/9 89/6 94/23	drove [1] 12/20	19/21 21/3 21/3	equally [2] 34/10	ever-changing [1]
doesn't [11] 10/5	drug [1] 45/14	eligible [1] 12/23	78/7	105/17
29/4 31/1 34/14 51/7	due [6] 62/23 66/17	else [4] 37/18 66/18	equipment [9] 49/4	every [12] 9/11 36/2
65/6 65/25 67/1 91/25	00/0 09/9 92/12 103/10	00/22 03/1	01/0 52/5 / 5/2 90/25	49/12 01/0 01/9 00/0 61/13 68/17 68/21
95/4 96/24	during [31] 1/17 1/23	27/19 27/22 58/10	102/10 103/10 104/10	68/21 78/11 89/12
doing [11] 54/17	4/22 5/2 5/9 6/5 6/7	68/19 68/23	equipped [4] 24/11	evervbody [5] 16/13
66/10 78/7 81/11	6/22 7/17 8/20 11/7	embedded [1] 48/6	24/13 24/17 25/9	16/14 89/21 101/2
83/16 87/6 99/14	11/11 13/15 13/20	emergence [1] 11/8	equitable [2] 18/24	106/13
104/25	15/17 16/12 21/21	emergency [4] 70/17	25/13	everyday [2] 99/4
don't [27] 7/4 7/14	22/5 43/12 44/2 52/15	80/24 88/5 104/7	equivalence [1]	106/12
7/16 7/18 7/21 8/8	53/15 56/14 61/5	emerging [1] 102/21	95/23	everyone [6] 67/9
12/4 14/6 16/7 27/25	/ U/ 12 8 1/ 1 82/ 14 86/17 03/3 102/5	emotional [1] 58/18	erroneous [1] 94/20	72/14 73/178/982/17 88/15
28/5 29/9 31/1 34/13	105/9	emphasise [1] 95/2	94/17	everything [1] 81/8
47/15 65/20 76/19	duties [1] 57/19	EMRS [2] 70/18 71/1	Es [1] 76/19	everywhere [1] 93/13
	duty [1] 33/12	enable [2] 75/10 87/8	escalate [3] 54/9	evidence [22] 1/15
02/2 02/3 03/13 92/7	dying [3] 2/5 13/4	enabled [2] 46/6 75/3	87/2 97/4	2/25 7/12 8/16 8/18
done [19] 14/9 14/14	58/18	enables [1] 50/17	escalated [1] 55/22	12/9 33/25 34/23
20/3 22/10 25/15	dysfunction [2] 38/3	encountered [1]	escalating [1] 68/23	34/25 35/3 36/15
31/10 47/24 54/3 79/2	103/20	36/11	escalation [5] 47/8	37/15 43/19 44/1 44/2
80/3 81/13 88/16 89/3	E	ena [7] 1/14 0/10	00000000000000000000000000000000000000	47/23 48/19 34/23
91/2 100/6 100/15	each [7] 3/12 30/23	83/25	especially [1] 50/7	102/21
102/5 102/6 104/19	64/11 72/12 75/18	endeavour [1] 66/16	essentially [8] 23/8	evidential [1] 81/13
door [1] 54//	78/2 79/9	ended [1] 81/19	40/16 53/25 55/7	evolution [1] 40/11
5/21 12/15	earlier [9] 12/24	ending [1] 35/16	66/19 71/1 72/18 85/5	evolved [4] 76/1
double [2] 65/7 66/5	29/24 30/5 54/3 54/4	engineers [1] 100/13	established [2] 11/20	76/18 77/6 77/11
doubt [2] 63/17	68/3 81/21 82/23 83/2	England [29] 3/1 9/9	75/17	exactly [4] 25/10
103/10	early [14] 3/2 0/3	14/15 15/10 18/4	estate [1] 100/18	36/16 91/3 104/18
down [19] 6/4 9/3	54/18 55/16 64/9	20/17 23/14 00/0	100/20	examine [1] 34/17
14/8 16/2 21/8 26/3	74/14 74/16 76/17	71/9 71/12 72/8 84/13	estimated [1] 103/1	example [15] 6/15
39/19 42/6 43/16 44/9	89/14 90/7 97/20	84/17 90/3 91/11	et [2] 40/9 40/9	30/4 40/14 50/18
44/14 49/20 51/13	eased [1] 105/18	92/16 92/24 93/3	et cetera [2] 40/9	53/11 55/12 69/10
03/972/273/170/14 04/10 05/7	easier [2] 95/19	93/25 94/5 96/4 98/6	40/9	70/13 73/23 74/21
downtime [1] 56/4	96/17	98/7 99/4 103/11	ethnic [26] 15/10	80/24 84/14 95/15
downward [2] 15/18	easiest [1] 84/20	England's [1] 64/10	15/19 15/22 16/1 16/6	98/10 101/5
15/22	easy [5] 56/19 62/9	English [1] 95/9	10/3 10/4 10/10 10/17	exceed [1] 101/9
Dr [12] 32/11 32/16	62/13 63/12 91/18	50/6 50/9	22/19 22/24 23/10	exchange [1] 79/16
33/12 48/16 60/7 90/3	ECMO [6] 42/21	enormous [1] 58/7	29/19 29/20 30/6	excluded [1] 92/20
91/23 92/13 92/18	42/21 51/20 53/20	enough [9] 12/2 34/8	30/12 30/17 31/5 31/6	excuse [1] 70/4
Dr Ganesh [3] 32/11	68/22 69/11	53/16 80/12 93/7	31/10 31/16 31/20	exec [1] 34/18
32/16 108/10	editorials [1] 69/24	94/23 99/7 99/23	ethnicities [2] 15/4	existed [2] 70/18
Dr Michael [1] 90/3	education [1] 75/2	103/15	21/20	71/11
Dr Prentice [3] 91/23	effective [2] 25/13	ensure [3] 89/12	etnnicity [14] 14/11	existing [6] 10/14
92/13 92/18	45/23	ensuring [1] 81/5	20/12 20/13 20/24	47/17 75/23
Dr Prentice's [1]	effectively [1] 100/20	entered [1] 59/14	21/4 21/5 22/22 23/17	expand [1] 63/4
94/4	effects [1] 66/24	entering [2] 58/25	30/14 31/9 31/17	expansion [1] 87/9
131 33/12 60/7 07/0	effort [1] 14/14	87/15	Evans [1] 36/19	expect [4] 19/8 53/10
draft [1] 90/7	efforts [1] 59/8	entire [5] 12/25 61/8	even [19] 16/3 16/4	53/14 60/20
draw [1] 35/2	eight [4] 44/6 44/16	92/18 96/21 97/25	49/9 52/19 56/6 60/22	expectancy [1] 21/25
drew [1] 58/10	45/0 00/11 aithar [7] 33/16 34/11	entirely [1] 105/17	02/1 03/25 00/5 74/14	expected [1] 37/8
		enuueu [1] 49/23	11/4 00/3 02/0 02/15	experience [5] 22/2

(33) does - experience

E	fearful [1] 57/8	fluids [2] 103/25	generic [1] 46/12	government [1] 61/4
experience [4]	feasible [1] 56/11	105/15	geographic [2] 70/22	granular [1] 104/23
56/20 66/1 70/21	February [3] 23/24	focus [5] 22/3 49/2	82/20	graph [25] 4/21 9/3
99/14	33/4 98/8	49/23 69/12 105/10	geographical [1]	9/11 11/3 15/13 16/3
experts [1] 32/14	February 2020 [2]	follow [5] 26/10	///23	16/18 17/2 18/15 52/7
explain [4] 11/3	23/24 33/4	41/12 59/9 90/21	geographically [1]	61/02 62/15 62/21
17/16 63/5 102/14		104/9 following [1] 22/20	10/10 mot [20] 2/20 2/20	01/22 02/10 02/21 62/5 64/25 66/25 67/1
explained [1] 64/10	28/18 21/17 23/0	$\frac{10110W1119[1]}{5000000000000000000000000000000000000$	gel [20] 3/20 3/20 3/21 23/8 38/25 50/11	67/1 73/6 7/17 76/
explanation [1] 7/9	fooling [1] 1/10	Fong's [2] 78/3 03/15	50/12 51/22 60/22	01/16
exposed [1] 58/16	fools [2] 86/14 87/7	food [1] 59/6	63/1 67/21 70/7 73/4	graphs [7] 4/22 15/2
exposure [1] 18/21	felt [3] 94/12 95/9	footprint [1] 51/11	81/5 82/3 83/23 87/4	21/9 21/18 63/3 69/8
expressed [3] 62/23	97/4	force [1] 101/19	89/17 99/11 105/5	69/14
64/7 64/15	few [8] 14/17 22/16	foraive [2] 11/5 18/15	aets [4] 65/18 86/5	grateful [1] 32/4
	22/21 74/11 79/9	form [3] 8/2 61/21	96/18 102/18	great [1] 41/1
extent [4] 20/10	91/15 94/20 99/12	77/22	getting [17] 7/15 7/16	greater [19] 2/6
oxtornally [2] 65/18	fewer [1] 95/22	forms [2] 37/20	7/19 8/7 12/19 12/19	11/24 14/5 19/2 19/4
	fight [1] 37/19	50/19	16/14 17/4 18/20	21/4 21/5 21/12 27/1
extracorporeal [1]	figure [18] 2/8 4/17	fortunate [1] 75/24	27/23 50/16 52/25	40/12 50/9 53/15
42/22	10/1 11/2 15/7 18/1	forwards [1] 76/25	73/2 83/25 86/22	63/25 67/25 68/2
extraordinarily [2]	20/15 46/18 51/15	found [1] 80/6	94/22 96/13	79/21 81/14 102/2
57/4 57/18	51/17 60/10 62/14	four [6] 49/12 60/19	give [7] 24/7 28/18	102/3
extrapolate [1] 47/25	03/1 64/12 /3/7 73/20	14/98//2496/397/1	34/16 37/15 85/23	grey [2] 63/8 63/16
extreme [6] 1/19 1/24	/ 6/3 / 8/14	fractions [1] 38/22	9/// 105/3	ground [1] 100/5
2/4 92/11 93/16 95/6	figure / [1] / 3/20	framework [4] 25/12	given [3] 37710 9177	grounding [1] 73/19
extremely [1] 32/3	11gures [5] 10/10	frightoning [1] 50/12	94/3 aivos [1] 61/11 61/12	18/10 18/18 10/3
extremes [1] 92/2	final [2] 26/4 28/21	front [A] 34/6 54/7	64/21 73/19	22/24 30/17 30/17
F	finally [2] 13/13	58/18 66/14	aivina [2] 65/4 102/7	31/5 47/18 53/13
feee [0] 20/46 20/0	66/25	frontline [1] 87/1	glean [2] 2/22 21/13	71/15 75/5 79/6 79/24
Tace [9] 38/10 39/9	find [7] 11/5 26/8	full [7] 7/24 33/5	gleaned [1] 15/13	aroupina [1] 31/9
139/10 39/11 43/10	28/18 45/13 45/18	33/12 39/10 51/7	go [19] 1/13 4/16	groups [18] 14/19
facilities [1] 87/11	94/1 102/4	85/19 87/17	12/18 13/22 26/15	15/10 15/19 15/23
facing [1] 48/7	finding [2] 46/15	full-time [2] 33/5	35/13 38/17 38/20	16/1 16/6 16/17 17/9
fact [15] 8/12 9/20	105/2	33/12	39/9 45/1 61/3 64/25	18/4 19/18 20/17
37/1 46/7 53/5 54/3	fine [3] 1/9 68/25	fully [3] 23/18 70/8	73/15 74/12 76/8	21/24 22/19 23/5
63/23 65/6 72/13	94/19	82/9	80/16 82/17 94/16	23/11 31/10 31/16
77/10 82/7 83/5 88/14	finger [1] 102/18	function [2] 36/2		31/20
94/9 99/6	fire [1] 94/16	79/15	goal [2] 49/8 /3/5	grow [1] /4/12
factor [8] 3/4 3/13	first [16] 2/24 3/8	fundamentally [1]	goes [1] 31/2	guidance [3] 34/1
3/14 3/17 3/19 4/3	4/23 10/19 11/7 13/24	10/1 funded [6] 21/12 70/2	going [50] 2/14 0/9	91/1 101/21
10/12 20/13	16/2/ 18/13 20/1	7/2/ 20/21 24/13 70/0	16/12 1723 10/13 14/14	H
factors [12] 1/25	22/17 36/9 36/12 66/9	103/6	24/11 26/2 33/22	H1N1 [2] 85/7 88/18
3/11 4/6 4/9 6/14 8/4	firstly [9] 26/19 54/2	furniture [1] 49/6	34/17 35/12 36/7 36/8	had [53] 1/6 1/7 2/1
12/20 20/9 30/14	54/17 56/21 58/15	further [8] 22/11 58/9	37/15 39/19 40/23	10/23 11/20 11/22
fail [1] 37/2/	64/10 71/1 76/16	58/9 58/9 59/24 59/24	45/1 48/8 49/2 49/10	13/18 14/18 14/22
fails [2] 89/21 89/21	95/20	60/1 60/1	52/12 53/1 53/2 53/22	22/21 35/15 36/11
failure [3] 35/24	fit [1] 102/1	future [4] 24/19	56/8 57/8 59/11 67/2	36/14 36/15 37/2
43/18 47/19	fits [1] 72/7	24/23 25/5 83/7	76/8 76/23 76/25	39/16 44/1 45/21 46/3
fair [1] 18/6	fitting [2] 39/9 41/7	G	77/14 78/5 81/20 89/5	46/6 47/19 47/21 57/9
fairly [5] 18/13 37/5	five [1] 87/24	O	90/15 91/25 92/9	58/9 58/11 58/21
77/5 79/6 97/17	fixed [1] 101/4	Ganesn [3] 32/11	92/17 94/1 95/6 98/4	50/23 59/10 59/23
familiar [5] 39/21	Tiag [1] 93/22	32/10/100/10 aas [2] 70/16/101/22	98/18 98/20 101/11	63/13 63/20 68/4 70/1
45/3 53/7 99/3 104/21	fiat [1] 0/22	gas [2] 79/10 10/122	103/9 100/10	70/14 70/14 72/14
familiarity [1] 61/19	flow [11] 38/15 38/10	gauge [1] 86/14	gone [1] 2/1 good [5] 25/25 20/18	79/22 81/14 81/15
families [6] 22/16	38/23 38/23 39/2	gave [2] 29/24 33/25	34/8 59/21 81/1	90/24 93/4 97/25 98/2
20/1 55/2 59/6 82/6	46/20 47/3 47/3 47/7	general [4] 31/6	aot [19] 2/15 7/17	98/17 100/7 100/21
90/3	84/3 101/4	50/14 50/15 52/8	22/16 26/2 29/8 29/9	102/5 103/20 103/24
far [1] 20/23	flu [3] 85/7 86/3	generally [3] 19/16	37/9 55/8 59/5 62/2	105/9
80/0 04/15	86/22	50/25 84/2	65/13 68/4 78/10	haemoglobin [1]
fault [1] 62/17	fluctuated [1] 67/23	generated [1] 47/23	83/20 85/16 90/22	102/20
	fluid [1] 104/12	generating [1] 23/7	95/1 95/20 96/11	HAMMAD [2] 22/14

(34) experience... - HAMMAD

Н	help [33] 27/17 32/3	57/14 57/16 58/11	I	I think [89] 1/21 2/10
HAMMAD [1] 108/5	34/14 38/5 40/2 41/4	63/7 63/10 63/13	l actually [1] 73/20	3/21 5/25 7/1 8/18
Hammersmith [1]	42/21 47/12 48/17	64/11 65/10 67/4	1 am [8] 26/2 32/24	8/18 12/11 12/15
76/24	58/22 59/2 60/7 60/15	67/12 67/22 68/21	39/19 72/2 72/3 72/3	
hand [1] 96/6	64/7 67/11 68/11	70/25 71/2 73/22	89/5 97/3	20/15 21/6 22/3 22/4
handles [1] 87/8	69/19 /0/19 /1/22	75/11 75/12 75/15	I apologise [1] 26/10	23/9 24/8 24/20 25/6
hands [1] 61/19	71/23 71/25 72/12	76/11 77/18 78/22	l appear [1] 25/25	25/8 25/11 25/18 32/1
happen [13] 69/5	74/14 79/2 88/9 89/13	79/20 80/13 81/7 82/5	I appreciate [1] 12/7	32/19 33/17 34/23
69/13 75/10 75/15	92/5 93/23 94/2 94/0	83/1 84/13 83/24 00/3	l assume [1] 51/22	35/11 30/22 39/0
86/23 87/8 92/3 92/8	99/10 99/19 100/20 halaful [1] 20/11	00/14 01/0 08/13 00/12 00/22 02/22	I believe [1] 71/4	12/10 51/11 51/16
92/23 93/18 93/20	holofully [1] 37/3	03/24 03/25 04/3	I can [7] 8/25 21/6	51/17 52/5 57/3 58/4
96/15 96/16	Helning [1] 59/4	93/24 93/23 34/3	48/9 57/14 67/21 86/1	58/19 59/20 61/3 61/6
happened [3] 62/7	helns [2] 35/17	104/10	93/14	62/20 62/23 63/12
82/12 93/12	105/24	hospitalised [4]	1 can't [3] 66/20 78/9	64/16 65/25 67/14
	hence [1] 40/8	38/14 45/19 45/24	93/12	68/9 69/16 69/17
15/22 92/8 93/10	her [1] 34/12	46/16		70/22 71/14 73/11
93/11 93/20 94/21	here [14] 4/22 11/6	hospitals [26] 39/3	ו Coula [2] וווט ועצויי ביי געו געו	73/24 76/15 80/2
103/0 hannone [2] 56/25	11/15 16/3 18/15	47/1 48/20 70/25 71/5	1 010 [1] 33/0 1 40 [2] 2/10 25/12	80/18 80/18 82/14
11appens [2] 00/20	30/23 45/21 55/8	71/22 75/1 75/5 76/8	22/2	82/16 83/7 83/15 84/3
hard [2] 7/1 7/3	67/16 67/20 74/17	76/10 76/19 77/1 77/7	I don't [3] 8/8 77/20	89/10 90/2 90/18 91/8
hardest [1] 29/6	77/8 91/7 105/8	77/16 79/8 84/2 84/4	81/9	92/10 92/12 93/2
harm [2] 102/5 102/6	hesitate [1] 76/5	84/20 87/1 92/16 95/1	I follow [2] 90/21	94/23 95/1 95/2 95/14
harmful [2] 68/1	hiding [1] 63/23	95/5 95/9 95/17 95/18	104/9	95/15 95/18 96/1
102/13	high [17] 1/18 1/23	95/21	l get [1] 70/7	96/22 97/17 97/21
has [16] 10/14 14/9	2/4 3/4 10/12 10/14	host [4] 10/20 19/20	I go [1] 12/18	100/1 100/16 103/9
20/3 24/10 24/12	30/4 31/4 30/ 19 30/23 20/2 16/20 17/3 17/7	59// 99/20	I had [1] 1/7	105/4 100/4
24/12 37/16 44/2	59/2 40/20 47/3 47/7	hotepote [3] 68/1	I have [1] 103/10	68/12 83/18 83/20
46/10 50/20 63/22	high_flow [6] 38/19	77/7 82/20	I heard [1] 30/9	00/12 00/10 00/20 03/21
70/18 71/11 72/16	38/23 39/2 46/20 47/3	hours [2] 44/10	I hesitate [1] 76/5	I want [6] 2/20 2/24
104/19 105/18	47/7	79/22	I hope [5] 1/9 34/6	7/13 22/7 35/9 91/4
have [118]	high-risk [1] 3/4	how [47] 16/23 24/19	34/21 35/2 60/15	I wanted [2] 66/4
	higher [13] 16/17	25/9 35/5 35/14 43/13	I imagine [1] 8/14	81/12
baying [12] 21/17	18/10 19/18 30/5	43/14 48/8 51/19 53/9	1 interrupted [1] 0/0	I was [6] 1/8 6/9
27/14 32/5 56/23 68/1	30/10 31/21 38/22	53/12 53/23 53/25	30/24 60/13 69/12	76/23 77/14 88/22
68/19 77/24 80/21	41/9 50/21 61/11 89/6	54/6 54/24 56/19	84/16 92/13	97/1
82/1 82/25 102/24	101/25 102/7	56/21 56/25 60/4	l keep [1] 90/7	I won't [2] 33/10 75/8
104/3 104/6	highest [1] 63/18	60/13 61/15 62/10	I know [4] 36/18 63/6	I wonder [1] 48/21
he [6] 3/2 33/25 78/4	highlight [3] 52/5	62/22 62/23 64/7	81/21 91/18	l would [5] 52/5
78/5 93/16 93/21	52/10 104/25	64/15 05/10 05/17 67/00 71/11 71/19	I made [1] 12/18	60/10 96/22 97/11
headline [1] 1/20	hignlighted [1] 52/8	07/2071/1171/10 75/1575/2576/1	I may [3] 60/17 64/8	101/13
health [10] 18/24	105/22 11/10	21/13 26/2 26/14 27/7	80/16	יא ואו אין
21/22 21/23 21/24	historical [1] 85/13	88/3 89/5 91/24 97/23	I mean [2] 72/24	105/20
22/1 22/4 23/14 29/23	historically [2] 40/7	99/10 100/5 101/18	75/25	I'II [11 57/1
49/16 101/25	51/4	101/19 102/19	1 might [3] //22 53/8	I'm [311 1/4 1/7 1/8
healthcare [6] 29/19	hit [3] 29/5 92/20	However [2] 18/12	9///	1/11 6/2 7/1 9/16 11/5
29/20 33/14 37/12	98/17	63/15		14/14 16/3 18/14
baalthy [1] 102/2	hitting [1] 16/13	huge [3] 46/15 98/17	I put [1] 05/0 I represent [2] 22/15	23/15 23/15 23/18
hear [1] 103/9	hoc [1] 75/9	101/1	29/18	26/8 26/9 27/23 28/17
heard [20] 2/25 8/21	home [4] 13/4 54/8	hugely [1] 44/14	I right [1] 20/3	30/22 36/25 45/1 48/8
24/9 30/9 34/21 34/23	69/1 69/10	human [2] 50/16	I said [3] 2/15 6/9	48/18 49/2 53/24 76/8
35/1 35/9 36/18 39/6	honest [1] 23/15	93/14	105/15	80/16 91/22 98/20
42/20 43/11 48/19	nope [5] 1/9 34/6	numane [2] 25/13	I shall [1] 106/23	101/11 104/24
52/13 55/16 56/13	34/21 35/2 00/15	83/10	I should [2] 54/19	1'Ve [7] 1/0 22/10 20/2
68/8 78/20 89/23	hospital [66] 2/6 2/10	hundreus [1] 02/0	66/19	82/16
100/4	3/11 3/16 4/4 4/10	11 45/22	I start [1] 32/18	ICNARC [1/1] 1/16 3/6
hearing [3] 1/6 78/6	6/13 7/16 7/17 7/19	hypothesis [2] 16/10	I suppose [2] 48/2	10/14 14/9 14/13 20/3
106/25	12/19 12/19 12/23	16/11	81/12	22/23 23/12 23/24
Heart [1] 32/21	25/14 26/18 27/16	hypothesise [1]	I suspect [3] 42/2	30/1 34/22 37/4 41/3
height [2] 16/9 87/23	33/6 48/24 49/22 50/7	16/16	45/2 100/16	73/8
nelicopter [1] 80/23	51/22 54/8 55/7 55/15			ICNARC/SICSAG [1]

(35) HAMMAD... - ICNARC/SICSAG

1	66/6 78/18 78/24	inequalities [5] 18/24	57/11 57/16 57/24	69/18 70/3 70/8 95/12
	79/21 81/14 81/15	21/22 21/23 22/4	58/8 58/14 58/21 59/1	95/16
ICNARC/SICSAG	83/3 85/1 103/5	29/23	60/13 60/18 62/10	is [320]
[1] 41/3	impacted [6] 6/17	inevitably [1] 59/11	67/13 77/19 88/11	isn't [10] 6/20 12/9
ICU [45] 1/16 1/24	29/21 59/25 102/23	infected [2] 31/18	96/25 99/8 103/20	35/18 77/22 86/21
2/1 2/22 17/1 18/8	104/3 106/8	36/4	104/6	89/12 90/19 96/1 96/6
20/8 21/12 26/18	impactful [1] 4/10	infection [2] $3/4$	intensivist [1] 54/23	100/15
26/20 28/12 33/13	impact [1] $\frac{1}{25}$	25/22	intensivist lod [1]	icolated [1] 78/6
34/19 35/6 35/11	impacts [1] 55/5	inflormation [2]		isolation [2] 2/20
35/16 36/5 37/2 37/10			34/23	
38/24 39/1 40/13 41/2		40/11 102/10	ntent [3] 04/10 03/13	11/24
44/18 53/12 54/1 60/2	Implemented [2]	Information [2] 65/10	05/20	ISSUE [2] 103/18
61/23 63/10 63/10	90/1 90/10	96/24	Inter [1] 17/22	106/4
63/13 64/4 71/21 73/9	implies [1] 40/13	informative [1] 32/4	inter-wave [1] 17/22	issued [1] 101/20
74/9 75/13 79/1 79/3	importance [2] 3/13	Infrastructure [2]	interchangeable [2]	ISSUES [3] 23/17
84/25 85/3 85/24 88/5	48/5	89/15 101/9	40/6 40/16	69/25 101/25
88/19 89/7 105/25	important [18] 3/19	initial [2] 30/9 84/9	interest [1] 68/16	it [281]
ICUS [2] 9/6 98/23	4/3 13/22 22/3 25/12	initially [4] 36/23	interested [1] 8/10	it did [1] 41/12
idea [1] 34/16	27/4 31/1 34/12 40/19	43/25 49/2 71/4	interests [1] 69/3	it's [93] 2/12 2/25
	45/8 47/10 47/24	initiated [1] 42/9	internal [1] 64/17	3/10 3/23 6/2 6/4 6/5
ideally [1] 96/9	51/14 55/12 61/7	injection [1] 46/10	interpret [1] 20/22	6/19 9/6 9/10 9/14
identified [1] 60/23	83/16 88/12 95/2	injury [3] 66/7 66/22	interpreted [1] 65/18	9/18 12/6 12/7 12/8
identify [2] 31/12	importantly [2] 49/15	81/22	interrupted [1] 6/8	12/21 14/13 15/7
	55/11	input [2] 25/3 93/8	interval [1] 79/1	15/24 17/10 19/25
if [02] 1/12 2/12 5/12	impression [1] 65/5	INQ000226890 [1]	intervention [1]	20/15 20/21 20/22
[[33] 1/13 3/12 3/12	improve [1] 45/19	91/6	92/11	22/3 22/18 24/10
0/14 0/18 10/11 12/11	Improvement [1]	INQ000409921 [1]	interventions [4]	24/11 25/8 25/10
	98/6	84/21	49/5 50/18 54/13 59/2	30/10 31/1 34/5 34/24
10/10 10/12 20/15	improving [2] 45/24	INQ000474239 [2]	into [41] 1/24 2/1 8/5	37/10 40/5 40/13
19/10 19/13 20/13	46/15	4/16 11/2	8/7 11/25 12/3 12/6	41/10 42/22 44/3 45/8
23/15 24/11 20/6 29/9	inadequate [1] 87/23	INQ000474255 [1]	17/18 22/24 26/3 27/5	47/24 49/5 51/3 53/4
32/16 34/10 35/17	include [2] 6/24	34/5	29/9 31/9 32/12 37/10	54/2 54/20 61/2 62/19
41/21 40/22 47/1	85/10	INQ000480138 [1]	42/7 43/1 43/1 45/6	62/23 63/9 63/11 64/7
48/10 48/21 50/16	included [1] 30/14	15/7	46/22 57/2 57/7 58/25	64/15 65/4 66/22 67/4
51/2051/2152/17	includes [2] 49/10	INQ000497473 [1]	59/19 63/9 65/1 67/3	67/5 67/23 68/15
52/19 52/21 53/11	49/17	92/14	67/3 68/5 71/6 72/7	68/22 69/9 73/2 73/24
53/19 50/4 60/17	including [5] 18/23	INQ00474255 [1]	72/22 73/13 73/21	74/17 74/18 74/24
60/24 01/13 01/22	21/25 54/7 56/8 98/9	51/17	74/13 85/19 87/10	75/18 76/12 76/16
64/25 65/2 65/42	incorrect [1] 94/8	INQUIRY [7] 1/12	96/13 97/22 98/23	78/20 78/23 80/18
64/25 65/2 65/13	increase [3] 16/5	8/10 22/9 24/9 29/25	101/19	82/6 83/14 84/12
05/20 00/11 00/10	19/14 37/1	38/8 108/4	intravenous [1]	86/14 87/1 87/25 88/1
07/21 08/9 09/7 72/19	increased [7] 18/21	Inguiry's [1] 105/10	46/10	88/3 88/4 88/5 89/10
73/273/1373/15	20/14 20/23 20/25	inside [1] 40/20	introduced [3] 22/23	91/18 91/21 93/21
74/10 76/3 76/23	99/21 103/21 106/14	inspired [1] 38/22	23/12 23/20	94/15 94/17 94/18
	increases [4] 18/18	instance [1] 36/9	introduction [1]	94/22 97/17 100/17
81/23 82/6 82/16 83/2	19/23 26/20 27/19	Instead [1] 88/21	35/14	iterations [1] 85/6
83/18 83/20 84/22	increasing [1] 25/16	Institute [1] 32/22	introductions [1]	its [5] 37/20 63/18
86/186/1387/2489/7	increasingly [1]	intense [1] 6/24	32/18	64/5 67/20 77/18
90/14 90/22 91/13	55/12	intensive [79] 3/15	intubation [1] 46/19	itself [4] 3/13 12/2
91/2093/1293/14	incrementally [1]	4/4 6/10 6/11 6/12 8/7	invasive [16] 27/6	45/12 54/13
93/24 94/5 94/8 94/12	81/10	9/1 9/8 10/6 12/1 12/3	27/16 39/17 41/4 41/6	
94/18 94/20 96/7	indeed [20] 6/23 7/1	12/6 12/21 13/3 13/5	41/12 41/15 41/22	J
105/20 105/21 105/24	10/9 14/17 19/16 33/4	13/8 13/19 13/23	42/1 42/4 42/16 42/17	January [4] 7/3 19/12
	33/22 34/25 35/10	14/12 17/6 17/24 20/5	47/5 47/8 97/19 97/19	24/22 36/13
91/19	36/17 56/4 56/17	21/1 24/14 24/21 27/1	invasively [1] 44/4	January 2021 [2]
III [8] 20/10 25/8	63/11 76/11 81/16	27/3 27/5 27/11 28/1	inverse [1] 81/9	19/12 24/22
25/11 31/22 40/20	90/2 90/23 90/25 94/3	28/8 29/9 31/15 32/20	involve [1] 68/19	jobs [3] 58/14 58/17
51/19 64/16 100/2	98/21	33/2 33/20 37/4 37/20	involved [4] 56/10	58/22
	INDEX [1] 108/2	38/4 38/11 39/3 39/25	74/23 77/21 88/22	joint [3] 9/10 14/14
25/1/ 54//	indicated [1] 20/13	40/1 40/2 40/7 40/8	involves [3] 14/10	75/2
	indication [1] 94/11	40/10 40/21 41/19	42/4 42/24	journal [1] 74/19
19/20	individual [9] 10/10	41/20 44/15 44/19	iPads [1] 82/6	judge [1] 1/6
	44/6 51/25 59/2 65/9	45/9 45/10 48/8 48/17	Ireland [14] 9/9 14/15	July [2] 19/12 34/5
36121 27146 56122	67/17 86/6 95/21	50/24 51/7 51/12	15/11 18/4 20/17 60/5	July 2021 [1] 19/12
30/24 37/10 30/22	100/11	54/11 54/25 57/6	60/14 62/12 69/18	July 2024 [1] 34/5

(36) ICNARC/SICSAG... - July 2024

J	large [5] 30/18 70/24	50/17 50/23 51/13	London [5] 33/13	lying [2] 43/16 44/10
jump [2] 73/14 73/16	80/12 95/18 103/19	51/18 84/11 84/19	63/7 63/7 77/12 79/3	Μ
jumping [1] 34/13	largely [1] 93/1	84/23 85/1 91/4 91/7	long [6] 26/2 35/10	machine [5] 42/7
June [2] 45/21 46/1	53/18 84/3 87/25	life [5] 21/25 49/10	99/10	42/10 42/25 99/15
just [109]	last [9] 2/25 8/22	69/5 81/2 106/16	long-lasting [1]	104/11
Justice [2] 22/16	30/7 33/25 34/23	light [2] 12/12 92/4	66/24	machines [5] 53/3
20/1 Justice IIK [1] 22/16	59/21 68/14 78/4	lighter [1] 5/20	long-term [1] 35/10	97/14 99/2 103/15
	80/17	lights [1] 102/20	longer [3] 36/18	103/24
K	lasting [1] 66/24	like [41] 2/12 3/12	80/14 80/14	made [11] 12/18 20/0
KATHRYN [2] 1/3	late [3] 5/2 12/19	3/24 4/21 0/13 11/25	longer-term [1]	56/2 80/5 81/10 91/11
108/3	later [6] 7/17 49/3	23/15 29/9 33/11	look [46] 3/19 4/14	94/13 98/2
keep [7] 39/22 90/7	57/2 65/18 83/4 86/2	34/11 35/5 35/7 35/25	5/12 5/15 6/19 8/25	magic [1] 59/19
105/13 100/11 100/11	latter [1] 88/25	36/6 36/17 50/17 52/5	10/13 10/25 12/11	magnified [1] 22/5
Kevin [1] 8/22	lay [1] 46/22	60/10 60/24 67/9	12/12 15/15 17/8 18/1	magnitude [1] 7/5
kidnev [2] 36/2 53/3	layer [1] 54/6	67/21 69/5 77/24	19/10 20/15 25/4	mainly [3] 12/15
kidneys [2] 37/23	lead [1] 66/24	85/24 86/13 86/16	28/16 30/15 30/18	15/20 30/18
103/14	leading [1] 33/5	93/18 93/20 94/15	31/11 35/9 40/23	major [1] 04/17
kind [11] 37/17 40/7	leads [2] 10/4 94/25	97/1197/1398/11	44/22 43/13 31/20 51/21 60/5 60/10	101/23
57/9 57/19 62/7 62/23	learned [2] 78/13	100/3 101/13 103/11	63/16 64/2 64/2 64/2	make [23] 14/19
04/10 0//2 0//12 69/2	83/22	likelihood [3] 2/5	65/2 68/6 73/20 76/3	34/11 36/22 39/21
100// Kingdom [2] 36/13	learning [6] 36/12	3/14 8/6	84/10 84/19 84/20	53/4 58/1 63/6 63/6
106/6 106/8	36/16 82/14 82/21	likely [12] 2/1 2/19	84/21 85/24 86/16	65/19 67/18 70/7
kit [1] 49/6	83/6 83/17	5/4 11/9 11/13 16/20	89/23 91/4 91/13	78/17 81/12 82/21
knew [1] 86/24	learnt [3] 43/12 80/20	17/15 17/23 19/3	96/18	89/3 89/20 100/1
know [47] 3/23 6/17	82/10	27/15 35/8 78/21	looked [14] 10/14	
7/14 7/16 7/18 7/21	least [4] 21/10 42/5	limit [1] 105/3		101/1 101/5 101/7 makaa [7] 0/13 0/15
7/23 8/8 8/21 10/9	59/22 / U/15		28/15 30/13 31/8	10/3 17/19 54/21 55/9
13/24 14/1 24/16	led [2] 31/13 54/23	limitations [2] 80/1	71/18 73/11 79/15	96/17
25/10 27/13 29/9	left [3] 44/10 81/16	88/14	looking [26] 3/10	making [11] 8/4 8/19
30/24 30/24 34/21	91/13	limited [1] 86/7	3/23 4/9 5/19 6/2 7/2	8/24 13/19 40/25
47/15 53/20 63/6	less [8] 2/19 11/9	line [19] 4/25 5/13	9/11 11/15 14/10	52/10 59/5 86/4 86/6
64/22 65/17 66/12	16/24 28/12 65/22	5/19 5/20 5/21 6/20	14/10 15/14 15/24	90/25 101/7
67/20 74/18 75/18	70/25 83/3 96/4	6/22 12/12 12/15 19/6	18/14 23/4 24/25	manage [1] 44/7
77/17 77/20 78/7 78/8	lesson [2] 82/10	19/7 19/7 61/7 61/9		managed [4] 2/16
81/21 82/8 88/1 91/18	83/21	61/11 62/19 63/12 64/2 65/3	64/21 70/22 87/21	20/17 20/19 27/19
92/25 93/9 94/18 95/1	lessons [1] 70/13	104/2 03/3	94/18	50/19 75/6 87/2
95/3 95/10 96/11	let's [3] 61/14 63/5	21/2 44/8 50/18	looks [4] 19/12 65/12	managements [1]
97/24 knowing [2] 82/7	97/10	103/23	65/13 93/18	95/23
91/6	level [47] 9/8 16/2	link [2] 30/2 30/10	lost [1] 70/4	manner [1] 1/7
knowledge [1] 66/12	20/21 24/12 39/12	linkage [1] 14/20	lot [7] 1/10 15/14	mantle [1] 56/20
known [3] 43/17	41/8 41/9 41/10 41/11	listed [2] 24/20 58/5	17/14 24/9 56/8 56/9	manufactured [1]
65/10 84/12	48/22 48/23 48/25	listening [1] 95/3	96/15	100/0 many [15] 2/14 22/10
1	49/10 50/2 50/3 50/5	101/5 101/6	1015 [2] 05/13 106/5	35/16 43/14 45/23
	50/0 50/0 50/8 50/21	101/0101/0 111101/01/02 35/10	loved [1] 01/10	53/9 53/12 57/7 57/11
12000[1] 44/14	51/8 51/22 51/22 52/6	38/16 38/20 60/17	low [4] 38/15 38/23	63/20 77/18 95/20
96/23	53/11 53/24 54/22	62/18 88/2 94/15	47/3 74/8	95/21 97/23 100/17
ladder [1] 86/10	55/5 62/5 63/24 67/8	97/11 100/4	low-flow [3] 38/15	map [2] 65/11 81/2
lady [12] 1/9 25/23	67/8 67/10 78/10	live [1] 61/5	38/23 47/3	March [14] 6/1 6/3
27/24 28/16 29/13	78/10 85/21 91/12	lived [1] 17/22	lower [11] 8/8 17/5	6/5 45/5 45/21 61/23
29/17 31/24 32/9 48/8	91/12 91/13 92/23	lives [1] 17/18		64/367/373/1374/8
48/12 92/14 106/21	93/6 93/9 96/18	10ad [3] /1/25 81/5	04/22 04/23 81/4 83/5	08/16
Ladyship [1] 34/12	level 0 [1] 55/5	local [1] 82/20	lunch [2] 97/12	marked [1] 19/23
Ladysnip's [1] 92/18	level 2 [1] 51/3	localised [1] 68/1	106/22	markedly [1] 16/2
ay [1] 00/10	level 3 [5] 9/8 24/12	locally [1] 64/14	lung [2] 32/21 102/10	marker [1] 55/16
49/17 58/6 86/10 96/7	51/2 51/7 62/5	lockdown [2] 45/6	lungs [7] 35/19 35/24	mask [2] 39/9 41/7
96/17	levels [18] 25/16	74/10	36/8 37/22 42/7 43/2	masks [1] 38/16
	48/20 48/22 49/11	logical [1] 64/12	79/16	matched [1] 98/5

(37) jump - matched

Μ	mechanisms [5]	53/6 53/6 61/1 61/1	motion [1] 23/13	30/22 31/2 31/24 32/9
matter [1] 38/8	31/16 55/11 69/16	101/5 101/6	mouth [2] 39/10 41/7	48/8 48/12 50/19
matters [1] 35/4	74/19 75/23	minutes [1] 99/12	move [13] 25/1 46/17	57/16 62/17 70/5 70/8
maximising [2] 89/1	media [1] 64/18	misleading [1] 65/20		/0/21 91/22 92/14
89/18	medical [6] 3/1 49/1	missed [1] 30/7	08/19 09/19 71/23	106/2106/21
maximum [4] 61/13	49/13 70/17 93/4 93/3	missing [1] 103/20	moved [3] 68/4 71/24	
64/12 87/12 87/12	105/22 106/3	mix [5] 14/21 24/6	82/8	N
may [53] 6/5 6/16	medications [2] 38/1	25/8 61/18 61/20	movement [1] 51/24	name [1] 40/8
1/20 1/25 8/12 8/15	106/15	mixture [1] 67/8	moving [10] 23/22	named [1] 95/1
16/10 16/25 17/8 20/7	medicine [3] 32/20	modalities [1] 104/5	24/19 51/12 68/23	nasal [5] 38/16 39/2
32/18 32/18 41/22	33/2 105/7	mode [1] 40/5	69/1 69/10 76/22	46/20 47/3 47/7
46/7 47/21 47/22	medicines [6] 97/14	model [3] 4/9 4/12	79/17 79/18 82/2	nation [2] 72/11 96/3
51/23 52/2 52/2 53/1	105/7 105/11 105/12	31/9	Mr [3] 29/15 29/16	national [8] 15/1 24/6
53/2 53/2 53/17 55/6	106/5 106/6 modium [2] 67/21	modelling [4] 3/9	108/7 Mc [9] 1/4 22/14	91/1 96/3
55/10 56/8 56/11	84/3 85/18	5/10 90/3 90/13 models [1] 4/1 4/7	25/22 25/24 29/14	nationally [3] 64/14
60/17 61/19 64/8 65/1	meet [2] 25/15 84/25	30/15 88/18	32/7 108/5 108/6	64/18 87/3
	membrane [1] 42/22	modified [1] 101/15	MS HAMMAD [2]	nations [7] 60/19
90/11 20/16 21/1 21/7	mend [1] 1/11	modifying [1] 45/11	22/14 108/5	65/12 70/1 72/25
81/10 83/3 87/6 88/13	mention [1] 68/7	module [1] 40/4	Ms Rowan [1] 1/4	89/18 93/1 97/1
102/12 102/25 103/2	mentioned [7] 7/8	moment [12] 9/4	Ms Shepherd [3]	nature [1] 36/17
May 2020 [1] 67/3	30/5 42/20 62/20 78/5	32/12 48/10 51/21	25/22 25/24 108/6	near [2] 56/10 87/11
maybe [1] 7/2	81/21 82/4	53/9 56/4 63/2 89/6	much [32] 2/14 9/16	nearby [1] 77/10
me [18] 9/18 10/4	15/12 17/8 17/20	09/24 97/12 103/5	10/13 14/5 19/13	nearly [3] 63/20 64/5
11/5 17/3 18/15 23/1	20/19 21/13 79/10	monitor [1] 42/15	25/18 25/21 26/12	65/2
	messages [5] 2/22	monitoring [2] 14/24	27/1 29/12 31/23	necessarily [9] 9/16
34/14 46/22 47/12	5/17 15/12 16/22	53/3	31/25 32/2 36/16 37/7	28/20 29/3 29/4 51/7
07/11/0/4/0/12	21/16	month [3] 15/11 18/5	37/15 38/22 40/5	58/17 62/5 62/6 96/2
mean [19] 5/22 9/6	metropolitan [1]	20/18	43/22 44/21 59/3	necessary [2] 52/16
17/16 31/1 51/8 72/24	77/15	months [2] 33/5 46/5	62/22 70/1 72/23	89/11
75/25 76/23 77/20	Michael [1] 90/3		74/2077/1186/25	need [31] 9/10 10/13
79/9 85/23 88/10	mia [1] 5/2 middlo [1] 98/16	00/10 00/11 00/21 66/22 81/22	91/14 100/17 multi [6] 27/1 36/7	37/19 39/21 47/4
88/12 91/25 92/7 95/4	might [44] 7/17 7/22	more [46] 1/25 8/23	37/16 38/3 103/14	50/20 51/24 53/3
96/24 97/8 98/22	7/22 15/15 15/18	11/13 11/23 11/24	103/20	53/16 54/18 54/19
meaning [1] 103/1	16/11 16/16 18/21	15/21 16/19 16/20	multi-organ [5] 27/1	55/6 58/2 68/2 68/18
means [12] 43/15	19/8 23/9 28/11 31/8	17/14 17/14 17/22	36/7 37/16 38/3	69/23 71/24 72/19
85/4 88/11 93/6 93/9	38/24 39/24 40/24	17/23 18/19 19/3	103/20	73/2 75/12 82/22
94/21 95/5 96/6	40/25 49/7 49/11	19/13 31/21 40/7	multi-organs [1]	83/19 84/4 92/5 92/20
meant [10] 1/22	51/24 52/1 53/8 55/5	43/22 49/9 49/10	103/14	96/4 98/14 102/8
26/16 68/3 86/12	57/2 58/24 01/2 02/13	50/11 58/10 58/10 60/21 63/23 64/1	multidisciplinary [1]	29/7 71/3 71/7 92/11
86/23 88/2 90/10	83/21 86/16 87/20	65/18 70/24 71/20	multifactorial [1]	98/18 99/20 104/1
91/24 92/1 92/9	88/15 89/10 90/23	72/6 77/11 77/17 82/3	18/23	needing [1] 77/7
measure [1] 95/8	97/7 98/3 98/10 98/14	83/2 83/16 83/22 84/1	multiple [4] 35/23	needs [10] 23/5 25/2
60/4 60/14 62/10	103/24 104/10 105/19	84/6 86/25 87/25	37/22 49/22 100/8	27/12 51/13 52/21
62/22 101/22	105/22	89/16 91/21 95/25	multisystem [1]	54/17 57/25 58/1
measurements [1]	miles [4] 77/16 77/18	103/9 106/1 106/2	36/17	84/25 90/17
62/11	79/9 82/8	morning [5] 25/25	multivariable [4] 3/9	neignbouring [4]
measures [3] 55/17	milestone [1] 40/17	29/18 29/23 33/23	4/14/320/24	104/11
93/11 102/19	millions [1] 106/18	mortality [18] 20/10	90/10	network [13] 71/14
measuring [6] 23/22	mind [5] 10/25 12/4	26/21 27/20 28/2 28/7	mutated [1] 86/17	71/15 71/17 72/6 72/9
60/2 60/18 64/24	30/22 77/4 87/22	28/7 30/4 30/6 30/16	mutual [9] 78/10	74/21 74/22 75/5
mechanical [0] 37/23	minimum [1] 59/22	31/4 45/19 45/24 46/3	85/22 87/12 88/24	75/17 75/20 75/23
39/17 42/1 42/4 47/5	minor [1] 71/13	46/7 46/19 80/7 80/15	89/1 89/18 96/8 96/13	77/9 87/13
47/8 97/18 99/15	minorities [3] 30/6	81/15	104/1	networking [1] / 1/22
105/13	30/12 31/6	most [16] 3/14 4/10	my [31] 1/5 1/9 2/11	72/10 75/20 05/22
mechanically [4]	29/21 31/5 72/13	4/11 3/4 3/0 3/7 17/13 20/7 20/11 22/18	10/4 22/10 20/10 25/23 26/8 27/18	neurological [2] 27/9
43/21 43/23 44/4	minute [10] 38/18	27/15 39/1 78/21	27/24 28/21 29/13	35/25
47/19	38/21 52/24 52/24	81/19 100/3 102/9	29/17 29/23 29/25	never [1] 1/6

(38) matter - never

Ν	23/10 23/17 31/9	notion [3] 7/23 18/18	3/20 5/20 6/9 8/9	81/16 83/8 95/14
new [7] 57/23 78/22	31/16 31/17	19/25	11/16 25/6 31/18	ongoing [2] 98/20
80/20 99/11 104/15	noncritical [2] 85/2	Notwithstanding [1]		103/4
104/17 104/20	8//10	59/8	64/23 65/10 68/8	online [1] 75/6
next [6] 10/4 25/22	nonetheless [1]	November $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \end{bmatrix}$ 30/11	78/28///85/1205/8	0119 [19] 0/12 0/20 10/8 12/5 12/21 16/11
32/10 62/21 77/19	normal [14] 51/10	November/December	occasion [1] 94/19	42/9 67/16 77/5 79/23
103/10	56/7 58/17 61/8 62/2	/January [1] 7/3	occasionally [1]	84/17 86/8 86/12
NHS [19] 23/14 33/5	62/5 62/19 62/19 64/5	now [36] 5/12 5/23	94/16	87/20 88/12 89/3
33/14 47/1 57/5 64/10	81/2 84/24 85/1 85/3	8/3 12/18 14/8 17/11	occupancy [1] 64/23	89/25 90/10 98/8
04/13 90/3 91/11	85/9	18/1 20/15 22/11	occupational [2]	onwards [6] 48/18
97/24 97/25 98/6 99/4	normally [9] 27/2	23/24 24/24 34/7 37/9	49/18 58/5	64/4 68/9 70/9 78/15
100/10 100/19 103/11	28/19 38/24 56/25	39/20 48/10 48/11	occupied [3] 24/2	96/3
NHS England [9]	67/8 68/20 78/21	53/22 62/12 64/7 66/5	24/25 61/6	opened [4] 45/7
23/14 84/13 90/3	102/2 104/7	71/14 72/1 72/9 72/23	occur [2] 14/20 16/8	45/20 58/8 / 6/12
92/16 93/25 94/5 98/6	63/7 70/3	73/2174/2375/20 84/16 87/3 87/10	Octobor [2] 1/1 107/1	opening [1] 57/25
99/4 103/11	Northern [14] 9/9	89/15 89/16 90/15	odd [1] 62/1	operating [5] 64/4
NHS England's [1]	14/15 15/10 18/4	91/6 95/8 98/19	Odogwu [3] 29/15	85/3 87/11 99/18
64/10	20/17 60/5 60/14	nuances [1] 40/6	29/16 108/7	99/19
87/14 00/1 00/25	62/11 69/18 69/18	number [54] 3/17	off [5] 16/3 37/19	operational [5] 24/8
night [1] 53/16	70/3 70/8 95/12 95/16	3/24 6/14 8/4 8/10	91/25 94/16 95/6	71/10 71/16 72/6
Nightingale [2] 76/11	Northern Ireland [1]	18/17 19/14 24/1 24/2	offer [1] 68/21	72/10
77/10	69/18	24/3 24/7 30/19 30/23	offering [1] 54/16	operative [1] 32/3
NIHR [1] 103/6	Northwick [6] 63/8	31/14 33/9 33/16 34/3	office [1] 93/5	opportunity [1] 22/8
NISTAR [1] 70/4	73/22 74/4 75/7 76/7	34/7 35/1 37/7 38/13	Officer [1] 3/1	opposed [2] 41/10
no [15] 1/7 6/21	/0/10 noco [6] 38/17 38/20	41/144/1740/348/4	Officers [3] 52/14	43/10
27/23 29/3 63/17	30/10 30/11 41/7 41/8	52/14 53/18 59/15	often [3] 38/15 57/9	orange [3] 4/25 5/19
67/18 80/6 81/13	not [103] 2/8 2/10	60/20 63/9 63/17 67/5	102/16	91/12
87/19 89/6 90/21 91/3	2/18 3/15 3/15 4/8	73/9 74/9 76/9 76/10	okav [9] 4/21 26/22	order [3] 50/21 88/25
102/4 103/10 106/20	4/10 4/13 7/15 7/18	77/15 77/16 82/11	31/12 31/23 48/1	96/13
noble [1] 2/11	7/20 7/24 8/14 8/15	91/15 93/22 94/24	69/25 72/4 87/3 94/19	ordinarily [6] 39/24
non [32] 10/22 13/17	8/24 9/16 10/12 12/19	97/25 98/3 98/5 98/22	older [7] 3/20 10/7	41/13 61/23 63/13
15/16 16/5 16/19 17/9	14/13 15/20 20/1	99/9 99/22 101/8	10/22 11/17 13/17	65/8 99/2
19/21 21/3 21/11	20/24 24/10 24/17	103/19	28/21 28/25	ordination [1] 87/14
23/10 23/17 27/16	25/6 26/18 28/5 28/20	numbers [18] 11/24	oldest [2] 5/8 29/6	organ [19] 26/7
31/9 31/16 31/17 41/4	29/3 29/10 30/23 31/2	14/4 23/7 24/13 30/19	Omicron [5] 5/9 11/0	20/13/20/17/27/1
41/6 41/12 41/15	37/10 40/20 40/22	60/25 61/5 61/19	on [155]	28/17 28/23 29/1 29/3
41/22 42/16 58/22	41/15 41/19 42/4 43/8	74/11 80/12 86/12	once [3] 54/22 76/11	29/7 35/23 36/3 36/7
63/11 63/21 65/8	45/1 45/11 45/23 46/7	88/1 95/17 105/23	82/19	37/16 37/22 38/3
86/18 88/7 07/10	46/13 47/24 49/5	106/14	one [66] 3/25 8/1	103/20
100/15	52/20 54/12 55/22	numeric [1] 51/3	8/19 10/9 10/12 12/13	organisation [3]
non-clinical [3] 58/22	56/11 61/2 62/4 62/6	numerical [1] 86/12	12/20 12/24 14/17	48/17 75/10 93/2
85/21 88/7	62/22 64/16 65/19	nurse [9] 49/8 49/12		organisational [1]
non-Covid [1] 63/11	66/14 67/4 67/16 69/15 69/17 69/21	49/23 51/5 51/6 51/9	19/8 20/21 20/23	92/23
non-elective [5]	70/1 70/21 72/5 72/13	52/17 50/15 59/16	22/11 22/21 23/5 23/5	100/0
10/22 13/17 15/16	72/23 73/3 76/8 76/16	40/10 40/15	35/4 39/20 41/8 41/11	organisations [2]
19/21 21/3	77/24 77/25 81/15	nursing [12] 50/10	43/10 45/17 47/25	29/19 40/14
non-numane [1]	82/7 83/12 84/7 86/12	52/14 52/15 53/7	49/7 49/11 51/3 51/5	organised [3] 48/9
00/10	88/12 88/21 91/1	55/14 56/13 56/14	51/8 51/9 52/5 52/16	70/9 80/21
27/16 41/4 41/6 41/12	91/19 94/22 97/24	59/17 67/2 67/12	52/17 53/10 53/14	organs [1] 103/14
41/15 41/22 42/16	98/4 98/20 99/3 99/7	67/19 81/24	53/17 57/15 57/15	origin [1] 90/5
97/19	99/23 100/22 101/6	0	59/10 61/22 63/12	originally [1] 86/3
non-pandemic [4]	101/9102/12102/19 103/7103/1810//3	objective [1] 87/8	1 0111 00112 1019 1110 7815 79122 8012 80120	originates [1] 85/0
63/21 65/8 69/14	104/24 105/17 106/6	observed [3] 26/21	82/25 87/20 87/23	4/1 4/6 4/22 5/1 5/11
100/15	notable [1] 5/17	27/20 28/7	92/21 93/1 95/15	6/16 6/18 6/20 7/9 8/2
non-traditional [1]	note [2] 13/13 79/11	obstructive [1] 41/17	96/12 100/2 105/6	10/13 10/21 11/11
00/10	notes [2] 55/21 55/25	obtained [1] 98/2	105/22	11/22 11/23 12/11
16/19 17/9 21/11	nothing [4] 13/24	obvious [1] 46/7	one's [1] 23/4	13/20 14/9 14/19
	44/8 69/5 94/21	obviously [22] 2/10	ones [5] 4/11 18/20	15/15 16/25 17/5 19/6

(39) new - other

0	overarching [1]	29/22 33/7 36/5 36/10	75/17 79/19 84/14	103/8 103/19 104/21
other [54] 19/19	80/16	39/15 43/13 43/22	101/8	
19/19 21/2 21/16		44/2 45/15 47/14		per [11] 3/23 15/18
22/12 25/18 26/18	85/19	52/15 53/8 56/5 56/7	21/11 37/21 45/9	
26/20 27/15 28/16	overseeing [1] 53/18	50/14 50/25 59/15	77/12 80/25 81/24	38/18 44/16 49/8
33/9 34/3 34/25 37/12	overspeak [1] 34/14	59/19 01/3 03/21 03/8	90/8 90/17 99/18	101/5 101/0
40/14 43/10 46/11		08/17 09/14 09/23	105/12	percentage [9] 12/13
46/11 46/11 46/17	00/5 01/0 00/0 00/15	70/1072/172/11	partiy [2] 70/22 90/22	15/11 15/19 15/9
55/17 55/18 56/16		77/10 81/2 82/13	pass [1] 3771	61/22 61/23
58/22 66/15 68/4	overwhelming [2]	82/15 83/7 84/23	passing [1] 42/0	nercentages [1]
70/25 71/21 72/13	83/15 83/23	85/11 86/17 86/19	patch [1] 79/6	64/21
75/18 76/2 77/12	own [4] 3/6 23/13	86/24 87/24 88/18	patent [1] 46/13	perform [1] 57/21
11122 19/1 19/9 81/25	76/21 91/2	93/4 97/20 97/22	patient [41] 1/24	perhaps [22] 2/18
95/20 97/10 90/12	oximetry [2] 101/22	97/24 100/15 102/5	13/14 14/10 17/17	7/13 8/23 15/15 16/17
92/10 92/25 96/6 99/2	102/17	105/10 105/11 105/18	25/2 25/7 25/11 29/5	16/24 60/4 63/4 65/3
99/20 101/24 101/24	oxygen [40] 38/6	pandemics [1] 25/5	41/22 42/4 42/9 43/14	66/5 66/8 69/11 77/14
103/11 104/7 104/14	38/7 38/10 38/11	paper [2] 30/13 77/21	43/16 44/7 44/9 44/16	77/17 79/25 81/17
105/6	38/13 38/17 38/19	papers [1] 69/24	50/13 51/9 51/19	84/20 90/4 91/13
other's [1] 78/3	38/21 38/22 39/2	paragraph [12] 7/10	52/17 52/21 53/5 55/1	94/21 96/4 97/12
others [3] 4/12 23/15	39/13 46/2 46/20	7/13 10/16 10/25	55/5 55/8 55/22 56/9	period [13] 5/16 5/16
55/14	40/21 47/2 47/3 47/7	30/25 48/18 68/9 70/6	50/22 59/12 68/12	0/19 0/22 7/5 8/20
otherwise [3] 34/20	97/14 99/25 100/2	10/15/9/259//1/	70/19 70/21 91/25	77/4 82/15 105/10
56/19 88/16	100/4 100/7 100/11	naragraph 167 [1]	86/8 90/23 101/18	106/9
ought [3] 66/9 68/13	101/3 101/3 101/8	97/17	101/19 102/16	neriods [9] 1/23 5/18
105/25	101/10 101/15 101/17	paragraph 177 [1]	patient's [6] 51/25	6/24 13/21 16/1 17/21
our [10] 13/25 16/10	101/21 102/1 102/7	101/14	55/25 68/16 69/10	17/22 21/4 82/1
20/24 25/12 27/13	102/9 102/12 102/16	paragraph 28 [1]	78/19 88/13	peripheral [2] 101/15
07/12 00/8	102/25 103/2	48/18	patient-initiated [1]	102/17
out [40] 4/6 4/21 4/24	oxygenate [1] 43/3	paragraph 6 [1]	42/9	person [5] 30/23
5/6 23/9 33/10 34/4	oxygenates [1] 42/25	36/25	patients [141]	66/14 99/14 102/2
37/1 40/24 41/9 46/6	oxygenation [3]	paragraph 7.6 [2]	pattern [5] 11/12	102/23
51/21 64/18 67/7	42/23 42/23 44/12	7/10 10/16	17/12 20/22 50/15	personal [1] 70/21
69/12 71/22 73/22	Ρ	paragraph 75 [1]	07/24	
74/4 74/12 74/15	package [2] 37/21	Daragraph 82 [1]	pallerns [1] 00/11	nharma [1] 46/13
75/13 76/9 77/9 79/25	58/7	70/6	39/25 50/2 51/15 63/1	pharmacists [2]
81/14 82/11 83/14	packages [2] 75/2	paragraph 90 [2]	74/1 100/14	49/16 58/7
83/20 83/22 92/10	99/5	78/15 79/25	paused [1] 72/9	pharmacological [1]
94/194/494/1390/7	paediatric [2] 87/11	paragraphs [2] 35/18	pausing [7] 38/23	44/22
104/4 105/2 106/2	98/9	53/24	46/5 55/4 57/19 61/22	Phillip [1] 32/21
outcome [1] 78/19	paediatrics [1] 69/20	paragraphs 2 [1]	69/8 72/17	phoned [1] 59/6
outcomes [3] 2/9	page [8] 26/4 44/24	35/18	peak [1] 67/15	phones [1] 58/1
46/16 78/12	58/5 60/11 62/14 73/7	paragraphs 30 [1]	peaks [1] 10/19	phrase [1] 84/15
outreach [2] 55/13	13/24 10/4	53/24	people [67] //15 //16	phrased [1] 13/16
71/20	page 14 [1] 44/24	parallel [2] 13/23	7/10 13/2 13/4 21/20	phrases [1] 00/8
outset [1] 52/16	page 22 [1] 00/11 page 39 [1] 62/14	97/0 parallole [1] 21/2	20/10 01/17 00/10	21/16 21/25 52/1
outside [18] 2/17	page 40 [2] 73/24	parameter [1] 21/2	40/10 40/20 41/1 43/2	60/23 87/12
7/18 16/16 16/21	76/4	Park [6] 63/8 73/22	43/7 43/14 43/18	physicians [1] 41/18
31/18 39/15 40/10	page 61 [1] 58/5	74/4 75/7 76/7 76/16	43/23 43/24 44/6	physiological [1]
40/13 41/1 41/20	painkillers [2] 105/15	part [12] 14/25 15/1	44/16 45/11 45/16	88/20
71/5 71/21 06// 106/7	105/25	32/5 52/9 55/12 71/14	45/23 45/25 46/1 49/3	physiologically [1]
over [14] 1/5 36/20	paint [1] 86/15	82/4 83/6 83/16 86/19	49/4 53/17 54/15 55/1	52/23
41/7 42/10 62/1 62/18	painted [1] 76/14	97/24 106/4	55/20 56/9 58/13	physios [1] 49/17
62/19 66/23 71/24	pandemic [80] 1/1/	participants [2] 8/11	58/15 58/17 58/20	physiotherapists [1]
73/17 77/4 81/6 103/1	1/10 1/10 1/23 1/23	22/12	60/25 61/18 65/17	58/7
106/9	5/16 5/16 6/6 6/10	participated [1]	00/20 00/4 00/20 75/18 77/9 77/04	PICK [3] 70/11 /1/2
over-estimated [1]	6/22 7/5 7/18 10/19	narticular [16] 0/2	1 3/10 11/0 11/21 81/14 88/20 02/2 02/0	nicking [2] 5//2
103/1	11/7 13/16 14/3 14/19	19/11 30/6 30/12 31/5	94/17 95/3 95/4 95/24	54/18
overall [6] 5/13 8/5	14/22 15/17 16/8	33/17 43/12 47/12	96/23 99/22 100/2	picks [1] 71/1
10/9 19/22 28/3 / 8/23	16/23 20/2 21/22 22/6	49/23 51/8 67/4 67/11	101/23 101/24 102/25	picture [8] 8/6 12/25

(40) other ... - picture

Ρ	post [1] 17/14	pretty [2] 40/5 91/19	Professor Sir Chris	put [20] 21/19 23/9
picture [6] 18/7	post-wave [1] 17/14	prevent [1] 87/15	[1] 3/2	31/8 46/22 50/8 64/18
60/22 76/14 85/24	postcode [2] 17/17	preventing [1] 47/8	Professor Summers	67/21 73/6 77/21 87/7
86/16 86/16	17/18	previous [1] 75/9	[5] 32/19 35/14	88/1 89/6 93/11 93/14
piece [1] 105/22	posts [1] 33/16	primarily [1] 71/4	53/21 63/22 97/8	93/22 98/7 100/9
pieces [2] 98/23	potential [6] 7/8 7/9	prime [1] 87/14	Professor Whitty [2]	
104/20	8/16 8/18 10/5 23/25	prior [8] 4/23 10/23	33/25 59/21	putting [4] 22/10
pipe [1] 43/1	potentially [12] //11	11/7 11/18 12/2 13/18	Professor/Doctor [1]	59/4 80/2 101/7
place [10] 8/20 46/25	12/20 12/23 13/1 13/3	4/22 /2/10	34/7	pyramidai [1] 52/7
69/16 70/5 70/14	10/23 30/13 03/20 69/1 73/17 90/7 09/19	Prioriusation [4] 0/13		Q
71/16 72/11 72/22	noworful [1] 78/4	nrioritice [3] 13/6	nrogramme [3] 14/21	qualifications [2]
93/11 104/2	PPF [1] 59/4	26/6 26/14	24/6 101/1	33/9 34/4
placed [1] 51/10	practical [1] 48/3	prioritised [2] 28/22	progressed [1] 63/17	quality [2] 22/2 25/12
places [4] /6/2 84/7	practically [1] 75/15	29/1	progressing [1] 47/4	quarterly [1] 24/5
8//25 104/3	practice [2] 33/1	proactive [1] 83/22	progressively [1]	quasi [1] 85/20
planned [1] 05/11	99/17	probably [6] 2/12	25/14	quasi-critical [1]
96/10 99/17 07/2/	practised [1] 80/23	16/4 25/14 72/13 90/9	prone [1] 43/14	85/20
nlausible [2] 13/9	practitioners [1]	100/16	proned [1] 44/5	question [10] 10/4
	99/18	probe [1] 102/18	proning [4] 43/11	26/2 27/18 28/21
play [1] 100/5	pre [12] 5/16 6/19 7/5	problems [1] 104/17	43/15 58/23 58/24	29/23 29/25 30/8 31/2
please [39] 4/14 4/16	10/14 10/17 11/1	procedure [1] 78/20	proportion [9] 12/16	35/19 61/3
4/18 15/8 18/1 20/16	11/10 27/11 47/17	process [6] 52/11	18/17 19/4 19/10	questions [14] 1/12
23/2 32/14 32/19	71/2 73/11 97/24	54/12 54/14 55/3	19/18 20/4 21/4 26/24	22/11 22/14 22/18
34/12 34/13 35/13	pre-existing [5]	79/17 83/17	65/4	23/18 23/24 29/10
38/5 41/4 42/3 42/21	10/14 10/17 11/1	produce [3] 10/10		108/5 108/6 108/7
48/11 48/16 48/22	11/104//1/	38/1/38/21	10/20 27/2	aujekty [2] 76/18
51/16 60/2 60/10 63/2	5/16 6/10 7/5 73/11	21/21 106/5	proposed [1] 101/10	95/25
63/4 70/19 72/2 73/7	97/24	professional [1]	prove [2] $\frac{4}{0} \frac{4}{10}$	auintile [1] 17/13
73/21 78/15 79/13	pre-supposing [1]	101/20	24/11 25/12 59/24	auite [10] 19/13
84/10 88/9 91/5 97/16	27/11	professions [1]	99/15	20/22 47/10 59/1
	precise [1] 9/17	49/16	provided [23] 9/10	61/16 63/16 75/19
	precluded [1] 34/13	professor [43] 1/3	23/24 37/3 38/3 38/10	76/12 76/23 84/8
pm [2] 91/10 106/24	predicted [4] 26/20	1/13 3/2 8/22 12/5	38/11 38/13 38/14	quoted [1] 61/4
point [22] 1/20 0/21	27/20 28/1 28/6	16/22 22/7 22/15	39/1 39/2 39/4 39/14	D
13/13 25/10 31/11	predominant [1]	25/25 29/12 29/18	39/15 39/24 41/13	<u>R</u>
36/14 40/24 61/23	76/17	32/2 32/10 32/15	42/15 43/4 48/20	raised [1] 36/24
63/6 64/14 65/19	predominantly [1]	32/19 32/20 33/25	59/25 73/8 73/24 81/1	raising [1] 55/18
78/17 80/17 81/12	36/8	34/7 34/22 34/24	99/5	ran [2] 105/14 105/15
82/17 89/20 100/1	prefer [1] 69/6	35/14 35/17 36/19	provides [5] 8/16	
102/5 104/25	pregnancy [2] 37/6	36/19 40/25 41/5 45/1	8/18 39/12 41/8 45/10	range [/] 40/20
pointed [1] 71/22	37/0	40/23 53/21 54/10	providing [4] 9/8	79/7 85/9
policy [3] 5/4 5/5	pregnancy-related	31/1 39/21 03/22 00/0 73/13 78/2 03/15 07/9	22/25 50/20 99/21	ranging [1] 77/11
6/15	[1] 37/0 prognant [4] 36/23	07/16 00/10 100/6	proximate [1] 73/18	rapid [1] 1/5
political [2] 95/24	36/24 37/1 37/11	108/3 108/8	proxy [1] 5/24 psychological [1]	rapidly [2] 75/23 98/1
96/18	Prentice [4] 90/3	Professor Brightling	66/24	rate [2] 18/14 101/5
pool [4] 6/13 6/17	91/23 92/13 92/18	[11 36/19	psychologists [1]	rates [2] 16/12 80/7
	Prentice's [1] 94/4	Professor Charlotte	49/19	rather [8] 13/4 14/2
	preparations [1]	[3] 32/10 32/15	publicised [1] 97/18	24/15 24/24 34/2 81/6
19/10/20/21/20/20	83/25	108/8	publicly [1] 74/18	82/25 86/7
29/0 / 0/24 02/20	preparing [1] 35/2	Professor Evans [1]	publish [1] 92/17	ratio [2] 50/10 50/12
58/20 60/6 62/12	presenting [1] 6/18	36/19	published [4] 43/20	rational [1] 8/23
76/20 77/17 103/15	president [2] 33/19	Professor Fong [1]	47/20 74/18 74/21	rationing [3] 7/12
positive [1] 39/7	97/1	34/24	pulmonary [1] 41/17	1/22 0/2
possibility [2] 8/1	pressing [1] 94/9	Professor Fong's [1]	pulse [2] 101/22	ratios [11] 35/5 49/14
88/6	pressure [15] 6/25	78/3	102/17	49/23 52/15 53/6
possible [8] 3/11	37/25 39/7 39/13 41/8	Protessor Kevin	pumps [2] 53/1 53/2	67/12 67/10 82/1
8/24 12/7 12/8 12/8	41/941/1041/11	rong [1] 8/22	pure [1] 92/10	reaching [1] 64/13
31/20 34/9 56/10	1 JI I J I O I U O J Z J 01/2 01/22 01/21 05/23	FIDIESSOF KOWAN		reactive [1] 83/19
possibly [3] 18/22	nressures [1] 13/25	25/25 29/12 20/18	nurnoses [3] 14/16	read [3] 33/10 33/11
29/7 82/8	14/1 14/7 94/11	32/2 34/22 68/8 73/12	40/4 40/17	35/1
1				I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I

R	red [3] 91/12 92/4	repatriation [2] 69/9	17/20 19/6 20/19	105/12 106/2
readily [2] 83/16	102/19	77/3	respiratory [14]	rural [2] 70/24 77/17
106/1	redeployed [6] 56/17	repeat [4] 26/11	26/25 27/8 27/16	S
Readiness [1] 84/12	56/19 57/6 57/20 59/9	26/12 30/8 30/17	35/24 37/18 41/18	sadly [2] 13/4 81/20
reading [3] 16/3	01/10	repeating [1] 70/2	41/1043/1040/24	sate [4] 59/5 80/25
21/21 70/20	reduced [2] 40/140/19	37/24 103/22 104/5	79/15 101/24	101/21 102/4
real [4] 2/9 40/3 48/3	101/15	105/16	response [1] 33/6	safely [5] 49/5 50/21
56/11	reduction [1] 101/17	report [27] 9/10 9/18	responsible [1] 42/7	53/17 73/3 83/5
	reductions [1] 14/6	15/6 23/19 23/24 24/1	restricting [1] 90/16	safer [3] 50/18 81/11
	refer [3] 28/15 93/15	24/20 24/24 28/14	result [1] 8/6	82/22
reality [1] 85/23	105/6	33/10 34/4 34/8 35/2	retrieval [3] 69/19	safety [1] 53/4
really [35] 1/8 5/19	reference [2] 46/18	35/18 36/22 44/25	70/18 80/21	said [15] 2/15 3/2 6/9
10/4 13/22 15/24	62/13	48/18 60/11 62/14	retrieve [1] / 1/2	10/11 12/24 17/7
16/11 22/3 22/4 22/5	referral [1] 7/20	73/21 78/16 07/17	return [1] 100/23	63/22 69/17 80/11
25/11 31/2 32/3 32/4	28/14 59/21	98/19 105/7	revealed [1] 98/8	90/8 94/18 105/15
	referring [5] 40/1	reported [3] 31/19	reversed [1] 11/12	same [15] 7/4 7/21
52/20 53/4 53/6 56/6	55/1 55/10 55/19	91/9 97/13	revisions [1] 85/14	54/16 56/8 60/19 69/6
00/12 09/1 01/10	91/22	reporting [6] 22/23	rewind [1] 60/17	72/18 77/22 79/6
87/19 88/4 89/19	reflect [3] 65/6 65/25	23/16 23/20 60/23	right [31] 1/21 5/25	79/20 80/23 103/22
93/16 93/19 96/9	94/23	94/6 96/21	6/20 11/6 17/2 19/7	104/1 104/16 106/13
96/11	reflected [2] 16/18	reports [3] 22/10	20/3 22/22 24/1 32/25	
reason [8] 8/3 15/11	/5/9	22/24 94/22	33/15 34/1 37/13	SARS [1] 33/22
18/5 20/18 47/22	52/20 92/10	20/18 86/12	56/11 61/12 63/15	[11 35/22
57/10 74/17 96/1	reflects [1] 85/8	representation [2]	65/24 69/21 74/6	saturation [7] 61/15
reasons [16] 3/25 5/1	refusal [1] 88/7	20/5 20/8	76/17 77/14 78/7 81/6	64/13 101/11 101/16
5/11 10/21 11/11 10/25 12/1 12/0 12/10	refuse [1] 90/23	represented [1]	83/25 85/16 91/3 91/9	101/21 102/7 102/12
16/20 18/23 10/1	regarding [2] 74/19	91/16	rightly [2] 17/7 57/8	saturations [2] 103/1
19/21 72/20 80/8	78/13	represents [1] 93/10	ring [3] 55/7 75/14	103/2
106/9	region [3] 76/10 87/3	reproned [1] 44/13	75/14	saw [5] 1//12 1//22
reassure [1] 96/23	90/12		rising [2] 74/9 86/21	27/19/09/0 sav [32] 6/9/8/14/8/15
recall [1] 5/24	71/23 87/13 03/1 03/5	requests [1] 90/7	16/17 18/11 18/21	10/18 18/6 21/7 26/5
receive [2] 41/25	regions [6] 62/25	26/15 42/17 52/25	20/14 20/23 20/25	26/13 26/16 27/18
43/8	65/12 72/8 77/12	98/4 100/3 101/4	21/12 30/10 31/21	43/4 47/1 54/19 55/8
received [3] 28/17	89/18 93/8	required [11] 37/17	65/13 86/5	61/14 69/13 70/17
receives [2] 58/2	regular [1] 77/25	39/17 44/13 45/12	risks [2] 22/1 81/3	75/9 76/23 78/23 83/2
59/12	rehabilitation [1]	53/19 99/9 99/17	risky [1] 78/20	84/8 87/3 90/13 90/18
receiving [6] 26/24	69/2	100/7 101/4 103/16	robust [3] 23/7 23/9	90/19 91/2 91/8
41/1 46/1 46/4 83/25	reinforced [1] 80/21	105/13	106/10	101/13 102/2 102/11
104/22	relates [1] 29/23	103/21	roles [1] 57/5	saving [16] 1/22
recognised [3] 57/3	relating [2] 37/4	requirements [3]	roll [2] 4/24 5/6	27/25 78/6 81/10
59/16 99/4	60/12	26/17 28/11 52/1	roll-out [2] 4/24 5/6	83/18 83/21 86/20
58/20 50/16	relation [3] 10/16	requires [3] 42/12	room [1] 32/12	88/20 90/8 90/15
recommendations	22/19 36/23	44/5 69/11	rough [1] 35/12	90/21 90/21 95/6
[1] 96/10	relative [1] 19/18	research [6] 32/21	roughly [1] 44/17	96/11 100/10 104/9
recommended [3]	relatively [4] 6/22	45/12 48/5 103/4	round [1] 39/10	says [2] 00/19 89/20
24/24 69/25 102/1	49/21 /4/8 /8/25	104/19 105/3	routine [1] 99/16	70/3 93/1 95/15 96/3
recorded [1] 55/23	45/4 49/3 82/15 86/2	residential [2] 17/17	100/15 106/11	scenarios [1] 93/16
records [2] 57/23	reliable [1] 23/10	17/23	ROWAN [16] 1/3 1/4	scientific [2] 69/24
58/1	relieve [1] 75/13	resort [2] 68/14	1/13 12/5 16/22 22/7	74/19
recovery [11] 0/4	relying [1] 106/7	80/17	22/15 25/25 29/12	score [1] 55/17
45/6 45/7 45/17 46/5	remains [1] 88/12	resource [8] 44/15	29/18 32/2 34/22	scores [1] 55/16
46/21 46/24 46/25	remember [3] 2/15	58/10 69/25 86/7 88/7	40/25 68/8 73/12	SCOTIANO [14] 9/9
48/3 82/3 85/20	3/21 43/9	00/0 00/9 09/9	100/3 DC [1] 16/25	61/24 62/10 70/17
RECOVERY-RS [1]	remit [1] 31/18	[1] 44/15	rudely [1] 40/20	70/23 80/3 80/4 95/11
46/25	renal [7] 27/9 37/24	resources [3] 66/17	run [2] 15/2 65/8	95/17 96/11
recruitment [2] 45/7	103/12 103/16 103/21	72/15 84/4	running [7] 65/7 66/5	Scottish [1] 61/4
43/20	104/5 105/16	respect [4] 2/24	67/22 72/14 104/4	screen [8] 15/8 44/24

(42) readily - screen

	2010 mit. [4] 29/2	aines [0] 67/10 69/7	a = m = b = dy [A] = 57/25	E9/6
S	severity [1] 28/3	since [9] 67/19 68/7	somebody [4] 57725	58/6
	shading [1] 63/9	70/18 71/11 72/16	58/1 58/2 68/23	speed [1] 99/11
screen [6] 51/10	shall [2] 68/6 106/23	74/23 85/14 100/17	someone [4] 53/23	spent [2] 15/14 33/1
74/2 84/22 91/5 91/14	chana [4] 20/44	105/19	54/1 00/11 100/2	Cpider [4] 76/6
92/13	snape [1] 39/11	105/18	54/199/11 102/7	Spider [1] 70/0
a [3] 2/22 24/16	shared [5] 14/18 75/2	single [5] 27/12	someone's [1]	spikes [1] 19/25
se [2] 3/23 24/10	86/10 86/10 88/24	27/14 36/3 39/12	102/18	spoke [2] 19/11 78/4
second [7] 1/22 2/3	charing [4] 06/16	07/15	comothing [14] 7/10	opontonoouo [2]
16/10 32/5 53/6 53/6	snaring [1] 90/10	07/15	something [14] 7/10	spontaneous [2]
80/5	sheet [1] 11/6	single-organ [2]	23/12 23/13 39/6	42/11 75/3
80/5	shelf [1] 106/16	27/12 27/14	42/20 43/12 56/3 69/6	spontaneously [2]
secondly [2] 54/19	Chambard [4] 25/22	C: [4] 2/2	92/24 96/20 05/12	
89/3	Shepheru [4] 25/22	Sir [1] 3/2	03/24 00/20 95/12	43/24 / 3/10
sodato [1] 105/24	25/24 29/14 108/6	site [2] 78/6 88/3	100/14 102/10 105/24	spread [3] 36/15 50/7
	shift [2] 56/4 60/24	sites [7] 67/17 68/4	sometimes [8] 21/2	75/22
sedated [2] 42/6	shock [1] 8//9	70/18 01/25 02/7	24/16 30/25 40/0	enroadeboote [1]
105/13		19/10 91/20 92/1		
see [31] 4/19 4/22	snort [/] 48/14 50/11	93/10 93/16	49/18 67/15 92/9	86/13
	78/25 79/7 105/12	sitrep [1] 67/18	99/14	spring [2] 98/21
5/22 5/24 6/4 7/1 7/5	105/14 105/15	situation [4] 57/7	somewhat [1] 100/18	98/25
7/4 7/6 9/24 12/16				
14/6 15/17 15/25	snort-range [1] 79/7	87/5 97/5 97/21	somewnere [4] 20/20	stabilising [1] 56/9
17/12 10/12 10/16	shortage [1] 97/18	situations [1] 57/18	69/1 82/1 83/1	stable [2] 78/21 82/3
	shortages [6] 97/13	six [3] 44/6 44/16	sorry [17] 1/4 1/8	staff [33] 49/7 49/13
19/8 24/9 25/15 26/20	07/13 100/4 105/7	87/24	3/15 5/21 6/2 20/12	10/10 10/21 50/12
49/1 73/13 73/16 76/9			0/10 0/24 0/0 20/12	
82/2 91/7 01/11 01/15	105/9 105/16	size [3] 23/5 23/8	24/22 26/8 26/24	52/3 55/2 55/18 56/17
	shorter [1] 71/24	62/24	28/15 28/24 30/7 32/4	56/17 56/22 56/23
92/21 94/24	should [26] /1/21	sizes [1] 11/20	30/23 62/17 72/2 72/4	57/1 57/13 57/13
seem [1] 19/1				
seemed [2] 18/10	50/12 54/19 55/22	SKIII [2] 61/17 61/20	sort [69] 2/18 3/23	57/13 58/5 58/21
	55/22 55/23 56/10	skilled [2] 24/13	4/2 4/7 5/8 6/3 6/4 7/2	58/24 58/25 59/14
31/20	56/12 57/3 66/13	24/14	7/5 7/20 7/21 8/23	59/15 59/20 66/1 66/7
seems [3] 15/20 19/2	00/12 01/0 00/13			03/10/03/20/00/1/00/1
21/10	66/19 68/17 72/21	SKIIIS [1] 66/12	9/14 11/15 11/15	67/5 81/16 81/25 83/3
2000 [dd] 12/20 14/4	73/3 82/17 91/8 92/3	skin [4] 102/19	11/16 11/19 12/20	98/24 99/3 99/17
seen [11] 13/20 14/4	92/3 92/4 92/8 93/5	102/23 102/25 103/8	13/11 15/21 16/8	99/20
21/9 27/2 34/22 65/16	02/6 02/0 02/11 02/19	aliant [2] 7/2 15/19	17/01 10/10 10/14	atoffed [C] 24/12
69/14 73/6 76/21 90/2	93/0 93/9 93/11 93/16	signi [3] 7/2 15/16		
02/12	99/4	85/13	18/22 18/23 20/21	24/13 24/18 25/9
	show [8] 44/2 48/2	slightly [4] 12/14	20/21 20/23 21/23	60/24 62/6
select [1] 30/16	51/23 61/5 61/6 67/1	39/19 49/10 97/10	23/7 23/10 23/12 24/8	staffing [5] 25/3
selecting [1] 13/3	01/20 01/0 01/0 01/1	200/10 40/10 07/10		
self [1] 13/3	80/12 92/13	slow [3] 39/19 49/20	25/16 27/6 27/12 28/2	50/21 60/21 63/24
	showed [5] 2/3 43/20	72/2	28/2 31/9 31/17 47/13	83/1
	47/5 79/14 79/19	slowly [3] 38/9 48/21	52/6 58/14 62/9 73/19	stage [8] 41/23 74/14
13/3	chowing [1] 20/21	70/13	75/9 77/2 77/5 77/23	75/21 79/11 99/17
senior [1] 93/2	showing [1] 20/21			
sonso [5] 9/14 9/15	shown [7] 20/25	small [6] 30/20 43/2	79/11 81/9 81/24	88/22 89/17 90/22
	45/20 45/21 45/25	49/21 77/5 79/4 84/3	82/16 83/9 83/12 85/9	stages [1] 97/20
10/3 17/19 68/15	46/19 47/21 77/9	smaller [/] 13/19	86/1 86/13 89/15 93/8	stand [1] 94/19
sensitive [1] 94/22			00/1 00/13 03/13 33/0	
Sentember [1] 24/22	snows [13] 11/4 15/9	70/24 71/5 95/17	93/14 93/15 94/14	standard [4] 4772
	37/4 48/5 51/15 61/7	smoke [1] 94/15	95/24 96/1 96/18 97/4	49/1 64/24 85/12
series [1] 102/20	61/11 61/12 62/19	so [251]	97/5	stark [1] 19/14
serious [1] 12/2	61/13 76/15 01/17	social [2] 20/4 20/44	sounds [4] 92/0	start [11] 1/10 15/5
service [6] 33/5	04/13/0/13 94/17	Social [2] 30/4 30/11	sounds [4] 03/9	
68/21 60/21 70/10	94/24	societies [1] 101/20	87/17 105/19 105/25	32/18 35/13 48/25
	sick [4] 1/8 18/20	Society [4] 24/21	space [1] 39/17	60/4 82/17 86/6 89/11
11/212/24	81/19 88/21	33/20 40/9 96/25	spare [1] 65/13	90/15 90/15
services [3] 22/2	cinker [2] 25/14 20/4	como [F91 0/00 2/0	eneck [2] 46/22	otortod [2] 5/5 70/45
80/24 85/1			spear [3] 40/22	
set [7] 4/21 34/4	28/8	4/6 4/7 4/12 8/2 10/7	52/14 55/18	86/19
	SICSAG [4] 14/14	10/8 10/16 13/1 13/4	special [1] 72/24	starting [4] 5/7 48/22
04/12 00/19 / 9/20	37/4 41/3 73/8	13/5 14/1 14/9 15/2	specialised [2] 42/14	74/7 86/23
92/3 105/21	sight [1] 61/14	16/16 17/9 22/11	105/22	starte [1] 6/2
sets [4] 14/17 66/18				
94/4 98/19	significant [9] 3/14	28/18 29/24 32/18	specialist [11] 42/17	stat [1] 2/8
actting [7] 47/04	3/17 4/8 8/9 19/13	35/3 36/14 39/3 39/3	43/4 43/6 43/9 53/21	state [4] 83/23 84/14
setting [/] 4//24	20/13 80/6 91/22	40/23 43/18 44/22	59/14 59/20 69/12	88/20 91/20
47/25 48/24 71/8	99/22	15/2 18/10 50/16	60/18 71/6 76/21	stated [1] 15/21
80/24 81/3 101/6				
settings [6] 30/3	significantly [2] 20/7	01/22 62/6 68/3 68/10	specialty [2] 50/7	statement [11] //11
20/14 44/44 44/45	65/21	68/19 69/8 69/14	59/23	10/15 13/14 26/8
39/14 41/14 41/15	similar [9] 4/25 5/10	70/22 72/8 75/13	specific [1] 30/17	26/22 64/10 78/3 90/2
43/25 70/12	17/21 20/22 62/14	76/11 76/10 77/0 77/0		
seven [1] 9/13				
severe [2] 43/18	85/8 95/10 95/12	84/8 87/7 88/20 92/19	specifications [1]	statements [3] 26/4
17/18	96/20	92/21 93/7 97/13	72/24	35/1 91/23
4//10	simple [4] 2/7 28/17	100/18 101/4 102/21	specs [1] 38/16	statistical [1] 30/21
severely [1] 50/11	38/15 61/2	103/6 105/16 105/20	speece [2] 40/17	etatietically [2] 4/9
	50/15 01/2		sheerii [2] 48/11	

(43) screen... - statistically

S	suddenly [2] 57/11	surgical [1] 49/1	team [7] 44/5 49/14	Thanks [1] 51/19
statistically [1]	106/12	surrounding [1] 2/20	55/20 74/25 75/6	that [593]
20/25	sufficiency [1] 34/19	survival [1] 4/3	75/20 100/12	that's [59] 1/9 5/4
statistics [3] 23/5			teams [9] 42/17	0/10 0/19 //20 12/12 12/22 17/25 21/6
23/6 23/10	12/13 21/22 37/10	10/22 surviving [3] 3/15	58/1 58/21 80/19	21/13 22/7 23/10
status [3] 35/25	102/4	3/16 4/10	80/22 81/11	23/22 25/11 27/10
92/11 102/16	suggested [3] 28/3	suspect [5] 37/14	technical [1] 83/13	33/15 33/21 34/1
stay [1] 79/1	98/3 98/13	42/2 45/2 47/22	technically [1] 94/12	35/12 35/21 39/9
staying [2] 13/3 80/13	suggesting [2] 65/1	100/16	tell [8] 4/20 6/12 8/1	39/13 41/11 46/12
steadily [1] 74/9	101/21	suspended [1] 7/9	10/12 42/2 53/22 78/9	47/14 48/10 50/1 50/2
steady [1] 18/13	suggests [8] 18/9	swine [2] 85/7 86/3	93/12	50/9 50/15 54/3 58/19
stenograph [1] 72/3	26/5 26/13 27/3 27/4	sworn [3] 32/14	telling [1] 12/5	61/16 64/15 65/19
stenographer [3]	28/7 81/13 102/21	32/16 108/10	tells [1] 18/6	66/3 66/14 66/21
34/15 39/21 97/7	Summary [1] 34/10 Summare [8] 32/11	symptoms [1] 55/6	ton [1] 65/5	73/1 71/6 77/21 70/23
steps [5] 94/2 94/4	32/15 32/19 35/14	40/22	tend [3] 51/10 51/11	80/9 81/15 81/21
94/6 100/8 100/23	53/21 63/22 97/8	svstem [21] 8/22	83/13	85/14 86/22 88/2
stewardship [1]	108/8	8/25 14/2 25/2 36/3	tended [3] 11/21	90/14 91/19 93/12
101/3 etick [2] 34/10 84/10	Suntharalingam [7]	37/12 61/8 65/14	11/22 51/4	93/17 93/17 94/19
still [5] 36/16 41/22	32/11 32/16 33/12	65/17 67/25 69/19	tends [1] 74/12	103/5 105/20
90/18 94/9 100/24	48/16 60/7 97/9	70/4 70/8 70/14 70/18	term [8] 35/10 36/18	theatre [1] 85/20
stockpiles [2] 106/11	108/10	81/1 91/24 95/5 96/21	38/15 40/8 71/20 83/9	theatres [1] 99/19
106/11	superimpose [1]	97/0 104/1	83/13 106/2	
stop [1] 6/16	Supplementing [1]	system [1] 21/24	terminology [2]	2012 42/0 42/1 42/0 ΔΔ/10 ΔΛ/12 51/12
straight [1] 105/21	49/13	35/23 37/22 37/25	39/20 40/3	52/1 52/21 52/21
strain [11] 1/17 1/19	supplies [1] 105/23	38/15 38/19 39/2	terms [31] 1/20 2/7	52/23 53/5 55/1 57/17
1/24 8/23 8/24 8/25	supply [5] 38/7 100/1	55/15 72/14 72/17	3/13 4/2 4/19 5/15 8/5	58/14 58/17 59/9 69/3
13/23 14/2 95/8 97/5	103/23 106/7 106/10	104/7 104/14	9/5 13/10 16/23 17/1	76/20 77/25 81/14
strands [1] 35/3	support [40] 26/7	т	18/7 18/8 19/9 20/4	81/16 82/6 84/14 87/2
stress [2] 86/13	26/15 26/17 26/25		20/4 20/7 20/12 20/23	87/2 88/19 89/14 91/2
95/11	27/1 27/7 27/8 27/9	tab [1] 84/22	30/20 46/15 50/12	95/22 95/23 97/4 97/5
stressful [1] 84/6	27/9 27/10 27/12	tablet [1] 04/22	51/6 56/21 56/24	99/3 100/22 102/19
stretch [2] 59/24	21/14 21/10 20/12	tabs [1] 84/22	02/24 00/7 77/24	thom [40] 4/8 11/25
87/17	29/8 37/18 37/22	tackle [1] 7/13	territory [1] 87/4	19/4 32/12 33/11 34/9
stretched [2] 56/15	37/22 37/23 37/24	take [22] 5/12 22/8	tertiary [1] 51/20	40/21 45/1 45/4 52/3
58/9 atratabas [1] 50/10	38/1 41/9 42/18 46/24	32/11 41/21 43/13	testimony [3] 78/3	53/4 54/9 54/20 55/9
stretching [4] 35/5	57/6 57/13 57/25 59/7	43/14 53/10 56/20	81/22 93/15	56/20 57/7 57/11
60/1 67/13 94/14	78/10 93/11 98/1 99/6	69/10 73/13 73/22	testing [1] 18/25	57/12 58/18 61/1 62/6
strip [1] 4/6	99/8 103/12 103/16	74/10 76/7 76/20	than [28] 2/1 7/17	62/7 68/5 68/19 68/23
strokes [1] 36/1	103/17	10/24 10/14 10/21 8//1 05/15 07/12	10/21 11/10 13/4	69/1 69/15 72/13 78/6
strongly [1] 4/11	56/16	99/11 106/22	24/15 24/24 26/20	01/10 02/1 02/2 04/0
struck [2] 36/5 36/10	supportive [3] 45/10	taken [14] 8/5 12/9	27/2 34/2 47/6 52/8	103/2 104/21 106/13
struggling [1] 72/3	54/11 105/2	13/6 34/18 53/23 54/1	60/21 63/24 63/25	106/19
studies [1] 45/13 study [5] /17/20 70/2	supports [1] 42/9	55/21 62/11 63/7 65/3	64/23 65/22 81/6	themes [1] 34/16
79/4 80/1 81/13	suppose [2] 48/2	94/2 94/6 100/9	82/25 86/7 89/6	themselves [7] 53/3
style [1] 96/20	81/12		101/25 102/2 102/3	55/1 80/11 82/5 94/12
subconscious [1]	supposed [1] 92/23	Takes [5] 42/10 59/13	102/7	95/18 102/12
7/22	supposing [1] 2//11	taking [2] 8/20 /2/2/	τnank [3/] 1/11 9/2	TIG 7/25 0/10 0/12
subjective [1] 88/3	Sule [∠1] 3/10 14/19 18/25 22/2 22/15	talk [9] 7/14 18/13	18/2 21/8 21/15 22/8	9/23 10/11 11/11
subjectively [1] 87/7	23/18 39/21 58/1 59/5	38/9 40/9 40/10 48/21	22/13 23/21 25/18	15/24 26/9 38/10 39/6
submissions [1] 24/6	70/7 77/20 89/3 89/20	67/17 83/13 95/20	25/19 25/20 25/21	42/1 42/25 44/11 49/4
SUDSEQUENTIY [1]	100/10 100/12 100/21	talking [7] 7/6 37/9	25/23 26/12 27/24	50/6 53/20 56/12 57/1
subset [2] 43/2 43/20	101/2 101/5 101/7	45/9 50/9 105/8	28/10 29/12 29/13	60/5 60/25 61/11
such [13] 8/23 22/5	101/7 101/11	105/21 105/24	29/14 29/17 31/23	62/21 63/5 63/9 64/2
30/11 35/15 44/12	surge [5] 61/12 64/11	targets [3] 101/11	31/24 31/25 32/2 32/9	64/15 64/18 65/12
45/13 45/17 55/6	04/21 05/22 85/18	tack [1] 104/23	32/1/39/542/19	05/18 06/16 06/22
58/23 86/21 89/2 99/1	surgery [1] 03/17	teach [1] 56/23	95/7	74/12 76/3 81/10 82/1
102/24	68/22	teaching [1] 66/15	Thank you [1] 18/2	82/19 83/24 84/19
		51.		

(44) statistically... - then

Т	76/1 76/20 79/15	90/16	40/12	45/7 45/17 45/18 46/6
then [11] 85/15	79/19 80/5 80/6 81/7	through [13] 15/2	toxicity [1] 102/10	46/21 46/25 47/17
85/16 87/4 87/25 88/1	81/8 84/4 89/8 90/8	38/9 42/6 42/24 45/1	traditional [1] 86/18	47/23 47/24 48/3
88/5 89/13 91/2 92/3	90/14 90/19 90/19	48/21 64/16 67/3	train [2] 59/14 99/20	triangulating [1]
99/23 101/7	90/22 90/23 90/24	74/12 75/23 76/8	trained [9] 49/7	27/12
theoretical [1] 61/12	92/1 92/2 92/20 94/1	94/22 102/19	49/12 50/13 51/5 51/5	tricky [1] 25/10
theory [2] 50/12 62/2	94/5 95/9 95/12 97/4	throughout [1] 91/8	51/9 55/14 58/23	trigger [1] 96/13
therapies [5] 37/24	99/6 100/3 100/7	Thursday [1] 107/1	59/15	triggering [1] 92/3
45/13 45/14 45/18	100/20 100/21 100/21	tide [1] 86/21	training [2] 59/23	triggers [1] 94/20
103/22	100/22 102/7 106/17	tie [1] 57/2	99/5	triple [1] 66/5
therapists [4] 49/17	they used [1] 37/5	tight [2] 39/9 41/7	trajectory [3] 45/14	trouble [1] 75/8
49/18 58/6 58/6	tney're [5] 2/11 44/10	tight-fitting [1] 39/9	48/6 50/14	true [7] 4/7 20/25
therapy [9] 41/19	49/14 / 6/25 82/2	time [39] 1/25 2/2	transter [26] 08/7	21/11 23/1 40/14
43/8 45/11 45/22	tney ve [1] 82/8	15/14 33/1 33/3 33/12	08/13 08/20 08/24	80/18 90/18
46/13 46/20 47/2	11119 [11] 11/19	30/12 30/20 44/11 45/22 56/8 56/11 58/8	72/14 72/10 74/10	truct [1] 34/1
104/6 105/16	54/20 57/5 57/17	43/22 30/0 30/11 30/0	7/12/14 72/19 74/19	87/15 80/7
therapy in [1] 45/11	72/18 78/7 80/20	69/21 70/15 71/15	78/10 78/22 78/25	trustoos [1] 33/19
there [202]	things [24] 3/24 4/1	77/4 77/5 77/10 77/13	80/19 80/22 81/4	trusts [4] 85/22
there's [27] 6/21	6/16 11/23 35/25	78/25 82/18 85/8	81/11 82/22 83/5	87/13 98/7 100/10
18/12 19/13 30/10	40/22 46/11 54/24	85/11 86/18 88/19	83/20 83/22 85/2	try [8] 30/2 34/13
40/11 46/18 49/19	56/25 57/12 58/2	88/22 90/9 96/24 97/1	transferable [2]	37/19 45/13 85/23
51/15 52/10 53/11	58/16 61/15 65/16	97/13 98/13 103/22	79/11 83/7	89/12 100/6 100/24
54/5 57/10 65/16	71/21 75/25 76/18	104/20 105/5 106/13	transferred [4] 43/8	trving [8] 11/5 25/15
66/23 /5/20 /6/25	77/6 78/5 81/3 85/10	timely [1] 54/18	73/18 76/9 80/8	26/8 28/17 45/15 87/7
77/15 81/22 82/22	93/20 104/9 106/12	times [14] 28/12	transferring [3]	93/22 105/1
83/3 83/24 85/13 87/9	think [119]	51/10 56/7 62/2 63/20	68/12 81/14 104/2	tube [1] 42/6
87/19 94/21 95/15	thinking [2] 13/23	63/21 64/5 65/8 65/14	transfers [25] 35/9	tubes [3] 38/16 38/20
90/10	54/6	67/9 67/15 69/14	68/11 69/13 69/20	44/8
	thinks [1] 75/12	92/10 100/15	71/4 71/8 73/9 73/14	tummies [1] 44/10
01/10	Thirdly [1] 54/19	tiny [1] 91/15	73/21 74/3 74/11	tummy [1] 44/14
thoroforo [3] 3/25	this [140]	tipping [1] 11/25	74/15 77/1 77/9 77/11	tummy-down [1]
41/2 76/19	those [73] 2/16 4/1	titled [1] 24/22	78/8 78/13 79/3 79/7	44/14
thereof [1] 38/8	4/6 4/7 5/18 8/7 8/10	today [5] 1/10 22/8	79/20 80/25 81/10	turn [5] 10/11 48/16
these [22] 3/25 7/4	13/6 13/7 13/8 13/10	32/6 35/13 87/20	82/11 83/4 85/22	68/9 97/7 97/16
14/6 14/16 14/20	13/19 13/20 13/23	together [9] 21/19	translate [1] 80/15	turned [3] 44/9 44/11
15/14 16/7 18/7 19/23	17/20 18/19 21/17	22/10 31/10 35/2 50/8	transmission [2]	44/13
19/25 20/19 22/10	24/15 25/16 26/6	51/10 / //21 80/22	16/13 16/14	turning [1] 43/15
47/12 47/13 50/5	26/15 26/19 26/25	80/23	transparency [1]	IV[1] 23/16
54/23 72/8 72/11	27/5 27/6 27/10 27/11	told [3] 22/20 53/21	14/23	twice [2] 64/5 91/9
72/25 81/3 84/23	21/14 21/18 28/11	103/13	transparently [2]	two [14] 4/23 3/18
106/15	20/10/20/19/29/5/29/7	tone [1] 102/23	23/19 31/19 transport [1] 70/17	16/22 20/1 31/7 40/21
they [107] 2/1 4/19	30/20 33/10 35/1 35/8	103/8	transport [1] 73/1	51/6 77/1 82/21 01/22
5/5 7/3 7/17 10/7 10/8	35/11 43/9 47/4 49/21	too [11] 2/14 2/14	trauma [1] 71/15	104/9
13/15 16/8 22/4 22/5	50/20 50/22 51/10	9/16 20/14 33/16 72/3	treated [3] 27/15	two's [1] 97/13
30/15 33/10 37/5	53/3 54/4 56/18 58/3	83/20 88/20 94/15	27/22 37/11	twofold [1] 97/21
37/23 39/4 40/16 44/5	59/8 62/4 62/8 63/24	104/23 104/23	treatment [9] 40/2	tving [3] 80/18 86/4
44/13 49/15 49/24	65/4 66/8 76/18 77/1	to al [2] AGIDE OALE	11/16 11/05 12/10	88/23
50/10 51/10 52/17		TOOK [3] 40/20 94/0	41/10 41/20 40/10	
1 3Z/19 3Z/Z 1 3Z/ZZ	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7	104/21	43/17 46/4 48/9 48/17	tying-in [1] 88/23
50/05 51/2 51/10	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2	104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2	43/17 46/4 48/9 48/17 73/2	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23
52/25 54/3 54/18	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5	104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8	43/17 46/4 48/9 48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12	took [3] 40/25 94/5 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9	43/17 46/4 48/9 48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23 45/4 52/25	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19	took [3] 46/25 94/5 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6	41/16/41/25/43/10 43/17/46/4/48/9/48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23/45/4/52/25 54/13/54/15/100/3	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2	took [3] 46/23 94/3 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 topics [2] 22/16	41/16/41/25/43/10 43/17/46/4/48/9/48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23/45/4/52/25 54/13/54/15/100/3 105/2	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22 58/15 58/16 58/21	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2 52/13 59/10 62/1	took [3] 46/23 94/3 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 topics [2] 22/16 34/17	41/16/41/25/43/10 43/17/46/4/48/9/48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23/45/4/52/25 54/13/54/15/100/3 105/2 trend [1] 15/18	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24 104/7 105/14 106/3
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22 58/15 58/16 58/21 58/25 61/6 62/1 62/2	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2 52/13 59/10 62/1 78/12 102/11	took [3] 46/25 94/5 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 topics [2] 22/16 34/17 total [4] 61/15 63/8	41/16 41/25 43/10 43/17 46/4 48/9 48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23 45/4 52/25 54/13 54/15 100/3 105/2 trend [1] 15/18 trends [1] 23/4	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24 104/7 105/14 106/3 106/15
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22 58/15 58/16 58/21 58/25 61/6 62/1 62/2 62/7 62/8 68/18 68/18	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2 52/13 59/10 62/1 78/12 102/11 thought [3] 36/8	took [3] 46/25 94/5 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 topics [2] 22/16 34/17 total [4] 61/15 63/8 63/15 95/16	41/16/41/25/43/10 43/17/46/4/48/9/48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23/45/4/52/25 54/13/54/15/100/3 105/2 trend [1] 15/18 trends [1] 23/4 triage [7] 26/5/26/13	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24 104/7 105/14 106/3 106/15 typo [1] 92/10
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22 58/15 58/16 58/21 58/25 61/6 62/1 62/2 62/7 62/8 68/18 68/18 68/24 69/13 70/14	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2 52/13 59/10 62/1 78/12 102/11 thought [3] 36/8 90/22 102/3	took [3] 46/25 94/5 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 topics [2] 22/16 34/17 total [4] 61/15 63/8 63/15 95/16 totality [1] 31/11	41/16/41/25/43/10 43/17/46/4/48/9/48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23/45/4/52/25 54/13/54/15/100/3 105/2 trend [1] 15/18 trends [1] 23/4 triage [7] 26/5/26/13 88/6/88/9/88/25/90/11	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24 104/7 105/14 106/3 106/15 typo [1] 92/10 U
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22 58/15 58/16 58/21 58/25 61/6 62/1 62/2 62/7 62/8 68/18 68/18 68/24 69/13 70/14 71/23 72/12 72/21	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2 52/13 59/10 62/1 78/12 102/11 thought [3] 36/8 90/22 102/3 thousand [1] 106/18	took [3] 46/23 94/3 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 topics [2] 22/16 34/17 total [4] 61/15 63/8 63/15 95/16 totality [1] 31/11 totalled [1] 9/20 touch [2] 7/10 10/16	41/16/41/25/43/10 43/17/46/4/48/9/48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23/45/4/52/25 54/13/54/15/100/3 105/2 trend [1] 15/18 trends [1] 23/4 triage [7] 26/5/26/13 88/6/88/9/88/25/90/11 92/8 triaged [4] 27/5	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24 104/7 105/14 106/3 106/15 typo [1] 92/10 U
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22 58/15 58/16 58/21 58/25 61/6 62/1 62/2 62/7 62/8 68/18 68/18 68/24 69/13 70/14 71/23 72/12 72/21 72/22 72/25 73/2 73/3	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2 52/13 59/10 62/1 78/12 102/11 thought [3] 36/8 90/22 102/3 thousand [1] 106/18 three [7] 4/19 11/7 46/5 63/20 64/5 70/15	took [3] 46/23 94/3 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 topics [2] 22/16 34/17 total [4] 61/15 63/8 63/15 95/16 totality [1] 31/11 totalled [1] 9/20 touch [2] 7/10 10/16	41/16/41/25/43/10 43/17/46/4/48/9/48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23/45/4/52/25 54/13/54/15/100/3 105/2 trend [1] 15/18 trends [1] 23/4 triage [7] 26/5/26/13 88/6/88/9/88/25/90/11 92/8 triaged [1] 27/5 triaged [5] 29/22	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24 104/7 105/14 106/3 106/15 typo [1] 92/10 U UK [14] 9/7 22/16 40/8 40/10 43/7 60/3
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22 58/15 58/16 58/21 58/25 61/6 62/1 62/2 62/7 62/8 68/18 68/18 68/24 69/13 70/14 71/23 72/12 72/21 72/22 72/25 73/2 73/3 73/3 73/4 73/14 75/7	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2 52/13 59/10 62/1 78/12 102/11 thought [3] 36/8 90/22 102/3 thousand [1] 106/18 three [7] 4/19 11/7 46/5 63/20 64/5 70/15 74/9	took [3] 40/25 94/5 104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 topics [2] 22/16 34/17 total [4] 61/15 63/8 63/15 95/16 totality [1] 31/11 totalled [1] 9/20 touch [2] 7/10 10/16 touched [2] 72/23	41/16 41/25 43/10 43/17 46/4 48/9 48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23 45/4 52/25 54/13 54/15 100/3 105/2 trend [1] 15/18 trends [1] 23/4 triage [7] 26/5 26/13 88/6 88/9 88/25 90/11 92/8 triaged [1] 27/5 triaging [5] 28/22 29/1 29/3 92/4 95/4	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24 104/7 105/14 106/3 106/15 typo [1] 92/10 U UK [14] 9/7 22/16 40/8 40/10 43/7 60/3 69/17 73/10 73/15
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22 58/15 58/16 58/21 58/25 61/6 62/1 62/2 62/7 62/8 68/18 68/18 68/24 69/13 70/14 71/23 72/12 72/21 72/22 72/25 73/2 73/3 73/3 73/4 73/14 75/7 75/14 75/14 75/21	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2 52/13 59/10 62/1 78/12 102/11 thought [3] 36/8 90/22 102/3 thousand [1] 106/18 three [7] 4/19 11/7 46/5 63/20 64/5 70/15 74/9 threshold [2] 83/5	104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 topics [2] 22/16 34/17 total [4] 61/15 63/8 63/15 95/16 totality [1] 31/11 totalled [1] 9/20 touch [2] 7/10 10/16 touched [2] 72/23 82/16 towards [2] 1/14	41/16 41/25 43/10 43/17 46/4 48/9 48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23 45/4 52/25 54/13 54/15 100/3 105/2 trend [1] 15/18 trends [1] 23/4 triage [7] 26/5 26/13 88/6 88/9 88/25 90/11 92/8 triaged [1] 27/5 triaging [5] 28/22 29/1 29/3 92/1 95/4 trial [12] 43/19 45/6	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24 104/7 105/14 106/3 106/15 typo [1] 92/10 U UK [14] 9/7 22/16 40/8 40/10 43/7 60/3 69/17 73/10 73/15 73/20 84/11 88/21
52/25 54/3 54/18 54/19 55/5 55/6 55/7 56/2 56/12 56/21 57/5 57/7 57/8 57/9 57/10 57/16 57/17 57/22 58/15 58/16 58/21 58/25 61/6 62/1 62/2 62/7 62/8 68/18 68/18 68/24 69/13 70/14 71/23 72/12 72/21 72/22 72/25 73/2 73/3 73/3 73/4 73/14 75/7 75/14 75/14 75/21	91/24 91/25 92/7 92/7 95/4 95/5 96/15 97/2 98/4 98/20 106/5 106/5 106/12 though [10] 6/19 34/16 36/22 38/5 48/2 52/13 59/10 62/1 78/12 102/11 thought [3] 36/8 90/22 102/3 thousand [1] 106/18 three [7] 4/19 11/7 46/5 63/20 64/5 70/15 74/9 threshold [2] 83/5	104/21 tool [2] 33/24 34/2 top [2] 61/12 76/8 topic [4] 23/22 48/9 97/10 105/6 105/6 topics [2] 22/16 34/17 total [4] 61/15 63/8 63/15 95/16 104/21 totality [1] 31/11 104/21 totalled [1] 9/20 10/16 touched [2] 7/10 10/16 touched [2] 72/23 82/16 towards [2] 1/14	41/16 41/25 43/10 43/17 46/4 48/9 48/17 73/2 treatments [8] 37/17 44/23 45/4 52/25 54/13 54/15 100/3 105/2 trend [1] 15/18 trends [1] 23/4 triage [7] 26/5 26/13 88/6 88/9 88/25 90/11 92/8 triaged [1] 27/5 triaging [5] 28/22 29/1 29/3 92/1 95/4 trial [12] 43/19 45/6	tying-in [1] 88/23 type [7] 11/19 42/23 47/3 93/21 98/1 99/7 99/11 types [9] 38/10 46/2 46/11 46/11 51/24 104/7 105/14 106/3 106/15 typo [1] 92/10 U UK [14] 9/7 22/16 40/8 40/10 43/7 60/3 69/17 73/10 73/15 73/20 84/11 88/21

(45) then... - UK

U	up [48] 6/10 6/11	variant [2] 11/8 21/10	W	104/1 104/15
UK [2] 96/21 103/5	9/20 13/19 21/10 34/9	variation [2] 70/22	wake [1] 82/5	ways [6] 38/2 38/6
ultimately [1] 55/19	35/16 38/17 38/17	93/7	Wales [15] 9/9 14/15	38/14 55/18 60/3
unable [2] 43/2 66/16	38/20 38/21 39/22	varies [1] 103/3	15/10 18/4 20/17 60/5	95/11
unclear [2] 73/11	43/10 49/10 49/11	55/11 70/12 105/11	60/15 62/11 71/9	we [227]
92/8	54/18 56/3 56/20	106/8	71/12 71/14 71/15	27/2 80/20
under [11] 8/23	59/19 61/12 62/15	various [9] 37/25	72/5 95/11 95/17	we'll [3] 39/18 84/19
	63/1 63/17 63/25	38/2 46/2 48/22 55/17	walking [1] 57/7	89/23
5//1/ 05/3 /8/9 83/15	64/11 65/1 65/3 65/12	69/23 92/16 93/8	want [30] 2/20 2/24	we're [19] 11/15
95/9 95/10 96/15	66/18 67/15 70/11	98/19	22/8 26/22 30/8 30/24	27/25 30/25 32/4
12/22 25/1 30/2 30/24	71/1 71/2 73/6 74/1	vary [4] 49/14 53/16	35/9 60/13 63/6 68/20	33/22 34/17 35/12
60/13 60/15 62/9	81/3 81/19 82/5 86/22	69/16 75/16	69/12 73/20 75/25	40/23 52/12 53/7
62/13 63/12 65/21	86/23 91/5 92/4 96/25	varying [1] 44/19	78/2 81/9 84/15 84/16	60/12 87/3 87/21
68/12 80/10 82/9	99/11	vast [1] 105/25	89/17 90/15 91/4	103/0 105/21 101/11
83/18 83/20 84/16	102/24	43/23 44/5 47/19	92/13 93/20 94/16	we've [28] 15/14
91/20 93/24 100/10	uptake [2] 18/24	ventilating [1] 43/24	94/20 96/10 96/11	15/19 24/9 29/8 34/21
105/23	18/25	ventilation [13] 27/6	wanted [6] 23/18	34/25 35/9 37/9 39/6
understanding [4]	upwards [1] 95/22	39/18 41/4 41/6 41/13	00/4 07/20 72/14 81/12 106/13	42/20 43/11 46/2
understood [3] 41/3	us [34] 4/20 10/12	41/16 41/22 42/1 42/4	wants [1] 30/18	48/19 52/13 55/16
71/9 100/21	11/4 12/5 15/9 18/6	42/16 42/17 47/5 47/8	ward [11] 38/25	58/4 61/16 67/14 68/8
undertake [1] 30/1	22/3 22/20 24/7 37/16	ventilator [8] 24/11	48/25 49/1 49/7 50/5	69/14 73/6 78/20
undertaking [1] 33/1	38/9 40/3 41/4 42/3	42/12 52/18 52/20	52/6 53/23 55/4 57/14	85/16 89/23 91/2 95/1
undertook [1] 14/13	42/21 40/0 48/21 53/21 53/22 57/6 50/4	79/18 80/14 98/21	57/15 57/19	90/11 100/4
undoubtedly [2]	60/15 63/2 64/7 67/1	ventilators [14]	ward-level [2] 48/25	Wednesday [1] 1/1
103/6 104/3	68/11 70/19 78/4 79/2	37/23 53/2 97/14	50/5	week [13] 2/25 8/22
unfair [1] 21/23	85/23 86/17 88/9	97/19 97/25 98/10	wards [4] 39/4 41/18	9/11 9/25 33/25 34/24
	102/14 103/13	98/22 99/1 99/7 99/16	52/8 87/10	59/21 60/25 74/8
unfamiliarity [1]	use [12] 40/12 47/1	99/23 99/24 104/17	was [197]	74/10 74/15 78/4
104/15	47/13 58/4 71/20 76/5	105/14	was [137] wasn't [7] 23/13	103/10
unit [19] 2/13 2/17	95/12 99/7 99/15	version [2] 5/25	57/12 65/15 71/16	weekly [2] 9/14 22/24
7/23 24/17 38/4 39/25	102/22 103/7 104/21	89/14	94/12 96/2 96/24	Weeks [1] 79/1
51/12 52/4 58/8 58/21	41/16 41/20 43/2	versus [2] 24/2 03/17	watch [1] 93/21	40/13 41/22 50/15
59/2 61/13 68/13	43/22 43/25 46/10	verv [43] 2/7 2/11	watching [1] 23/15	52/11 53/1 54/13
69/11 /5/14 / //19	65/15 71/3 71/7 80/3	2/13 3/2 3/3 18/6	water [1] 59/6	55/17 57/2 58/13
80/4 81/17 94/7	84/17 98/10 98/24	22/13 25/18 25/21	wave [23] 1/23 2/3	58/19 59/2 64/22
106/6 106/8	101/3 102/14 102/24	29/12 30/19 30/19	6/15 11/12 11/20 16/9	65/10 68/6 69/5 72/1
United Kingdom [3]	104/6 104/8	30/22 31/23 31/25	16/10 17/14 17/22	75/17 76/23 77/14
36/13 106/6 106/8	usefully [1] 82/12	32/2 35/14 36/16 44/9	67/16 67/24 74/20	77/25 78/6 78/8 81/2
units [24] 8/7 9/8	uses [1] 41/6	44/21 47/18 49/24	77/6 77/13 80/5 84/6	83/8 84/1 84/5 97/17
10/6 10/10 14/12 20/5	87/10 99/1 102/17	52/23 53/20 57/17	84/7	59/19 61/13 62/1
24/7 38/12 39/16 40/2	102/20	74/20 75/17 75/22	wave 1 [6] 6/7 6/15	97/22
40/21 44/19 50/24	usual [7] 13/25 14/6	75/24 76/18 78/4 82/9	67/16 / 4/20 / //6 84//	were [156]
02/9 03/14 07/0 07/24	63/24 84/24 85/18	83/19 91/14 95/18	waves [21] 4/23	weren't [5] 13/20
73/15 79/21 99/8	98/23 104/5	98/1 99/16 101/2	16/8 16/10 16/12	58/20 72/15 72/22
103/20	usually [9] 27/7	104/4 105/21	16/16 16/21 18/14	98/23
university [2] 32/22	38/20 39/14 41/17	via [1] 43/1	18/16 18/19 19/2	West [1] 33/13
33/13	44/10 66/6 82/2 102/1	Victor [1] 32/21	19/23 19/24 20/1 20/1	westminster [1]
unless [1] 89/21	utilised [1] 82/12	violenily [1] 1/0 virtual [1] 82/6	67/24 82/16 82/21	what [1/1]
unlike [1] 14/3		virus [4] 36/4 36/11	way [36] 8/1 9/5 9/17	what's [5] 51/1 86/8
unlikely [1] 106/9	V	47/14 47/16		93/10 94/1 96/8
85/10 85/18 87/4	vacancy [1] 59/18	vision [1] 90/18	20/4 20/2 31/8 42/8 42/10 51/16 51/10	whatever [2] 25/17
unquestionably [1]	vaccinate [1] 5/6	visit [1] 82/7	60/19 64/17 64/19	40/21
59/13	vaccination [3] 11/18	voluntarily [1] 58/25	65/15 80/2 80/23 81/9	wheels [1] 24/10
unravelled [1] 36/20	11/19 10/20	voluntary [1] 33/16	81/11 82/11 84/6	wnen [42] 2/13 2/14
until [3] 21/10 25/7	vaccines [3] 4/24 5/5	vulnerability [1] 19/2	84/21 86/11 87/1	18/13 20/9 21/10 22/1
106/25	45/13	16/19 18/20 31/21	91/21 93/17 93/22	33/25 36/5 36/10
unwell [2] 35/8 50/11	variability [1] 10/6	52/23	93/23 94/20 96/9 97/5	37/23 41/8 44/5 57/5

(46) UK... - when

W	Whitty [3] 3/2 33/25	witnesses [1] 32/10	ves [64] 2/3 3/8 4/7	
where [25] 50/10	59/21	women [4] 36/23	5/14 6/2 7/4 7/7 8/18	
witeri [25] 59/10	who [56] 1/24 2/21	36/25 37/2 37/11	9/22 10/2 14/6 14/20	
65/9 65/11 66/4 66/11	6/10 6/11 6/12 8/11	won't [2] 33/10 75/8	14/25 16/4 17/10	
66/22 75/7 75/12 80/5	11/22 12/22 13/6	wonder [1] 48/21	19/16 23/2 23/3 23/12	
82/19 83/20 85/7 86/5	13/16 16/19 17/22	word [3] 27/3 76/5	26/23 26/24 28/14	
87/9 88/17 90/8 93/20	18/9 18/19 18/20 25/7	93/19	29/12 36/21 40/23	
96/8 96/17 96/18	25/13 26/19 27/4 27/5	wording [2] 90/9	44/16 50/25 51/25	
104/14	27/6 27/19 27/21 28/5	90/19	55/24 56/1 59/13 60/9	
where [44] 3/10 3/12	28/16/29/5/29/7/29/8	words [1] 26/18	60/17 61/11 61/25	
5/5 7/23 10/7 10/8	29/10 29/21 33/8 37/2	WORK [18] 2/12 0/10	62/3 62/10 63/14	
21/4 28/15 30/13	139/17 43/10 43/23 13/21 11/1 16/1 17/10	32/25 35/11 16/6	65/23 67/7 68/15	
35/12 42/10 48/24	43/24 44/4 40/1 47/19 5//21 55/0 55/1/	5/2/2/ 57/10 57/10	69/22 73/25 76/15	
49/11 49/13 52/22	57/14 57/15 58/20	71/11 76/1 76/1 91/24	77/2 81/21 82/24	
57/7 61/7 61/15 61/17	58/24 60/7 80/7 81/19	99/4 104/19	83/18 83/24 84/18	
62/17 62/18 66/22	81/25 88/11 90/3 98/4	worked [1] 64/18	87/16 87/18 87/22	
68/18 / 1/3 / 1/6 / 1/23	101/24 102/24 103/20	worker [1] 81/24	89/22 90/6 90/12	
	who'd [1] 33/11	workers [1] 29/20	91/17 94/14 98/6	
01/301/101/002/1	who's [3] 25/22	working [7] 7/21	98/12 102/9	
04/24 00/9 07/0 00/10	57/20 78/21	58/15 85/10 94/17	yesterday [7] 1/4	
90/22 92/22 93/10	whole [11] 8/4 8/22	98/24 104/16 105/2	1/14 1/15 2/16 4/21	
whereas [3] 49/22	8/25 16/20 19/20 30/8	workload [2] 66/17	6/10 73/12	
67/9 84/7	54/6 59/7 96/12 99/20	83/15	you [348]	
whether [21] 8/3 8/4	106/8	workloads [1] 76/21	you'd [1] 48/25	
8/14 8/16 30/2 30/10	wholesale [1] 96/2	works [1] 39/11	you're [10] 3/10 4/9	
30/15 31/2 44/12 49/1	whom [1] 101/25	workstreams [1]	9/11 22/21 41/8 84/22	
54/20 55/22 66/17	whose [3] 43/2 88/19	98/19 98/19	8//58//68//2496//	
68/16 68/22 78/9	90/0 why [10] 11/1 22/1	68/16 106/13	you ve [12] 2/15 22/9	
79/16 79/18 93/7 94/1	23/19 27/23 52/16	worldwide [1] 46/15	72/23 73/24 76/21	
104/20	74/14 88/2 92/25	worry [1] 9/16	90/2 92/12 92/19	
which [72] 1/16 7/6	105/23 106/2	worse [1] 86/22	103/13	
	wide [2] 73/20 77/11	worsens [1] 102/10	vounger [1] 5/3	
15/31//111//13	wide-ranging [1]	worst [1] 67/20	your [57] 1/15 4/5	
24/21 25/10 27/7	77/11	worth [2] 38/21 58/19	7/10 7/11 8/15 10/15	
24/21 23/10 27/7	widely [2] 43/22	would [52] 6/24 7/1	13/13 22/24 23/13	
31/13 31/16 33/9 34/4	46/10	7/3 8/19 12/22 18/5	26/4 31/13 32/2 32/25	
34/5 35/22 35/25	wider [1] 21/21	19/7 21/18 23/1 24/8	33/1 33/10 34/4 34/18	
38/11 38/15 39/20	will [19] 32/10 32/11	25/1 25/4 28/19 28/21	35/2 35/18 36/22	
40/14 43/7 43/11	35/4 39/19 46/22 49/3	28/25 34/11 37/8	36/25 38/5 38/17	
43/15 43/25 45/2 45/2	51/17 53/2 55/8 55/14	45/14 50/23 52/5	38/20 39/10 39/10	
47/3 48/25 49/16 50/6	00/10/01/0/4/0/10/00/0	53/10 53/12 53/13	39/10 39/11 41/7 41/7	
50/18 51/4 51/7 51/11	02/0 00/2 00/0 90/0	60/21 62/5 62/6 63/25	42/9 42/11 44/24	
51/17 58/16 61/1	winter [9] 6/25 13/20	65/7 67/8 67/9 68/20	56/19 61/3 62/14	
61/17 62/20 64/9 65/2		69/6 71/22 75/25 77/6	66/18 67/11 67/22	
68/18 69/4 /1/18	85/9 85/17 86/21	85/10 89/13 89/13	68/9 68/9 69/17 78/15	
74/23 75/24 76/3	withdraw [2] 89/8	89/16 89/16 90/24	79/25 80/17 84/21	
00/22 01/2 02/11	90/23	93/20 96/9 96/20	92/18 93/21 97/17	
02/10 03/11 00/3 00/7	withdrawal [1] 88/7	96/22 97/11 99/18	98/19 100/11 100/12	
96/25 99/16 101/11	withdrew [1] 32/8	101/13 106/21	101/14 105/6	
104/16 106/8	within [19] 38/24	wouldn't [5] 6/24	7	
while [4] 62/15 63/1	39/24 41/13 44/17	18/6 58/16 84/8 96/15		
72/5 74/1	46/5 51/11 52/3 65/16	written [1] 56/3	Zero [1] 50/4	
whilst [4] 45/15 60/1	70/20 70/22 92/45	wrong [3] 92/20 94/9	zoomed_in [1] 5/25	
102/11 103/24	83/6 85/9 87/2 80/18	103/20		
white [16] 15/10	97/23	Y		
15/19 15/22 16/1 16/5	without [4] 57/24	vears [9] 1/5 10/22		
16/19 16/23 16/25	84/25 94/14 97/22	13/17 43/19 59/13		
17/4 17/9 21/11 23/10	witness [7] 7/11	59/22 70/15 100/17		
23/17 31/931/10	10/15 13/14 26/4 26/8	106/19		
51/17	32/8 103/10	yellow [1] 91/13		