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Second lockdown spells an unprecedented non-Covid health crisis

Charles Levinson 25 October 2020 • 8:00pm

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All theoretical models are wrong, some are just less wrong than others. Cast your minds back to March – [Professor Neil Ferguson's](#), now infamous, estimation of 500,000 deaths had just thrown the Government into disarray. Despite similar apocalyptic predictions in Sweden of 85,000 deaths, their government held their nerve. Their total of just under 6,000 fatalities shines an unflattering light on Ferguson's predictions. Sweden's overall excess mortality is lower than many countries, and whilst positive test results skyrocket on most of the Continent, the Swedes are on a milder trajectory.

As Doctors, one of the first things we are taught is 'to do no harm'. Listening to [Anders Tegnell](#), the chief epidemiologist in Stockholm, that was the overarching principle of their strategy. They understood their inability to anticipate the unintended consequences of lockdown; we did not.

Six months on and what have we learnt? There has been no real acceptance from No 10, many in the media or even Government

scientists about the [costs of lockdown](#). Listening to members of Sage talk about further restrictions as if there is no collateral damage could not be more frustrating.

None of their theoretical models can properly estimate the utter carnage restrictions have unleashed. Many of these professors and academics deal in hypotheticals and estimations. Doctors on the ground like me have to deal with the catastrophic lockdown fallout.

At my service Doctorcall we deal with the widest range of patients you could imagine and I make no exaggeration when I say this is the worst health crisis I have ever experienced — missed cancer diagnoses, suicides, misdiagnosed acute heart failure, untreated strokes.

Speaking purely from a health perspective there is every chance over the long term that the restrictions imposed may cause far more suffering than the virus itself. In no way am I underplaying the severity of Covid-19, I have dealt with the effects of that first-hand. My issue is with those who diminish the other health impacts of the first lockdown, as they continue to demand a second one.

My respect for those working in the ICU, clad in PPE and working tirelessly to save lives, could not be higher. However it's important for all of us to remember that Covid-19 is not the only disease which is killing people.

We've all had quite enough of gloomy scientists, but it's a sad reality that we are seeing just the tip of the iceberg. Government is scrambling to put the pan fire out, but at the same time the rest of the house is burning down. Many have already sadly died, but for countless others the damage of not seeking help will not

immediately cause serious harm, but it will be a slow burn.

Take heart attacks for example; earlier in the year admissions had almost halved. The problems were still happening, patients just weren't getting the treatment and without treatment the structure of the heart can often be irreparably damaged. Likewise with [missed cancer diagnosis](#) the lethal tumour will still be growing undetected and sadly later stage cancer is far harder to treat effectively. We will be feeling the effects of these disruptions for some time to come.

Do the epidemiologists and behavioural scientists we hear from so much fully understand the consequences of their restrictions? The non-Covid health crisis is a genuine national emergency, yet barely a syllable is registered in press conferences to highlight it.

Scientists need to get their head out of the sand and recognise the damage that continues to be done.

This Government should be diagnosed with severe tunnel vision. When we look back years from now we can fully understand the true extent of the lockdown's damage, history will not be kind. Our society torn in half, a shattered economy and [a non-Covid health crisis](#) unlike anything we've ever seen. Epidemiological models massively overestimated the potential number of Covid deaths, but they have tragically overlooked the deaths from other causes. The sooner we accept that fact and deal with it, the faster we can start repairing the damage.

Charles Levinson is CEO of Doctorcall