

COVID-19 Daily Briefing: June 18th

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1. Summary

POLICING

- **'LEGITIMACY'**: Due to the circumstances brought about by the pandemic, existing issues around policing have been exacerbated. How the police carry out their additional powers will impact police 'legitimacy' issues after the pandemic. This pandemic could be an opportunity to reframe the role of policing as protective and compassionate, particularly among communities that have become distrustful. However, early signs point towards the relationship between police and community being negatively affected by the pandemic.

DISEASE TRANSMISSION

- **PUBLIC SPACES**: A modelling study identifies restaurants, particularly those visited by low-income groups and those which tend to be smaller and more crowded, as enhancing the risk of superspreading events. Many disadvantaged groups have been unable to reduce their mobility as sharply as others, increasing transmission risk. Among other proposals, the authors suggest prioritising the distribution of masks and other PPE to disadvantaged populations.
- **AGE STRUCTURE**: Infection susceptibility of those under 20 is half that of the over-20s. This fact is particularly important, as older people are considerably more likely to present clinical symptoms, with ~70% of over-70s manifesting symptoms compared to only ~20% of 10- to 20-year-olds. This finding suggests that interventions aimed at children might have a relatively small impact on reducing SARS-CoV-2 transmission, particularly if the transmissibility of infections is low.
- **HOUSEHOLD TRANSMISSION**: A study in China showed that transmission from primary cases to household contacts has been estimated as 12.4% when they considered within an immediate family, and 17.1% when contacts were defined on a residential basis. Older individuals are the most susceptible to household transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

MISINFORMATION

- **GLOBAL ISSUE**: During the pandemic, there has been an increased demand for information, with 67% of people in 13 surveyed countries consuming more news. When paired with knowledge gaps surrounding COVID-19, this fact makes the general population more vulnerable to misinformation. Some misinformation is driven by politics (e.g. SARS-CoV-2 is a Chinese bioweapon) or by profit (e.g. two individuals in the USA were warned for selling a treatment despite having no evidence that it worked). Scientists should be proactive and assist journalists and fact-checkers by offering their expertise.
- **SCIENTIFIC PAPERS**: There has been a significant increase in the number of scientific research articles published during the pandemic. However, the quality of these articles has come into question due to an insufficient capacity for rapid peer review. When publishing is rushed, the consequences can be damaging and lead to the misinterpretation. Although the review process is slow, it ensures that available findings are more reliable and that the information behind medical advice is robust and accurate.

3. Quick Summaries

[Food security in uncertain times](#)

- **FOOD SECURITY:** *Editorial.* After incorporating COVID-19 into their models, the World Food Programme estimates that 265 million people in low- and middle-income countries will suffer from acute food insecurity by the end of 2020 (double the number at the start of the year), unless action is taken. Governments, humanitarians, and development actors need to work closely together to preserve critical nutrition assistance to the vulnerable, assist vulnerable countries with social protection systems, and keep trade corridors open.

[COVID-19, wet markets, and planetary health](#)

- **WET MARKETS:** *Comment article.* To avoid future pandemics, there have been calls for an international ban on wet markets. However, wet markets provide an important source of protein for people in low/middle-income countries, are more environmentally sustainable than industrial farming, and have numerous social advantages over industrial farming. Banning such markets may drive them underground, resulting in markets with even less regulation. A more effective approach would be to improve hygiene and regulatory standards, eliminate industrial-scale movement of live animals, and outlaw sales of wild animals known to be of risk for disease spread.

4. Longer Reading

[Delirium is a presenting symptom of COVID-19 in frail, older adults: a cohort study of 322 hospitalised and 535 community-based older adults](#)

- **NEUROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS:** *Preprint journal article.* An observational study has shown that delirium is a common symptom amongst more frail, elderly patients with COVID-19. Clinicians should suspect COVID-19 in cases of frail adults presenting with delirium and this symptom could be used for the early identification of the disease in this population.

[Risk of depression in family caregivers: unintended consequence of COVID-19](#)

- **CAREGIVERS:** *Preprint journal article.* UK caregivers are at a higher risk of depression than non-caregivers. While this group had higher levels of depression than non-caregivers prior to the pandemic, levels of depression during the pandemic have been exacerbated. However, access to therapy can significantly mitigate risks amongst the caregiving population

[Towards intervention development to increase the uptake of COVID-19 vaccination among those at high risk: outlining evidence-based and theoretically informed future intervention content](#)

- **VACCINE UPTAKE:** *Preprint journal article.* 86% of UK participants surveyed would be willing to take a COVID-19 vaccine. Uptake correlated positively with the perception that COVID-19 would persist for a long time, and negatively with the perception that the media has overestimated the risks. Mass media information should focus on health, emotional, social, and environmental consequences of the disease to increase vaccine uptake.