

# COVID-19 Daily Briefing: MAY 11<sup>th</sup>

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## 1. Summary

### EXIT STRATEGY

- **CONTACT TRACING**: A survey on contact tracing apps of people from multiple different countries, including the UK - the authors suggest that while public support for a contact tracing application is high (~70 %), concerns about cyber security and privacy, and a lack of trust in the Government, are the main deterrents for installing and keeping the app on their phones.

### MENTAL HEALTH

- **WORLDWIDE**: A study of 13,000 people worldwide analysed the mental health impact of COVID-19. The authors found that being female, pre-existing psychiatric conditions, and prior exposure to trauma increased the odds of having poorer psychological outcomes. Exercise, being able to share concerns with family or friends, and being a healthcare worker decreased the odds. 16.2% of respondents reported suicide ideation (suicidal thoughts, contemplating, or planning suicide).
- **USA**: An analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on unemployment, suicide, and excess mortality in the USA predicts over 7,000 suicides in the next year and a further half a million avoidable deaths over the next ten years as an indirect result of the pandemic.
- **SUBPOPULATIONS**: the authors of a pre-print study in France investigated sociodemographic and environmental determinants of wellbeing during early lockdown. People with disabilities, students, those with no access to outdoor space and those unable to work were amongst the higher-risk categories. These subpopulations must be identified and supported where possible.

### MEDICINE

- **NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**: Underlying conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes, have been shown to have a major impact on the outcomes of COVID-19 patients. The prevention and control of these non-communicable diseases have a key role in the response to the pandemic.
- **TREATMENTS**: Several antiviral drugs are being tested for efficacy against SARS-CoV-2, including a trial in Hong Kong which appears to reduce viral shedding and length of hospital stay using a therapy combining three drugs.

## 3. Quick Summaries

### COVID-19: a public health approach to manage domestic violence is needed

- **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**: *Correspondence*. There are concerns that restricted movement, loss of earnings, overcrowding, and anxiety have increased the incidences of domestic violence. Charities have produced guidance for survivors to report violence while keeping themselves safe. The authors of this correspondence suggest that domestic violence surveillance needs to be improved; e.g. through routine inquiry at primary care consultations and by linking police datasets with health datasets where possible.

### Beat COVID-19 through innovation

- **INNOVATION**: *Editorial*. In the US alone, the lockdown is costing \$18bn per day. Investment in research and development, for example focusing on vaccine development, therapies and other

solutions, should be prioritised. Such investments are likely going to be smaller than current economic losses and may yield more sustainable solutions.

#### [Both/and problem in an either/or world](#)

- **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:** *Editorial.* Overcoming COVID-19 cannot be done without international scientific collaboration, as comparative questioning/critiquing of the actions of other governments is essential. The identification of the drug Remdesivir as a potential treatment required collaboration between scientists in China and the US.

#### [COVID-19: PCR screening of asymptomatic healthcare workers at London hospital](#)

- **HEALTHCARE WORKERS:** *Correspondence.* Healthcare workers have been particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Continuous or near-continuous surveillance could provide insight into hospital-based transmission and reduce public fear of contracting the illness in these settings.

#### [COVID-19 in Brazil: “So what?”](#)

- **BRAZIL:** *Editorial.* President Bolsonaro has responded with “So what? What do you expect me to do about it?” when asked about the deepening public health crisis in Brazil. On top of actively sowing confusion and discouraging sensible measures of social distancing and lockdown by state governments, his government has made severe cuts to the science budget and social security.

## 4. Longer Reading

#### [Impact of essential workers in the context of social distancing for epidemic control](#)

- **ESSENTIAL WORKERS:** *Pre-print of a journal article.* A modelling study shows that essential workers are at an elevated risk of infection, and that increases in the number of people considered to be essential workers will have to be accompanied by more stringent controls on the rest of the population, as to successfully contain the pandemic.

#### [Bidirectional contact tracing is required for reliable COVID-19 control](#)

- **CONTACT TRACING METHOD:** *Pre-print of a journal article.* A new contact tracing method (‘bidirectional contact tracing’) is examined. This method identifies ‘infector individuals’ (those who may have infected a newly infected person), in addition to potentially infected individuals. A combination of digital and manual tracing are proposed. This method is much more likely to contain an outbreak than forward tracing (working out who someone might have infected) alone, especially under more pessimistic assumptions about the transmissibility of the virus.