

Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

31st Jul 2020

Isolation Tips

Wellbeing levels fell during the pandemic but improved under lockdown, new research shows

From June 2019 to June 2020, YouGov surveyed a nationally representative sample of around 2,000 respondents each week across Great Britain. It asked them to report on 12 mood states: happiness, contentment, inspiration, optimism, energy levels, sadness, apathy, stress, boredom, frustration, loneliness and fear. Data from the survey suggests that the pandemic had a strong negative effect on people's mood, but that this quickly returned to baseline after the introduction of lockdown. Boredom, loneliness, frustration and apathy increased with the introduction of lockdown, but so did happiness, optimism, contentment and even inspiration. Meanwhile, sadness, fear and stress all fell. <https://theconversation.com/wellbeing-levels-fell-during-the-pandemic-but-improved-under-lockdown-new-research-shows-143367>

Britain's lockdown blitz spirit 'is starting to fray', says study

Britons were brought together in the first weeks after lockdown both within their communities and nationally. Clap for Carers also played a major role in community spirit with nearly seven in ten people taking part by May. But unity began to dissipate by mid-May amid a perception that young people were not socially distancing. Support for Black Lives Matter was 'tempered by concerns about public health and violence on the protests.'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8575379/Britains-lockdown-blitz-spirit-starting-fray-says-study.html>

Cummings trips damaged UK lockdown unity, study suggests

The scandal over Dominic Cummings' trips to and around Durham during lockdown damaged trust and was a key factor in the breakdown of a sense of national unity amid the coronavirus pandemic, research suggests. Revelations that Cummings and his family travelled to his parents' farm despite ministers repeatedly imploring the public to stay at home - as exposed by the Guardian and the Daily Mirror in May - also crystallised distrust in politicians over the crisis, according to a report from the thinktank British Future. The findings emerged in a series of surveys, diaries and interviews carried out over the first months of the pandemic as the public got to grips with profound changes to their habits, relationships and lifestyles.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jul/30/cummings-saga-damaged-uk-unity-covid-19-study-suggests>

Coronavirus: Self-isolation rules changed as government scientists say people may be infectious longer than seven days

Chief medical officers announce the new rule as the UK braces for winter amid warnings of a "second wave" brewing in Europe. Self-isolation rules are being changed as scientists warn people with coronavirus may be infectious for longer than previously thought. The chief medical officers of all four UK nations said anyone with symptoms or a positive test result should isolate for 10 days instead of seven. They changed their advice as the country braces for winter and warnings of a "second wave" of COVID-19 brewing in Europe.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-self-isolation-period-for-those-with-covid-19-symptoms-to-be-extended-to-10-days-12038836>

Coronavirus: Home visits banned in parts of northern England

The new lockdown rules for parts of northern England come nearly four weeks after restrictions were

eased across the country, and people were allowed to meet indoors for the first time since late March. More than four million people in Greater Manchester, Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Rossendale, Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees will be affected by the tightening of restrictions. The measures, which came into force at midnight, mean different households will not be allowed to meet in homes or private gardens, but individual households will still be able to go to pubs and restaurants.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53602362>

'Heartless and reckless' to force shielding people back to work, says TUC

Frances O'Grady, the TUC's general secretary, told the Guardian: "It would be heartless and reckless for employers to demand the immediate return of shielding workers. After self-isolation for a number of months, requiring shielding workers to immediately travel to workplaces may cause anxiety and distress. "The government must make clear to employers that they cannot give shielding workers unreasonable ultimatums to return to workplaces. The job retention scheme is in place until at least October, so employers must continue using it if home working is not an option. "And the government should make clear that furlough will still be an option after October for shielding workers who cannot safely travel to workplaces or who may be subject to a local lockdown."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/30/forcing-shielding-people-back-to-work-heartless-and-reckless-says-tuc>

Hygiene Helpers

Coronavirus: Under-5s spread infection as easily as older kids

Children under five years old can transmit the novel coronavirus just as easily as older kids can, a new study suggests. Researchers found that although youngsters only develop a mild illness, they have viral loads in their noses up to 100 times greater than adults. The team, from Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, says the ability of younger children to spread COVID-19 has likely been under-recognized because most schools and daycares closed by late March due to the pandemic. Children kindergarten-age or younger had viral loads between 10-fold and 100-fold greater amount in their upper respiratory tract. 'We found that children under five with COVID-19 have a higher viral load than older children and adults, which may suggest greater transmission, as we see with respiratory syncytial virus, also known as RSV,' said lead author Dr Taylor Heald-Sargent, a pediatric infectious diseases specialist at Lurie Children's. 'This has important public health implications, especially during discussions on the safety of reopening schools and daycare.'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-8576665/Children-younger-five-spread-coronavirus-just-easily-older-kids.html>

As a Covid-19 survivor, I don't have blind faith in health experts. Here's why

When WHO officials walked back their statement that asymptomatic transmission was "very rare", Andy Slavitt, a former acting administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, tweeted that WHO officials should "stop expressing certainty when you don't have it.". It is equally important that the media and public retain a critical eye when seeking to understand information from WHO officials. Scientists have been criticized before for being bad communicators, but as Slavitt points out, "public health communication isn't ancillary to public health. It is the central component in battling it." Unfortunately, a knowledge gap still exists between scientists, public health officials and the public they are supposed to serve.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/30/as-a-covid-19-survivor-i-dont-have-blind-faith-in-health-experts-heres-why>

The U.S. Can Control Covid Without a Second Lockdown

It's also time to stop blaming each other — which is tearing us apart. As Sandman pointed out, "all public health failures are policy failures." If people don't follow a policy, it's because it's the wrong

policy or was badly communicated. This is what policy makers are supposed to think through. A few brave souls in the public health community, trying to help people find a level of much-needed balance, have come forward to say that some activities are relatively low risk. Being around other people outdoors is safer than indoors, and short exposures are safer than long ones. If everyone wears a mask, getting a haircut is OK. Getting exercise outdoors is reasonable. Outdoor restaurant tables are safer than indoor ones.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/gadfly/a-smart-u-s-coronavirus-plan-can-avoid-a-second-shutdown>

Wisconsin Mandates Masks, Declares Public Health Emergency

Wisconsin's governor on Thursday ordered residents wear masks when indoors and not in a private residence, joining dozens of other U.S. state leaders mandating face coverings to slow the spread of coronavirus. In a statement, Governor Tony Evers said Wisconsin was seeing an increase in significant community spread and rise in COVID-19 cases which required he declare a new public health emergency and require face coverings statewide.

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/07/30/us/30reuters-health-coronavirus-wisconsin.html>

After the surge, the psychological impact of Covid-19 is hitting home

Having dealt with the months-long terror of crammed ICUs, unavailable PPE and the fear of getting infected, the coronavirus crisis is taking its toll on healthcare workers' mental health

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/coronavirus-ptsd-doctors-nurses-mental-health>

Dutch government will not advise public to wear masks: minister

The Dutch government on Wednesday said it will not advise the public to wear masks to slow the spread of coronavirus, asserting that their effectiveness has not been proven. The decision was announced by Minister for Medical Care Tamara van Ark after a review by the country's National Institute for Health (RIVM). The government will instead seek better adherence to social distancing rules after a surge in coronavirus cases in the country this week, Van Ark said at a press conference in The Hague. "Because from a medical perspective there is no proven effectiveness of masks, the Cabinet has decided that there will be no national obligation for wearing non-medical masks" Van Ark said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-netherlands/dutch-government-will-not-advise-public-to-wear-masks-minister-idUKKCN24U2UJ>

Scotland expected to have Covid-19 tracker app by autumn

Scotland is at an "advanced stage" in developing a coronavirus proximity tracing app to be available by the autumn, the First Minister has said. Nicola Sturgeon revealed she hopes to give more details about the software soon after a question from Gillian Martin MSP on Thursday.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/scotland/scotland-expected-to-have-covid-19-tracker-app-by-autumn/>

Australian state makes masks compulsory as COVID-19 spreads

Australia's coronavirus hot spot, Victoria state, will make wearing masks compulsory after reporting a record 723 new cases on Thursday, mostly among the vulnerable residents of aged care homes. Masks have been compulsory for the past week in the state capital, Melbourne, Australia's second-largest city with 5 million people, and a neighboring semi-rural district. Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said masks or similar face coverings will become compulsory across the state starting late Sunday. Residents around the city of Geelong will not be allowed to have visitors in their homes from late Thursday in a second measure aimed at slowing the spread of the virus from the city.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/australian-state-makes-masks-compulsory-082906401.html>

Community Activities

Community Circles: The lockdown lifesavers connecting hundreds across Lancashire

When you're an organisation dedicated to helping people connect and come together to explore

hobbies, interests, and experiences together, a global pandemic resulting in lockdown and social distancing can safely be described as a bit of an issue.

<https://www.lep.co.uk/news/people/community-circles-lockdown-lifesavers-connecting-hundreds-across-lancashire-2928110>

Working Remotely

Want To Live And Work In Paradise? 7 Countries Inviting Americans To Move Abroad

Back in the good-old pre-pandemic days, many people fantasized about becoming a digital nomad and quitting their 9-to-5 office job in order to live and work remotely in a dreamy international destination. Now, for most workers, being a digital nomad is no longer a luxury, but rather, a requirement of the job. Before the coronavirus took hold, only around 7% of US employees regularly worked remotely. These days, at least two-thirds of Americans are working from home, according to Gallup research—and many don't ever want to go back to the old ways of doing business.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurabegleybloom/2020/07/30/live-work-remote-move-abroad-coronavirus/>

300 council staff still working from home

Just over 300 Fermanagh and Omagh District Council staff are continuing to work remotely due to the coronavirus pandemic. Figures released by the council show that while 308 people are working from home, there are 304 staff members continuing their employment as usual on site. Significantly, the number of staff who have been furloughed has decreased. In May the council announced that 200 staff had been placed under the British Government's Job Retention Scheme. But that figure has since been reduced and currently stands at around 169. Director of corporate services and governance, Celine McCartan, told a meeting of the council's policy and resources committee that the numbers had marginally changed.

<https://ulsterherald.com/2020/07/30/300-council-staff-still-working-from-home/>

Puget Sound government employees to work remotely until 2021 due to virus

Officials say many local government employees around the Puget Sound area will work from home until 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. The Seattle Times reports leaders of several local cities, counties and ports "are taking a united approach to slow the spread of COVID-19 and maximize physical distancing by extending teleworking for eligible employees until 2021." Among the jurisdictions allowing employees to work from home are King, Pierce and Snohomish counties, the cities of Everett, Kenmore, Redmond, Seattle, Shoreline and Tacoma, and the ports of Seattle and Everett

<http://komonews.com/news/coronavirus/government-employees-to-work-remotely-until-2021-due-to-virus>

Coronavirus: Why some people want to keep working from home

Bedrooms, kitchen counter-tops and dining tables became the new way of working for millions of people. According to the ONS, 30% of adults in the UK were exclusively working from home at the start of July. From 1 August, employers in England can allow staff back into offices at their own discretion when they feel it's safe to do so. But now it's time to return to those communal workplaces, research from Eskenzi suggests that 91% of the UK's office workers would like to work from home at least part of the time. So why are so many office staff keen to keep working from home?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53580656>

Virtual Classrooms

Coronavirus: Hundreds more families homeschooling after lockdown

More families are choosing to homeschool their children since New Zealand came out of the coronavirus lockdown. Ministry of Education figures show a surge in homeschooling applications since alert level 4 in March, with 552 received between then and May. Three hundred applications

were received in June – the highest recorded in any month this year. In February, when school started, only 174 applications were received.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/parenting/122267059/coronavirus-hundreds-more-families-homeschooling-after-lock-down>

Survey data reveal impact of COVID-19 on perceptions of online education

If the world weren't in the grip of a pandemic, the choice to study online, in person or something in between would be roughly the same among men and women, according to recent survey results. Factoring in COVID-19, however, paints a different picture -- one where women are much less likely than men to choose to study in person, and much more likely to pick a fully online education option.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/07/30/survey-data-reveal-impact-covid-19-perceptions-online-education>

Canberra universities welcome students to real and virtual classrooms in semester two

The University of Canberra campus is slowly coming back to life as students and academics prepare for the start of semester two in the COVID-19 world. When coursework begins on Monday, there won't be the usual large lectures and tutorials teeming with students. There will be hand sanitising stations and extra cleaning of shared spaces. Deputy vice-chancellor academic Professor Geoff Crisp said large lectures and classes that would exceed four people per square metres would be delivered online while smaller classes that could respect physical distancing rules would go ahead on campus.

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6855372/canberra-universities-welcome-students-to-real-and-virtual-classrooms-in-semester-two/>

University of Guam to offer most courses online

Due to surges in COVID-19 cases, the University of Guam will offer most courses online for the upcoming semester. "In certain cases, limited-contact hybrid courses will be available and, only when it is absolutely required, face-to-face classes will be offered," Anita Enriquez, senior vice president and provost at the University of Guam, said in a memo. The university instituted enrollment caps for online classes and will continue standardized courses through Moodle, a free learning management system. Faculty and staff will complete professional development via an online module, according to the memo.

<https://www.guampdn.com/story/news/local/2020/07/30/university-of-guam-courses-online-uog-remote-learning-classes/5542591002/>

Coronavirus: NYC reveals more health and safety protocols for schools

After announcing a plan earlier this month to reopen schools partially in-person, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza have now shared more details on their health and safety protocols, including testing and tracing measures. Students and staff who are feeling sick will be required to stay home and asked to get tested if their symptoms are consistent with COVID-19. If there is a confirmed case in a classroom, all students and teachers in close contact with that person will have to self-quarantine for 14 days, and the classroom will transition to remote learning during that time. A school will close and go fully virtual for 14 days if a link is unable to be determined between at least two cases.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/coronavirus-updates-global-cases-covid-19-surge-million/story?id=72070852>

Bracing for COVID-19 in school, Phillipsburg approves hybrid start to year with coronavirus protections

The 2020-21 school year is set to begin with a hybrid of in-class and online instruction in the Phillipsburg School District due to the coronavirus. The board of education on Thursday night approved the detailed return-to-school plan crafted by Superintendent Gregory Troxell with input from focus groups, committees and questionnaires.

<https://www.lehighvalleylive.com/coronavirus/2020/07/bracing-for-covid-19-in-school-phillipsburg-approves-hybrid-start-to-year-with-coronavirus-protections.html>

Public Policies

U.K. Has Europe's Worst Surge in Deaths During Pandemic, Study Says

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has linked Britain's high toll to record-keeping variances among nations. But a government report shows deaths really have been higher than in neighboring countries.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/world/europe/UK-deaths-coronavirus-europe.html>

UK worried about second wave in Europe, more quarantine measures possible

Britain reported its highest number of new COVID-19 infections in more than a month on Thursday, as ministers fretted about a second wave of cases in Europe and warned more quarantine restrictions were possible. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said COVID-19 was under some measure of control in Britain, but a resurgence in some European countries showed the pandemic was not over. "It is absolutely vital as a country that we continue to keep our focus and our discipline, and that we don't delude ourselves that somehow we are out of the woods or that that is all over, because it isn't all over," he said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain/uk-worried-about-second-wave-in-europe-more-quarantine-measures-possible-idUKKCN24V0PL>

Coronavirus: Too soon for Bradford lockdown easing

It is "too soon" for further easing of lockdown measures in Bradford, the city's council leader has said. Susan Hinchcliffe's warning comes as coronavirus infection rates in the city rose to 48 per 100,000 of population for the week ending 25 July. Ms Hinchcliffe is in talks with the government about if the city should move forward with an easing of restrictions on 1 August. She said holding back could help avoid the imposition of a city-wide lockdown. Venues such as bowling alleys and boxing gyms are due to reopen from 1 August, while those extremely vulnerable people who have been shielding will no longer need to

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-53594031>

Poland may reimpose some curbs as daily COVID-19 cases jump

Poland may have to reimpose quarantine for travellers from countries such as Spain to contain the coronavirus, its prime minister said on Thursday after the country reported its highest daily number of infections so far. Poland has reported fewer cases of COVID-19 than some other European countries, but in recent days the number of new infections has climbed, with the health ministry blaming outbreaks in coal mines and social gatherings.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-poland/poland-may-reimpose-some-curbs-as-daily-covid-19-cases-jump-idUSKCN24V1GN>

I've eaten at restaurants, gone to a mall and attended concerts. That is life in France.

While the outbreak occurred primarily in only two parts of France, French President Emmanuel Macron imposed a severe, nationwide lockdown on March 16. And during that lockdown, the government put extensive testing and contact tracing in place. Almost exactly two months later, France mostly reopened. And for the last two and a half months, the country has functioned in a primarily open status with around 500 new cases per day and only about 450 deaths in the last month.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/07/30/us-could-learn-frances-response-covid-19/>

France's new COVID-19 cases hit one-month peak

The number of new coronavirus infections in France rose by 1,392 on Wednesday, the highest daily tally in a month and a figure likely to fuel fears of a second wave of the disease despite officials downplaying such a scenario.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/frances-new-covid-19-cases-hit-one-month-peak/ar-BB17I0mp>

Bali welcoming visitors after 4-month lockdown

Indonesia's resort island of Bali has reopened to domestic tourists after an almost four-month lockdown for the coronavirus pandemic. Bali's governor has been impatient to revive the economy and began easing restrictions on public activities three weeks ago. Under the easing that took effect Friday, Indonesians visiting Bali will face stringent rules at hotels, restaurants and beaches. Foreign tourists will be allowed on the island beginning Sept. 11. Tourism is the main source of income for Bali, which had 6 million tourists from abroad and 10 million from Indonesia last year. The pandemic has caused the numbers to dive.

<https://apnews.com/63c7f7300845e008abd08d4df6e8c894>

Australia Sets Virus Record as Melbourne Lockdown Struggles

Australia has suffered its worst day of coronavirus infections with Victoria state recording 723 new cases, dashing hopes that a lockdown in the city of Melbourne was bringing the outbreak under control. Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews told reporters that 13 more people had died, bringing the state's death toll to 105. Infections had gradually decreased earlier this week, with the state recording 295 new cases on Wednesday, raising hopes the six-week lockdown of the city of 5 million people was working.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-30/australia-braces-for-virus-record-as-second-lockdown-struggles>

Students and Teachers Exposed to COVID-19 Can Go to School in Utah

If there was any doubt that the return to school is going to be dicey, look no further than Utah. The state announced Thursday that students and teachers will be allowed to go to school even if they have been directly exposed to the coronavirus, as long as they are not symptomatic and no one at home has tested positive, the Salt Lake Tribune reported. It's well-established that people can have and spread the virus without symptoms. Utah is also setting guidelines for when schools must shut down after an infection—and the health department says they can stay open unless 15 people test positive in a short period of time.

https://www.thedailybeast.com/students-and-teachers-exposed-to-covid-19-can-go-to-school-in-utah?via=twitter_page

Coronavirus may cost Latin America and Caribbean a decade: ECLAC

The coronavirus crisis could set back Latin America and the Caribbean by a decade as countries endure faltering economies and rising poverty, the U.N. economic commission for the region and the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Thursday. Poverty in the region is forecast to climb 7 percentage points compared with last year to engulf an additional 45 million people, according to a report by the WHO and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The number of unemployed people is expected to rise to 44 million, an increase of more than 18 million compared with last year, while the region's economy is projected to shrink 9.1%, the report said. "The Americas are at risk of losing years of health gains in a matter of months. This is tragic," Carissa Etienne, director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), said in a news conference. A presentation with highlights from the report warned that the coronavirus pandemic could cause a "lost decade" if income per capita drops to levels not seen since 2010, as forecast.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-latam/coronavirus-may-cost-latin-america-and-caribbean-a-decade-eclac-idUKKCN24V3FG>

More Than One Million Chileans Seek to Withdraw Pensions Amid Pandemic

More than 3 million Chileans on Thursday asked to withdraw a portion of their pension funds as a controversial law took effect allowing citizens to tap into retirement savings to buffer the economic impacts of the coronavirus. Long lines formed in Santiago outside the offices of Pension Fund Administrators (AFP) as Chileans sought to take advantage of the new law. The emergency measure allows those with savings to withdraw up to 10% of their pensions. Chile's Superintendent of

Pensions said in a statement 3,024,347 people had asked to withdraw their share by 5 p.m. local time. The websites of several of the fund administrators collapsed Thursday amid the deluge of requests, prompting an apology from the companies.

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/07/30/business/30reuters-health-coronavirus-chile-pensions.html>

Government to Announce Lifting of Lockdown in Lleida, Spain

Lleida and six municipalities of the region of Segriá in Spain are counting the hours to the relaxation of the lockdown restrictions. The local government will announce the lifting of restrictions shortly, starting at four o'clock this afternoon, the mobility ban will be officially lifted. Shops will be allowed to reopen at 50 per cent capacity, as are bars and restaurants, but food can only be eaten on the terraces until 12 midnight. Meetings are limited to only 10 people because, although the contagion curve has been cut in half, authorities want to keep the pressure up. These same restrictions will apply to Barcelona and its metropolitan area.

<https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2020/07/30/government-to-announce-lifting-of-lockdown-in-lleida-spain/>

Tokyo Won't Rule Out State of Emergency If Virus Spread Worsens

Tokyo will ask bars, restaurants and karaoke stores to shorten their business hours as officials race to stop a resurgent spread of the coronavirus in the Japanese capital, with Governor Yuriko Koike threatening to declare a state of emergency if the situation doesn't improve. Shops will be asked to shut at 10 p.m. from August 3 until the end of the month, restrictions since the capital lifted all limits in June. Tokyo reported 367 cases on Thursday, one higher than the previous record.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/onweb/japan-mulls-virus-restrictions-as-tokyo-braces-for-higher-cases>

Maintaining Services

Covid-19: Scottish gyms and stadiums likely to stay closed until September

Scottish sports stadiums, gyms and swimming pools are not likely to reopen until the middle of September, assuming infection levels are low enough by then, Nicola Sturgeon has announced. In a statement updating MSPs on her plans to ease lockdown, the first minister said outdoor concerts and funfairs were likely to reopen in a little over three weeks time, on 24 August. Sturgeon confirmed Scotland's schools would open full-time from 11 August, with all schools expected to resume by 18 August, without any widespread enforcement of physical distancing among children. Ministers were also releasing another £30m to hire extra teachers, she said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jul/30/covid-19-scottish-gyms-and-stadiums-likely-to-stay-closed-until-september>

All GP consultations should be remote by default, says Matt Hancock

All GP appointments should be done remotely by default unless a patient needs to be seen in person, Matt Hancock has said, prompting doctors to warn of the risk of abandoning face-to-face consultations. In a speech setting out lessons for the NHS and care sector from the coronavirus pandemic, the health secretary claimed that while some errors were made, "so many things went right" in the response to Covid-19, and new ways of working should continue. He said it was patronising to claim that older patients were not able to handle technology. The plan for web-based GP appointments is set to become formal policy, and follows guidance already sent to GPs on having more online consultations

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jul/30/all-gp-consultations-should-be-remote-by-default-says-matt-hancock-nhs>

EU warns of risk of syringe shortages for possible COVID-19 vaccine

The European Union has warned member states of the risk of shortages of syringes, wipes and protective gear needed for potential mass vaccinations against COVID-19 and urged them to consider joint procurement, according to an EU document. The bloc has also asked EU governments

to consider jointly buying more shots against influenza and increase the number of people vaccinated to reduce the risk of simultaneous flu and COVID-19 outbreaks in the autumn. No vaccine against COVID-19 has yet been fully developed or approved, but countries around the world are seeking to secure supplies of potential shots so that, if and when vaccine candidates prove effective, immunisation campaigns can start quickly. Some countries hope that may be as early as this year. Should a shot prove effective, manufacturing and distribution issues could become hurdles.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-eu-syringes/eu-warns-of-risk-of-syringe-shortages-for-possible-covid-19-vaccine-idUKKCN24V1XK>

After the surge, the psychological impact of Covid-19 is hitting home

Having dealt with the months-long terror of crammed ICUs, unavailable PPE and the fear of getting infected, the coronavirus crisis is taking its toll on healthcare workers' mental health

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/coronavirus-ptsd-doctors-nurses-mental-health>

Healthcare Innovations

Hancock: NHS needs to 'double down' on tech advances after Covid-19

Speaking about the future of healthcare at a Royal College of Physicians event, Hancock told the audience better technology was needed for better healthcare. "We want to double down on the huge advances we've made in technology within the NHS and social care, because it's not really about technology, it's about people," he said. The health secretary also said in his speech that digital services should be used to keep patients out of hospital when appointments aren't essential, free up clinicians time, and better connect people with their care. Referencing difficulties in developing new technology, Hancock added they don't make it "any less valuable". "To promote collaboration and change we need more transparency, better use of data, more interoperability and the enthusiastic adoption of technological innovation that can improve care," he said. "This crisis has shown that patients and clinicians alike, not just the young, want to use technology.

<https://www.digitalhealth.net/2020/07/hancock-nhs-needs-to-double-down-on-tech-advances-after-covid-19/>

Russia plans 'world's first approved' COVID-19 vaccine by Aug. 12

Russia plans to register a vaccine for the novel coronavirus by Aug. 10-12, clearing the way for what its backers say would be the world's first official approval of an inoculation against the pandemic. The drug, developed by Moscow's Gamaleya Institute and the Russian Direct Investment Fund, may be approved for civilian use within three to seven days of registration by regulators, according to a person familiar with the process, who asked not to be identified because the information isn't public. The Gamaleya vaccine is expected to get conditional registration in August, meaning trials will still need to be conducted on another 1,600 people, Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said in a televised meeting of officials with President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday. Production should begin in September, she said.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/07/30/world/science-health-world/russia-worlds-first-approved-vaccine/>

This Is Where We're At With Treatments For Covid-19 Right Now

With a vaccine not looking likely this side of Christmas, scientists and health experts are scrabbling to find existing drugs that can help fight against the worst effects of Covid-19. The Recovery trial in the UK has already unearthed one game-changing drug, dexamethasone, and has crossed two other treatments off the list after they didn't show any clinical benefits. The first is hydroxychloroquine, the drug fiercely advocated for by Donald Trump despite studies showing it's not effective; the other is lopinavir-ritonavir, a drug commonly used to treat HIV.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/treatments-for-covid-19-explained_uk_5f202daec5b638cfec4a41a3

Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine performs well in early tests

A single dose of Johnson & Johnson's experimental coronavirus vaccine elicited "robust" protection

against Covid-19 when tested on animals, with clinical human trials now under way in the US and Belgium. The pre-clinical data, published in Nature magazine, show the drugmaker's dose successfully prevented subsequent infection in non-human primates, spurring so-called "neutralising antibodies". It also provided complete or near-complete protection against Covid-19 in their lungs. "The findings give us confidence as we progress our vaccine development and upscale manufacturing in parallel," said Paul Stoffels, J&J's chief scientific officer.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a983341f-4066-4ace-8b0a-43f4c82d63a9>

Sufficient vaccine doses perhaps only in end-2021

Sufficient doses of a Covid-19 vaccine may be available only towards the end of next year, the Ministry of Health's director of medical services Kenneth Mak has said. He also said Singapore is proactively working with vaccine developers, pharmaceutical firms and research institutions on finding a vaccine for Covid-19. Discussions have begun to ensure Singapore will have access to vaccines when they become available, he told a virtual press conference yesterday.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/sufficient-vaccine-doses-perhaps-only-in-end-2021>