

Living with COVID-19 depends on working with communities



COVID-19 is here to stay, it is endemic, and we can expect recurrent, possibly seasonal, outbreaks. The evidence for personal protection in public spaces, including thermal screening, face masks, latex gloves and social distancing, is weak and there is no safe and effective vaccine or treatment. The causes of death related to population control measures, such as the low uptake of services, increased stress and physical inactivity, may exceed COVID-19 deaths. Population control measures in the future will be difficult to justify and public perception is that they have led to worse economies and poorer health and social outcomes.

This scenario is important because living with COVID-19 in the future will depend on maintaining social responsibility and physical distancing. Effective community engagement combined with new clinical and home care protocols, shielding of the vulnerable and the localised use of testing, contact tracing and lockdowns could allow daily life to resume. However, our inability to engage with communities to promote greater personal and collective responsibility, including in mass gatherings, and public frustration with the negative socio-economic impact of population controls could lead to widespread civil unrest.

Daily life stops

- Endemic COVID-19, recurrent outbreaks
- Ineffective public protection (thermal screening, gloves, face masks, social distancing etc)
- No safe, effective vaccine or treatment
- Other causes exceed COVID-19 deaths



Civil unrest

- Population control leads to poorer economies
- Population control leads to poorer health
- Weak community engagement
- Unable to ensure personal protection
- Unable to ensure social distancing



Daily life resumes

- Revised clinical and home care management
- Prioritise shielding of the vulnerable
- Localise testing, contact tracing and lock-downs
- Strong community engagement for individual and collective responsibility

