



INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH TRANSFORMATION



Perspectives on COVID-19 from the Institute for Health Transformation

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we design and deliver care and prevention and demands a rapid and evolving response. Our researchers are playing key roles in generating new knowledge and supporting evidence-based decision making in government and health services, as well as contributing expert opinions to the wider conversation and debate about COVID-19.

We have also developed two Blog series (<https://iht.deakin.edu.au/category/blog/>), one by our D-HEAL (Deakin Health E-technologies Assessment Lab) about COVID-19 related apps, and one by our Early and Mid-Career Researchers on Future Thinking beyond COVID-19.

Here we provide a summary of key perspectives and links as of August 2020.

Perspectives

Pandemic epidemiology and response

Professor Catherine Bennett, Deakin's Chair in Epidemiology within Deakin's Institute for Health Transformation, is a leading researcher and teacher in public health, with a specific interest in infectious disease epidemiology and community transmission. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she has become a trusted and reassuring voice in the media, clearly presenting the facts around the daily case numbers and reducing anxiety and uncertainty by stripping away the misinformation and speculation surrounding the virus and its impact on our lives.

Her engaging commentary and expertise ranges from analysing and interpreting the numbers, to discussing the reasons why people can't or won't comply with restrictions, and the importance of facts over opinion.

In addition to her many daily television, radio and newspaper interviews she has also been invited to contribute the following Editorial Opinions to The Age:

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/stage-four-lockdown-offers-a-chance-to-find-our-path-out-20200813-p55lcv.html>

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/get-on-top-of-the-outbreaks-and-numbers-will-start-to-drop-rapidly-20200807-p55jo7.html>

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/latest-restrictions-became-a-self-fulfilling-prophecy-20200803-p55i0u.html>

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/with-new-case-numbers-so-high-is-melbourne-s-lockdown-failing-20200728-p55g9r.html>

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/melbourne-has-nothing-to-apologise-for-we-ve-just-been-unlucky-20200709-p55aip.html>

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/coronavirus-is-back-but-victoria-is-better-prepared-20200630-p557ny.html>

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/why-border-closures-may-not-be-needed-to-isolate-victoria-s-covid-spike-20200621-p554po.html>

Telehealth and remote health

IHT members have been highlighting the potential silver lining of the COVID-19 epidemic to inform more widespread, effective and equitable telehealth and remote health post-COVID-19. Along with identifying the key areas that will require further research, including the digital divide, regional and rural communities, and patient and health workforce experience and capabilities.

These include opinion pieces in the national media and journals, and on our IHT website

<https://www.croakey.org/better-access-expansion-timely-but-evaluation-essential/>

https://iht.deakin.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/153/2020/04/Coronavirus_-_Telehealth-expands-in-Australia.pdf

<https://iht.deakin.edu.au/2020/04/covid-19-telehealth-boost-could-set-us-up-for-the-long-term/>

The impact of COVID-19 on Australia's health and medical research workforce

Professor Anna Peeters (IHT Director) and Professor Trish Livingston (Faculty of Health ADR) developed a survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Australia's health and medical research workforce. Designed and delivered through our Research Australia partnership this project has led to a national report, an international publication in the Lancet and perspective pieces in national outlets, focussed on the need for investment in a resilient and responsive health and medical research sector post COVID-19.

<https://insightplus.mja.com.au/2020/18/covid-19-what-have-we-learned-about-rapid-response/>

<https://ahha.asn.au/publication/health-advocate>

<https://researchaustralia.org/impact-of-covid-19-on-health-and-medical-researchers-one-of-australias-crucial-lines-of-defence/>

[https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31533-6.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(20)31533-6.pdf)

Health system and workforce impacts

IHT members have been active in national discussions regarding the potential impact on our health system and workforce from COVID 19, as well as regarding significant learnings we can take from the current pandemic to build a more resilient health system.

Our unique expertise combining health services, systems and financing has led to perspectives advising on hot spots that will need to be addressed, including healthcare worker mental health and palliative care, as well as the need for new, comprehensive models that enable us to capture the overall health impacts of policy decisions incorporating the effects of infectious disease, non-infectious disease and economic changes.

<https://iht.deakin.edu.au/2020/07/honouring-our-nurses-on-the-frontline/>

<https://iht.deakin.edu.au/2020/04/what-does-the-outbreak-of-covid-19-reveal-about-palliative-care-in-aged-care/>

<https://iht.deakin.edu.au/2020/05/reminder-other-health-risks-are-still-important-as-covid-19-restrictions-ease/>

<https://insightplus.mja.com.au/2020/17/economic-recovery-from-covid-19-we-must-not-fall-for-austerity/>

<https://iht.deakin.edu.au/2020/07/the-lifesaving-dollar-how-will-covid-19-impact-our-mental-health-from-a-health-economics-perspective/>

The case for prevention

IHT members have been at the forefront of national discussions regarding the need to ensure our broader prevention systems are not neglected in the intense focus of government and communities on halting the COVID 19 pandemic. Through our perspectives pieces we have highlighted the additional risks to health through negative impacts on mental health, gambling and food systems, as well as the opportunity to reimagine core prevention and work practices to be more people-centred and flexible, with likely positive impacts on health and wellbeing.

<https://iht.deakin.edu.au/2020/07/the-need-for-self-awareness-in-times-of-social-distancing-and-isolation/>

<https://iht.deakin.edu.au/2020/04/with-pokies-shut-down-coronavirus-stress-could-drive-more-people-to-reckless-online-gambling/>

<https://theconversation.com/supermarkets-claim-to-have-our-health-at-heart-but-their-marketing-tactics-push-junk-foods-138292>

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ResourceCentre/Life-and-Health-Re-imagined---Paper-1---Getting-back-to-work-June2020.pdf?la=en&hash=6508C4625668050C23E16EC6C60213D15BF5EE76>

[https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/Life-and-Health-Re-imagined---Where-do-we-go-next-with-prevention-\(1\)/Life-and-Health-Re-imagined---Where-do-we-go-next-with-prevention-Jul2020.pdf?la=en&hash=5E6A6EF32B98E1D4506B811C6A94D1329CB1EAF](https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/Life-and-Health-Re-imagined---Where-do-we-go-next-with-prevention-(1)/Life-and-Health-Re-imagined---Where-do-we-go-next-with-prevention-Jul2020.pdf?la=en&hash=5E6A6EF32B98E1D4506B811C6A94D1329CB1EAF)

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