

The third wave is coming, and all because the government...

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There is a stark reality that has to be faced in this country. It is that the third wave of coronavirus is coming.

I share this tweet:

<https://twitter.com/sharkawymd/status/1374002275811753990?s=21>

Now, in fairness, I think that's US data, and we may be a little behind that. But I mentioned some weeks ago now that I had been reliably informed that the NHS was preparing for this next wave, which many within it think will reach its peak during the summer holiday season. It is the inevitable result of three things.

The first is new variants. The idea that this wave is the same as the last is wrong: it is the result of a different form of this disease.

The second is misplaced faith in a vaccine programme being managed inappropriately in delivering only half the dose most people require and with insufficient protection delivered as a result to prevent the spread of new variants.

And third it is the result of reopening schools and other premises far too early when no preventative measures have been taken within those locations to stop transmission. This is largely because, I am told, there remains a stubborn refusal in government to accept that this disease is aerosol transmitted. The prevailing belief in government is instead that it is droplet transmitted. Schools may be safe for the latter, but hopelessly ill-equipped for the former, which is what we have.

So, a third wave is going to happen. The likelihood is not 'if' now, but 'when', with sooner rather than later being the case because it is entirely possible that R is already back over 1.

I am, of course, aware that there is also a belief that this wave will not have the impact

of previous ones. It is believed that there will be fewer hospitalisation and deaths. The evidence that this is true is clearly not there: if it was then the tweet I have noted would not have been posted. People are still going to get sick. They are going to end up in hospital. At least 30,000 deaths were assumed acceptable by the Johnson 'road-map'. The only question now is how long it will take for them to happen.

This is all pretty depressing, of course. But it is also inevitable. If the government wants to put the economy first, child minding to ensure parents can get back to work second, and the safety of people a distant third then this is what happens. If at the same time it is indifferent to the workload and stress on the NHS, as its actions on this crisis and on nurses' pay shows to be the case, then this is also what happens.

Every single action this government takes is for one reason only, and that is to reduce the rate of money creation that it has to undertake within the UK economy. Note I do not say borrowing, because there has been almost none of that in the least year. The precise figures can be argued over and largely depends on timing, but it is likely that more than 90% of all Covid costs and the resulting deficits have been paid for by money creation. And such is the irrational fear of this process, which those in the Treasury claim not to understand, that the government is willing to sacrifice tens of thousands of lives rather than use the capacity that the state has to get things right using the power it has to create money, when getting things right would be putting in place the measures needed to tackle this virus on a timely basis.

It could sometimes be argued that debate on economics is without consequence, because a great deal of it speculates on what might be with little chance of influencing the outcome. But in this case economics does have a consequence. Government debt paranoia is leading to the early deaths of tens of thousands of people in a way that is wholly unnecessary if only we realised that the option to act appropriately exists, and that the measures to make our society a lot more safe could be taken.

All the money that is needed to beat coronavirus is available.

What is lacking is the will to use it. Setting acceptable death tolls is easier.

The result will, however, be a third wave and even more government support for the economy being required very soon because the right steps to ensure public health were not taken soon enough.

And that's what's really annoying about this. All of this could have been avoided by a government really willing to tackle the issues and not just its symptoms, but they weren't. One day, maybe this time, I hope we hold them to account for that.