

Chris Whitty is asking that we accept Covid deaths like...

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I share this Tweet, which is an angry reaction from someone well known to me to [Chris Whitty's suggestion](#) that we should just get on and accept Covid deaths, as we supposedly do flu deaths:

<https://twitter.com/drjawalsh/status/1377916388669599744?s=20>

It would seem that Chris Whitty's ignorance of flu deaths is pretty staggering. This was a tweet from earlier this year on this issue, using ONS data:

<https://twitter.com/NedinPhil/status/1363055663753162752?s=20>

Flu deaths are actually very low. Maybe we would live with them. Deaths from pneumonia are not low. They are what Chris Whitty is asking us to live with. They are abnormally high in the UK. And there is an explanation for this. See this [letter in the British Medical Journal](#). But perhaps most tellingly note this journal paper from Martin McKee, also noted above. The abstract says:

Many European countries experience a seasonal excess in deaths each winter compared to summer. The magnitude of the excess is greater in the United Kingdom than in many other European countries. Examination of the data for Northern Ireland indicates that myocardial infarction, respiratory disease and stroke exhibit the greatest increases during winter. Excess deaths from these conditions are closely associated with low environmental temperature.

What does that mean, because let's be clear that there are many places cooler than Northern Ireland? Lower environmental temperature means that people have cold houses. And why do they have cold houses? Because they cannot afford to heat them, that's why.

In other words the deaths from so-called flu are actually from pneumonia and the incidence of this flu is heaviest amongst those in houses that people cannot afford to heat. This is, in that case, a disease of poverty.

And it is as a disease of poverty, hitting those on low income and from minority ethnic communities the hardest, that Chris Whitty is asking us to accept Covid 19 deaths.

That angry tweet is more than justified in that case.