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## Covid-19: Medical leaders call for rapid review to prepare for second wave

Elisabeth Mahase

Leaders in the medical community, including heads of royal colleges and *The BMJ*'s editor in chief Fiona Godlee, have urged political parties to join forces and commission a cross party review into how the UK can prevent and prepare for a covid-19 second wave.<sup>1</sup>

In an open letter, leading doctors, nurses, and public health experts said that a review was “crucial and needs to happen soon if the public is to have confidence that the virus can be contained.” The review should not look to attribute blame for past actions, but should examine complex and inter-related policy areas, such as procurement of goods and services, public health and communicable disease control infrastructure, the disproportionate burden on black, Asian, and minority ethnic individuals and communities, and Brexit.

“These are too broad for any one of the existing select committees,” the letter said. “That is why a cross party commission was suggested, establishing a constructive, non-partisan, four nations approach that could rapidly produce practical recommendations for action, based on what we have all learnt, and without itself becoming a distraction for those at the front line or in government.”

The letter was issued after researchers warned of the risk of a second wave. A modelling study found that lockdown measures might have averted 3.1 million deaths from covid-19 across 11 European countries, including 470 000 in the UK. Despite this, European countries are very far from achieving herd immunity, researchers warned, as less than 4% of their populations were infected with SARS-CoV-2 up to 4 May.<sup>2</sup>

In the letter, medical leaders—including BMA council chair Chaand Nagpaul—said that several countries were now experiencing covid-19 flare-ups, and although the UK's future was hard to predict, the evidence indicated that a second wave was a “real risk.”

“As stakeholders and leaders of the UK's medical, nursing, and public health professions, we urge you to establish such a review,” it said. “We think there's a strong case for an immediate assessment of national preparedness, with the first results available no later than August, and that all its work should be completed by the end of October. We don't underestimate the complexities of establishing this in the required timeframe. We stand by ready to help in whatever way we can.”

1 Victor A, Derek A, Wendy B, et al. Covid-19: Call for a rapid forward looking review of the UK's preparedness for a second wave—an open letter to the leaders of all UK political parties. *BMJ* 2020;369:m2514. <https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m2514>.

2 Wise J. Covid-19: Risk of second wave is very real, say researchers. *BMJ* 2020;369:m2294. <https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m2294>. doi: 10.1136/bmj.m2294 pmid: 32518177