The BMJ

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2020;369:m2611<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m2611>

Published: 29 June 2020

Sixty seconds on . . . Mr Bean's checklist

Gareth Iacobucci

Number one—make sure the Mini has petrol in it?

That goes without saying. But that's enough about the daily routines of Rowan Atkinson's bumbling comic creation.

Bean there, done that?

The character is three decades old, but clearly still holds some cultural clout. The animated version of Mr Bean is the figurehead for a new public service announcement from the World Health Organization, reminding the public to remain vigilant about covid-19.¹

Was Alan Partridge busy?

The Department of Health and Social Care doesn't run itself you know.

Touché. But where did this Bean idea spring up from?

WHO worked with Tiger Aspect Productions and Project Everyone, a not-for-profit agency set up by the filmmaker Richard Curtis, who co-created the original *Mr Bean* TV series and is a prominent campaigner on global health matters.

So, what are Bean's top tips?

Keep your distance, practise good hygiene, and know the symptoms. These might be familiar messages, but WHO hopes the novel method of delivering them will cut through to certain groups of people in a way that "daily briefing by man in suit on podium" doesn't.

But isn't Mr Bean a man in a suit?

Yes—but he's a surprisingly popular one—in 2018 it was reported that he had more Facebook followers than the Canadian singing star Justin Bieber. Both, however, had fewer than the footballer Cristiano Ronaldo, but maybe the Portuguese superstar was too busy practising his goal celebrations and styling his hair to help WHO out.

Will we see more of these tie-ins?

WHO knows. As its director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus points out, "Covid-19 affects every walk of human life, and we need to use all tools and avenues at our disposal to share life saving information with all people around the world."

¹ WHO. The World Health Organization reminds public to remain vigilant through Mr Bean's essential covid-19 checklist. www.who.int/news-room/detail/22-06-2020-the-world-health-organization-reminds-public-to-remain-vigilant-through-mr-bean-s-essential-covid-19-checklist.

This article is made freely available for use in accordance with BMJ's website terms and conditions for the duration of the covid-19 pandemic or until otherwise determined by BMJ. You may use, download and print the article for any lawful, non-commercial purpose (including text and data mining) provided that all copyright notices and trade marks are retained.