

To: "beauperec@parliament.uk" <beauperec@parliament.uk>; "john@johnpenrose.org" <john@johnpenrose.org>
Sent: Tuesday, 11 Aug, 20 At 19:55
Subject: Medical Risk Assessment of Face Cloths/Masks

Dear John Penrose (MP),

As you may recall, I am trying to avoid disinformation by asking you/the government to provide me with factual medical science based information.

Thank you for your reply dated 16 July 20 where you indicated your thoughts and views on mask wearing, but you did not send me any evidence on the scientific effectiveness or safety of wearing them. Transparency regarding face cloths/mask issues is now urgent, with public, scientifically backed government answers needed in order for all policy makers and members of the public to make informed decisions, especially as the school year starts. I have therefore highlighted **8 questions in red below**, with associated notes below.

As you are aware as of 19 March 20, the week before lockdown, COVID-19 was removed from the High Consequence Infectious Disease register. This was still the case as of 17 June 20 [See Note:1 below] As lockdown restrictions are being eased, increased COVID-19 positives tests do not seem to be indicating high death or hospitalisation rates, especially not in the younger and healthier population.

1. Please can you tell me whether COVID-19 is still removed from the High Consequence Infection Disease register?

On 05 June 2020 the World Health Organisation (WHO) published its '*Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19*'. On 15 June 2020 the government introduced mask wearing on public transport, and on 24 July 2020 wearing them more widely, e.g. in shops [See Note:2 below]. Face coverings are neither Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) nor a Medical Device(MD).

2. Please send me the up-to-date medical risk assessments for the wearing of mask and face covering that have led to the government mandating public usage, including physical, social, psychological and emotional aspects, also any harms or disadvantages of their usage, as indicated in Note: 2[a] below?

3. Please send me the government's feasibility, scientific effectiveness and impact studies/reports as indicated in WHO items [b], [c] and [d] in Note: 2 below? (On 03 Aug 20 Rancourt published, "... a decade's worth of policy-grade evidence proves ... that masks are ineffective with viral respiratory diseases" [See Note: 3 below])

4. Please tell me how the government is informing and warning people of any harmful effects/disadvantages of using masks/face coverings, including those from the WHO?

Recent newspaper articles indicate that wearing of face masks in some schools may become mandatory in September, including that "*Teaching unions have called on ministers to look again at the rules so that pupils and staff have to wear masks after the summer holidays*". Yet there was also a statement attributed to the government's Health Secretary stating that that "*it doesn't give protection*" [See Note: 4 below]. Considering this and the WHO statement regarding the "*potential harms/disadvantages*" of wearing face masks, especially for long hours [See Note: 2 below],

5. Please confirm whether the Teaching Unions are asking the government to mandate masks after the summer holidays, and if so on what scientific basis?

6. Please tell me how children, teachers, parents and adults will be protected against schools, and other organisations, mandating wearing face coverings, especially if they are proven to be ineffective?

The current 07 Aug 20 government face cloth guidance makes a reference to, "*If you want to sell face coverings, the product must meet the existing requirements ... It is your responsibility as the producer to consider all the risks associated with the specific face covering that you want to sell ... If you need more help in considering the safety risks of your product, you should contact your Local Authority Trading Standards team.*" [See Note: 5 below]

7. Please tell me how members of the public, with small scale/home production making of face coverings, are being told of this requirement, and about any potential future liability that may arise from selling the product? E.g. people who are making and selling masks to friends, family, neighbours, customers via facebook posts, etc.

8. Please confirm whether producers, including small scale/home business, should therefore include risk assessments for breathing difficulties, contamination and other issues, e.g. as indicated by the WHO [See Note: 2 below]; and confirm that producers should therefore inform buyers of the potential risks/harms of using their face coverings?

Transparency on the above issues is now urgent, especially as the school year starts, and decisions on how children, teachers and parents will be expected to comply to mask/face cover wearing will be made. I look forward to your prompt response.

NOTES:

Note: 1: As of 19 March 20, the week before lockdown, COVID-19 was removed from the government's High Consequence Infectious Disease register. This was still the case as of 17 June 20 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/high-consequence-infectious-diseases-hcid>

Note: 2: On 05 June 2020 the World Health Organisation (WHO) published its 'Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19', https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332293/WHO-2019-nCov-IPC_Masks-2020.4-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (NB; this is the most recent information that I can find). It states:

- **"At present, there is no direct evidence (from studies on COVID19 and in healthy people in the community) on the effectiveness of universal masking of healthy people in the community to prevent infection with respiratory viruses, including COVID-19.**
- [a] The document lists 11 "*Potential harms/disadvantages*. The **likely disadvantages** of the use of mask by healthy people in the general public..", including potential increased risk of self contamination; headache and/or breathing difficulties; development of facial skin lesions, irritant dermatitis or worsening acne, when used frequently for long hours; difficulty with communicating clearly; waste management issues e.g. litter and further contamination, etc....
- **"If masks are recommended for the general public, the decision-maker should:**
 - [b] *consider the feasibility of use, supply/access issues, social and psychological acceptance (of both wearing and not wearing different types of masks in different contexts);*
 - [c] *continue gathering scientific data and evidence on the effectiveness of mask use (including different types and makes as well as other face covers such as scarves) in non-health care settings;*
 - [d] *evaluate the impact (positive, neutral or negative) of using masks in the general population (including behavioral and social sciences).*

NOTE: 3 Rancourt 03 Aug 20 - *'Face masks, lies, damn lies, and public health officials: "A growing body of evidence" re: the need for scientific rather than observational evidence:* https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343399832_Face_masks_lies_damn_lies_and_public_health_officials_A_growing_body_of_evidence/link/5f282ef0458515b729ff3f82/download

- There is "... a decade's worth of policy-grade evidence proves ... that masks are ineffective with viral respiratory diseases"
- "It should be of great concern to all that the WHO pretext of **"a growing compendium of observational evidence on the use of masks by the general public in several countries"** has morphed into the mantra **"a growing body of evidence"**, which finds itself on the lips of virtually all public health officers and city mayors in the country."

NOTE 4: Recent newspaper articles indicate that wearing of face masks in some schools may become mandatory in September. E.g.

- Mirror 27 July 20 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/face-coverings-should-made-compulsory-22425442>
 - "Teaching unions have called on ministers to look again at the rules so that pupils and staff have to wear masks after the summer holidays ... [on what scientific evidence?]"
 - Patrick Roach, general secretary of the NASUWT teachers' union, said: "The Government's guidance for schools is now out of step with wider public health guidance and guidance to other employers where it is recognised that where physical distancing cannot be assured, face masks should be worn ..."
 - So there is a strong argument that face masks should also be made compulsory for children [what scientific evidence?] when they return to secondary schools in September."
- Sun 30 July 20 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/uknews/12223094/school-face-masks-coronavirus-uniform-cheshire/>
 - "Holmes Chapel Comprehensive in Cheshire has become the first school to make the protective masks compulsory for pupils ..."
 - They have circulated a letter out to parents ahead of re-opening their doors in September detailing the new plans, which go against government coronavirus advice ... It reads: "When school reopens after summer, the wearing of face coverings will be compulsory for students and staff when inside the school buildings and in all classrooms ... We have taken this decision as a precautionary additional measure to our expected safe behaviours. On the balance of probability, the wearing of face masks is likely to make our school safer than if we don't wear them [what scientific evidence?] ..."
 - Health Secretary Matt Hancock said last week ministers wouldn't recommend kids wearing a mask as it "doesn't give protection" when sat in a classroom all day."

NOTE 5: On 07 Aug 20 the government published its document "Face coverings: when to wear one and how to make your own - Buying and Selling face coverings" https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own?fbclid=IwAR2IS_y-i2tTVn5R_NboXbWbjQKxmJyibFKoi3Je0ovHWieVZTenFjX5mGw#buying-and-selling-face-coverings

This document referred to the 'Office for Product Safety & Standards July 2020 publication on legal requirements re: 'Guidance for manufacturers and makers of face coverings to comply with the General Product Safety Regulations 2005, Version 3', https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/899806/Guidance-for-businesses-and-individuals-face-coverings-version-3.pdf