

Sent: Saturday, 15 October 2022 3:11 PM

To: Committee, Health (REPS) <health.reps@aph.gov.au>

Subject: Form Submission - Inquiry into Long Covid and Repeated Infection Submission

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: The impacts of the risk of Long Covid and repeated infections to myself and my loved ones have been great. My partner, and many of my friends have experienced a cognitive decline, as well as decreased capacity to exert themselves (ie. exercise). Their immune systems have also taken a hit, as they have become more susceptible to illness and infection. The impact to myself has also been great -- I have a higher risk of severe outcomes after a COVID infection, which means I cannot even risk one infection, not to mention the probable impact of Long Covid if I do survive the initial infection.

I have had also to isolate myself to a great degree. This means: only direct-to-boot groceries, no seeing friends, no seeing family, no seeing my partner. It is impossible for me to relax in a public place, even more so now that mandatory isolation has been dropped. My work now also requires me to work in a crowded open-plan office, where there is little to no ventilation, so the risk of infection is high. Because of this, I will need to search for a new permanently fully remote role in order to protect my health, and there is no guarantee that I will find one.

: There are several actions I would like to see taken to both protect myself and others.

They are:

1) Better ventilation

Covid is primarily an airborne virus. This means, if we improve ventilation by use of bringing in outside air and using HEPA filters in private and public spaces, the rate & risk of infection can be driven down, and therefore slow down the rate the virus evolves at so that it does not become completely evasive. This requires the least work on an individual level, which mitigates any "pandemic fatigue".

2) Research of better therapies & treatments, as well as education on the studies being released in relation to Long Covid

This is especially important as there appears to be an education gap into what GPs and specialists know about the markers & impacts of Long Covid and what has been studied. This will ensure that people who are experiencing Long Covid are not left without answers and have a way forward to start treatments. Even Long Covid clinics in every state and territory would provide a considerable positive impact as then there would be a dedicated, connected team treating a person's Long Covid

3) Better & consistent messaging & education

Covid is not going away, and the rate at which immune evading & antiviral-resistant Covid variants are evolving, repeated infections are inevitable. We cannot sweep it under the rug. The general public must be made aware of the health-related impact that repeated infections & Long Covid has and can be made on a person's immune system and general health so they can make informed decisions.

4) Universal masking

As asymptomatic infection is a considerable proportion of cases, as well as people being infectious before they show symptoms, I would also recommend universal masking using KN95 or greater quality masks, and surgical & cloth masks are not sufficient to provide protection against infection

5) Bringing back mandatory isolation & payments, and increasing the time to 10 days

Studies show that people with COVID are infectious for up to 10 days after symptoms first appear. By ensuring that infectious people are not in the community with the financial support they need means that the rate of infection will slow, and ergo reduce the amount of repeated infections and people with Long Covid. The use of dedicated & properly-built quarantine facilities could also aid in reducing household spread, which is a primary source of infection

Implementing all of these measures, or crucially 1 & 2, would dramatically impact the amount of Covid and Long Covid in the community, and therefore reduce the economic, social, and health impacts both on an individual & government level.

I would like the Inquiry to contact me to discuss privacy and confidentiality options for my submission: Yes