



19 March 2020

RIDING THE WAVE

Information is changing on the hour. We all are getting advice from many sources, some professional, some personal. Certain reports conflict and that increases trepidation. This is not an easy time.

A good place to start is to cover what we don't know. We don't know for sure what the effects will be of COVID-19 on individuals with cystic fibrosis (CF). We don't have data on that, only informed speculation but the Australian CF Data Registry is prepared to capture COVID-19 data from day one.

Certainly, a disease like COVID-19 that has been associated with massive lung damage and even septic shock is a risk to individuals whose organs already struggle due to CF. We have a young community and age is a definitely a factor in COVID-19, but again there are no hard and fast rules.

On the crucial issue of healthcare, Australia currently sits somewhere in the middle of the pack. We have more hospital beds and respirators per capita than somewhere like the UK or Italy, but fewer than Germany. We have had some success in flattening our curve, but the number of cases is doubling every few days.

Australia has also fallen behind a number of Asian countries in slowing the rate of infection, however political realities are hard to compare across continents. The most honest thing to say is that things are bad, though not as bad as they could be.

People affected by CF are not the only ones in the dark. The National Asthma Council of Australia is also looking for hard data on the interaction of that condition with COVID-19. Their current advice reads the same as ours – stay safe, isolate where possible, practice rigorous social hygiene and good social distancing. Exercise is still important.

In fact peak bodies all over Australia are championing common sense advice like this, which is all the more important amid criticisms that the Federal government is acting too slowly and dragging the line on public education about the virus.

I will repeat then what I wrote weeks ago: You are the CF Community, you are ready-made leaders in this scenario. As much as self quarantine is essential at this time, silence is not. Speak out about what you know – germ hygiene, infection control, health management and life-or-death stakes.

That is our CF reality, it's a lifestyle. Australians need to know what they're up against, what they stand to lose. We hear a lot about "<1%" death rates. We don't hear enough from the people who are fighting to stay out of that 1 per cent!

Talk to your friends and neighbours. Talk to your government if you are feeling sassy. And certainly, keep talking to us, because we will keep you updated on the virus and especially on CF-specific material as it becomes available.

Coronavirus is on our shores, but we can beat it. I will be in touch again soon. Until then, everybody keep your hands clean and your voices raised.

Kind Regards



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P.S. There is a lot of misinformation out there so here are a few reputable sites.

Latest news from the Government

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – frequently asked questions](#)
[Department of Health – Coronavirus \(COVID19\) update](#)
[Government response to the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
[Launch of the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) campaign](#)
[Coronavirus video – Good Hygiene Starts Here](#)
[What supply of medicines should I have at home?](#)

International resources

[WHO – A rolling update on coronavirus](#)
[PhRMA – Helping those affected by coronavirus](#)
[IFPMA – Tackling global health challenges – COVID19](#)
[EFPIA – European pharmaceutical industry response to COVID-19](#)