

Presentation: Health and safety lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic

This session considered both the preparation for the Covid-19 pandemic, and the precautionary measures that were, or should have been, implemented to protect the health of doctors and other healthcare workers. It explores lessons that needed to be learned at government, agency, employer and manager level.

Speaker: Raymond Agius

Raymond Agius is Professor (Emeritus) of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at The University of Manchester. He is a member of BMA Council, co-chair of the BMA Occupational Medicine Committee and a member of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council. Until 2017 he was Professor and Director at the Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health at The University of Manchester as well as an honorary consultant in Occupational Medicine at the Manchester University Hospitals.

Key takeaways:

- The main health and safety failing in the pandemic was the systemic denial of airborne transmission of Covid leading to neglect of precautions (e.g. provision of Respiratory Protective Equipment) and hence deaths and disease of countless workers, especially in health care.
- Employers undertaking their legal duty by doing health and safety risk assessments in the workplace manage to protect their staff and their business.
- Since lessons ostensibly learned from past outbreaks, research and exercises were ignored in this pandemic, and for as long as mismanagement in this pandemic is not recognised, lessons will not be learned to adequately protect workers in the current or the next one.

Resources/references:

- [Covid-19 and workers' protection: lessons to learn, and lessons overlooked](#) (Occupational Medicine)
- [Covid-19 in the workplace](#) (BMJ)
- [Protection from covid-19 at work: health and safety law is fit for purpose](#) (BMJ)
- [Ten scientific reasons in support of airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2](#) (The Lancet)
- [Efficacy of FFP3 respirators for prevention of SARS-CoV-2 infection in healthcare workers](#) (eLife)
- [Risk assessment for GP practices in England](#) (BMA resource)

For other relevant publications follow Raymond Agius on Twitter: [@ProfEmer](#)