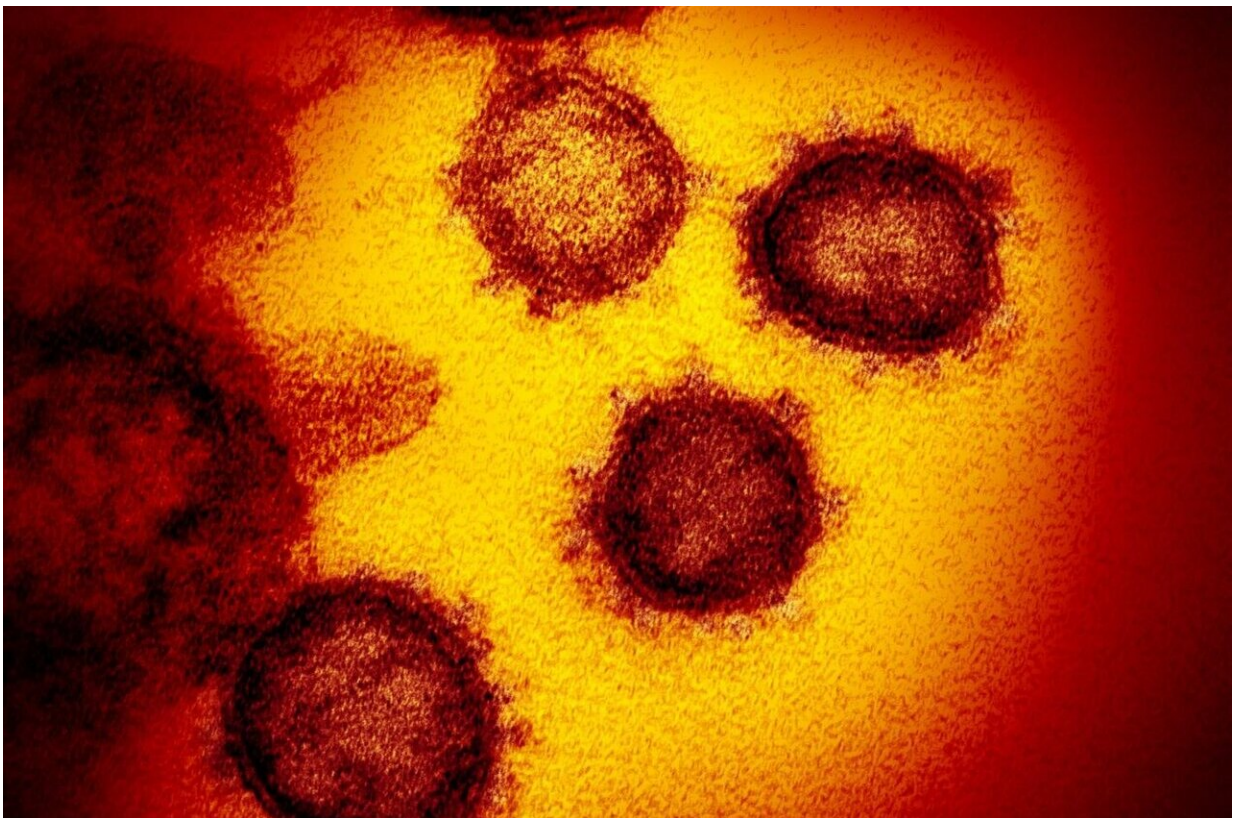


Understanding macro level influences on strategic responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

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Transmission electron microscope image of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, emerging from human cells. Credit: NIAID

A new study suggests that the effectiveness of countries' strategic

responses to the COVID-19 pandemic may be adversely affected by the limitations of current tools used to measure the barriers and facilitators to courses of action.

Published in the *Journal of Global Health*, the study has developed a new [tool](#) to help fill in existing knowledge gaps, and lead to more comprehensive, and effective [pandemic](#) responses to emerging challenges.

Led by City, University of London, an international, electronic, survey was conducted between May 5th and June 5th, 2020, to obtain citizens' perceptions of what the barriers and facilitators were to strategic responses to COVID-19 in their home countries.

From across 66 countries, 928 respondents participated in the survey, (including 81 respondents from the UK), 57 percent of whom were [health professionals](#).

They scored how influential (positively or negatively on a scale of +10/-10) they perceived the seven domains of the 'PESTELI' framework: Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Ecological, Legislative, and wider Industry; which is used extensively in the field of strategic management to assess macro-level influences on organisational decision-making.

Respondents were also asked to submit free text responses in the survey to explain the scores they provided. These were used in a thematic analysis to uncover further trends to inform a 103-item tool for use at the national level, produced from the collective findings.

In each of the countries surveyed, inhibiting political factors (with the exception of China) and facilitative technological factors attained the most extreme scores from respondents.

The impact of COVID-19 on the macro-environment was noted in three domains—sociological, ecological and industry.

The new 103-item tool mapped well to existing pandemic preparedness tools, including the Global Health Security Index; the International Health Regulations; the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) framework and the Epidemic Preparedness Index, but also highlighted gaps in their coverage, which the authors argue may be exploited for better strategic responses moving forward.

Dr. Raheelah Ahmad, Director of Global Engagement at the School of Health Sciences at City, University of London, and who led the study said:

"This is the first study to be conducted during a pandemic using a strategic management lens and can support contemporary assessment of how countries are responding and adapting. The timing of this study should allow assessment prior to probable resurgences as restrictions are lifted."

More information: Raheelah Ahmad et al, Macro level influences on strategic responses to the COVID-19 pandemic – an international survey and tool for national assessments, *Journal of Global Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.7189/jogh.11.05011](https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.11.05011)

Provided by City University London

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