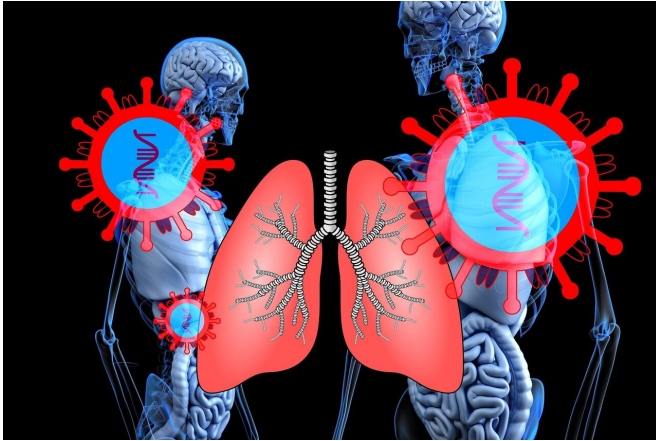


Experts call for rejection of coronavirus policy based only on age

23 March 2020, by Joe Stafford



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Experts are urging the Government to reject the formulation and implementation of policy to fight the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic based solely on the age of the population, as well as calling on both the Government and media organizations to be cautious in their use of language.

The British Society of Gerontology argue that fostering generational and societal cohesion during the course of the pandemic is essential. In its statement from its National Executive Committee, which includes The University of Manchester's Professor Debora Price and Dr. Tine Buffel, the society expresses its objection to any policy which differentiates the population by application of an arbitrary chronological age in restricting people's rights and freedoms.

They point out that while people at all ages can be vulnerable to COVID-19, and all can spread the disease, not all people over the age of 70 are vulnerable, nor are all those under 70 resilient.

Given [older adults'](#) multiple [social roles](#),

quarantining the more than 8.5 million people over 70 years of age will deprive society of many people who are productive and active and who can be a key part of the solution by supporting the economy, families and communities.

Acknowledging the importance of measures to control and limit the spread of COVID-19, as well as the need for rapid testing for front-line workers leading the response to the pandemic, BSG also expresses its support for testing of the wider population regardless of age. This allows people to respond appropriately to the [pandemic](#), ensuring that the right people isolate themselves at the right time.

"We are witnessing terrible age divisions in Britain, with growing hostility between the generations. We need to recognize that this is being caused and exacerbated by [government policy](#) and rhetoric, and that it is incredibly harmful to society for both young and old. The messaging needs to change as a matter of urgency," says Professor Debora Price

"Only by bringing the generations together in this time of crisis can we prevent lasting damage being done to relationships between young and old in Britain," said Professor Thomas Scharf of Newcastle University, the president of the [society](#). "I am proud that BSG is taking a firm stand against the ageist and stereotypical assumptions that characterize [policy](#) measures that rely solely on the application of chronological age."

Provided by University of Manchester

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