

## **Ministerial Meandering**

I was really hoping that Dr Blake Gilks - top guru on Covid related issues - would have done his Q&A session on line before I had to get this MM into the Bulletin. Sadly, his programme is not until tomorrow night at 1930 (7.30 pm) and if I don't write this today, Pam will have words with me!

My own opinion is that we are now in a position to accept that the disease is endemic, and are going to have to live with it. The data that we are being fed are far from reliable, in that the hospital admissions 'with Covid' are often just that - ***with*** Covid, and not ***because*** of Covid.

Given that everyone who is admitted to hospital is tested for Covid, we are going to find many people who test +ve for Covid, but they were admitted for a heart attack or epilepsy or bowel cancer or renal failure or, or, or.

Add to that fact the issue of reliability of the lateral flow tests, and even the PCR tests, which are also coming under scrutiny. It appears that some batches of the lateral flow test (that's the 'Rapid' test) are showing up to 50% false negative rates - which means that you might as well spin a coin to guess whether you have the condition or not.

Our daughter and some other members of her family recently 'had Covid' - or were presumed to have 'had it' - based on symptoms, but told that testing was no longer necessary and that they should just isolate for 5 days. This is beginning to sound like the sort of advice your doctor would give you if you had a bad cold; 'Don't go spreading it around, and take it easy for a few days.'

Omicron is easily spread, Yes, but it is not causing major problems, except (it would appear) for the statisticians (number-crunchers, bean-counters, etc.)

If testing is no longer either available or unreliable, and the strain of the virus is about as serious as a bad cold, is it not time to allow common sense to prevail?

I write as a member of the 'high-risk' group, so I have the most to lose (my life) if I am wrong, so I don't write this opinion lightly. Nevertheless, I truly believe that it is time to bite the bullet and accept that we have a new bug in the mix, and one that is not going to go away quietly or even at all. That makes it just like the 'flu virus - which also claims lives in the at-risk population every year. It is interesting to note that we have had no comparable data on 'flu deaths over the last 2 and a half years; it has been total tunnel vision on Covid.

Personally, I think it's time to stop, and regain our lives.

Philip+