

It's a Land of Confusion...

I started the week wearing a jumper on the summer solstice trying to convince Lisa that a holiday in Margate would be fun. By the end of the week our holiday that was booked nearly 3 years ago is now in a "green country" and the weekend of promised rain has resulted in the most glorious sunrise.

"Why aren't you open yet?" is still asked by patients when we consult with them in the surgery and "When will you get back to normal?". The answer is that I just don't know but we are "open". On the one hand we have a population that has engaged really well with the vaccination program and seems to be very aware of the risk of Covid. On the other hand there is Covid that has no knowledge of Woodchurch or our wonderful population.

Cases are marginally on the rise locally and the "delta" or "Indian" variant is the prevalent one in the UK and may be more wise to the vaccination. People that have been "2-jabbed" are getting the disease and even those most familiar with social distancing occasionally/unintentionally breach the code increasing our risk (perhaps we will have a new Health Secretary by the time the newsletter is published...).

So how 45,000 people are going to watch football at Wembley and 140,000 are expected at Silverstone just baffles me. I'm nervous enough about the prospect of almost having to go on a holiday where the greatest risk will be sitting on an aircraft - the rest of it can be entirely risk managed. The amazing vaccination uptake has led to this new phase in everyone's response to the disease and I noted parallels when I watched Channel 4's "It's a Sin". The initial fear of an unknown illness, the brave reach-out from people to care for people that just needed care and then the risk assessment of individual situations evolved. It is just a shame that we don't have such effective treatment for Covid that we now have for HIV, although it was too long coming for so many people.

There has been a huge rise in the common "winter" infections in children recently which is a reminder of how few children we have seen in the last 18 months. As the children are a group that have not been vaccinated they are probably the most likely cohort of people to carry Covid and pass it on hence we really don't want the waiting areas to be full of feverish, spluttering children. In view of this we will be asking these innocent children and their families to wait outside until being called in. We talked about this in our weekly clinical meeting and all of us as parents thought it was a much better idea anyway as our own children have all let us down in a waiting room before.

So, as a surgery that enjoys seeing our patients we remain in a state of limbo. Natural evolution is taking place and we are seeing more face-to-face appointments as time goes along and both we and the community are deciding which risks to take. We just can't afford to throw the doors open yet and have to take the positives from the telephone calls which can be more efficient for us all and are likely to be a consultation tool we adopt more than we did previously. Our work at the Surgery has changed so much in 18 months feeling like a different world with the same people in it and having to assess our actions differently each day - represented this week by woolly jumpers on the solstice and Mankinis at the weekend!

With that thought... Best wishes from us all at the Surgery,  
Jack Hickey - GP