Twitter Thread by Crystal moth



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THREAD: British people are so thick that they will watch the government make exactly the same mistake for a fourth time, and carry on cheering. Ok, yes, you're being lied to in the press. But the opposite of "opening up as quickly" is not "lockdown forever". Here's why: 1/

In fact, opening up as quickly as we can will lead to more lockdowns, and worse restrictions over the course of the next year. Or to put it another way an extra week of lockdown now saves us from an extra month of lockdown in the Summer or Autumn.

How does that work? Right 2/

now the number of infections is declining quite fast. But the number of cases is still quite high. If they are still quite high (or even medium) when we lift restrictions this will lead very quickly to a massive spike in cases, and then we will have to lock down again, 3/

probably for a long time.

Sounds familiar doesn't it. It's exactly what we did in November through to now. First we went into lockdown, then we released it too early (at the beginning of December). As a result, cases spiked. By the end of December there was an enormous wave 4/

of infection, which killed tens of thousands of people. In the first weeks of January the government put in the current lockdown restrictions. They didn't really have a choice: about 80% of the British public supported restrictions. But here's the thing: after six weeks of 5/

the current lockdown we have the same number of cases as we did (and possibly more) than when the government catastrophically decided to open up everything in December. If we had simply locked down for a few extra weeks in December, we wouldn’t have had to spend the last six 6/

weeks getting back to where we were.

I want you to cast your mind back to June last year. Think about how excited everyone was to come out of lockdown. The

newspapers had been pushing hard to get things opened really quickly fast. So was the government. “The end of lockdown” 7/

was supposed to be a great celebration. Now think about what happened in the last year as a whole. “The end of lockdown” actually turned into wave after wave of infection, regional restrictions, and then two national lockdowns. What if I told you that we got it wrong: instead 8/

of having the horrible year we did, we could have locked down for another 3-4 weeks in June, and basically been free of the virus. That’s what the smartest countries did. For the last year they have had less death, fewer restrictions, and nearly normal lives. Now ask yourself 9/

the question: would you rather have had an extra month of lockdown in June or the whole last shitty year of restrictions that we had? Hindsight is a great thing. But we are being given this same choice again. And we are about to choose the stupid option.

So what's the 10/

problem? Part of the issue is the government doesn't get it. Boris really believes that the alternative to “opening up fast” is lockdown forever. But also, bits of the government still believe in getting everyone infected while "protecting the vulnerable" is the way out of 11/

this. Most scientists and medical organisations across the world disagree with this view. And part of it is that the British public only accept restrictions too late. As a country we are very bad at seeing what is coming in even just a few weeks time. The British public only 12/

ever support restrictions when there is so much covid that literally tens of thousands of people are dying and the hospitals aren’t coping. We are bad at preventative measures.

It's worth saying that those people who believe in “protecting the vulnerable” and then letting 13/

the virus infect everyone are particularly stupid: if they had been reading the news they would understand what happened in the city of Manaus in Brazil. In the first wave last year, Manaus was very hard hit and 50% of people got infected. Everyone assumed there would be 14/

something like herd immunity. What actually happened was a second wave, with a different variant, loads and loads more people in the city got sick. The second wave was even more catastrophic than the first. The hospitals ran out of oxygen. Large numbers of people died. 15/

Meanwhile, the new variant that developed in this setting seems to be more resistant to the vaccines, and certainly evaded existing immunity from infection.

So what needs to happen? Firstly, the idea of trying to open everything as quickly as possible needs to be 16/

dropped. The press need to stop pushing it, and so do the government. Just think to yourself, when was the last time you saw a newspaper asking the government for more and better public health measures rather than fewer? Instead the British press has treated public health 17/

measures as a burden, instead of something that saves lives and stops people getting sick. British people need to stop sucking it up. Instead we should believe in opening up when it is safe.

Secondly, we should lockdown for a few extra weeks to prevent more lockdowns and 18/

restrictions in the future. If we are going to learn from our mistakes, we have learnt that we always open up a bit too early, and the result is usually bad. Meanwhile, we know from our experience that if we open up too early and case numbers spike again, the British public 19/

and the government will only support new measures to stop it too late. So we have to prepare people to do this a bit differently: we need to get people used to the idea of accepting and supporting restrictions *before it is too late* even if tens of thousands of people dying 20/

around us is still a few weeks away.

Thirdly, we should look at what worked at wasn't lockdowns in other places. Really the main thing that proved effective was isolating infected people away from their homes in quarantine centres, instead of "self-isolation." Turns out we 21/

are bad at self-isolation. So people who are infected and their close contacts should be removed from their home, and taken to a quarantine centre for 10 days as soon as there is a case. The government should also pay people properly for this time.

Fourthly, we should have 22/

a government policy to keep the virus at the lowest possible levels, instead of at "manageable levels." We need to give up on all the "protect the vulnerable" narratives, and instead try to protect everyone. In order to do this we need to do what the WHO has been telling us 23/

to do since March last year: find every single case, test all of their contacts, isolate every case and their contacts so that they can't spread it, and give people financial support through isolation, while making sure their dependants are looked after.

Fifthly, try to 24/

have a situation that isn't a recipe for vaccine-resistant strains to develop in the UK. If we have large numbers of infections while the population if partially vaccinated, this is what will inevitably happen. So we need to not do that.

It feels so ridiculous having to 25/

write this after a year. It should be obvious. Instead everyone is cheering "8th of March, 8th of March, 8th of March." And everything is going to play again on repeat.

And before I get a whole lot of butthurt comments about how awful lockdown is, I know. I have been 26/

separated from my partner behind closed borders for the last year. It massively sucks. What I am suggesting is a way out of this.

As for vaccines: we really need more data to be released urgently. It seems like some of the vaccines prevent a lot of transmission while 27/

others don't. We don't really know how safe people are after a single dose - especially in vulnerable groups. They might help us a lot. But we have to wait and see. Right now the government is behaving like good protection from a single dose of the Oxford vaccine makes 28/

you definitely "safe." It might do and it might not. We don't know, and we have to say we don't know if this is true. But if we wait a little longer we will know for sure one way or the other, rather than risking everything on a stupid prediction. 29/29.