

An Open Letter to the Premier of Western Australia, Hon. Mark McGowan MLA, from Senior Specialist Doctors of Perth.

Dear Premier,

We write to express our deepest concern regarding the need to immediately take strong actions to enforce quarantine and social isolation measures including the immediate closure of schools and other non-essential places of mass gathering; as well as the closure of our State borders.

We also call upon you to urgently source more ventilators, personal protective equipment and medical supplies.

Western Australia is experiencing the proverbial calm before the storm, with various models pointing to hospital admissions reaching crisis level in May.

Without strong action and decisive leadership, first tens, then hundreds and then thousands of vulnerable West Australians will die as a result of Covid-19 infection.

Most of these deaths will be in the course of just a few weeks. There will be many who will become critically ill and die with hospital staff unable to do anything to prevent their demise.

We will have colleagues who die.

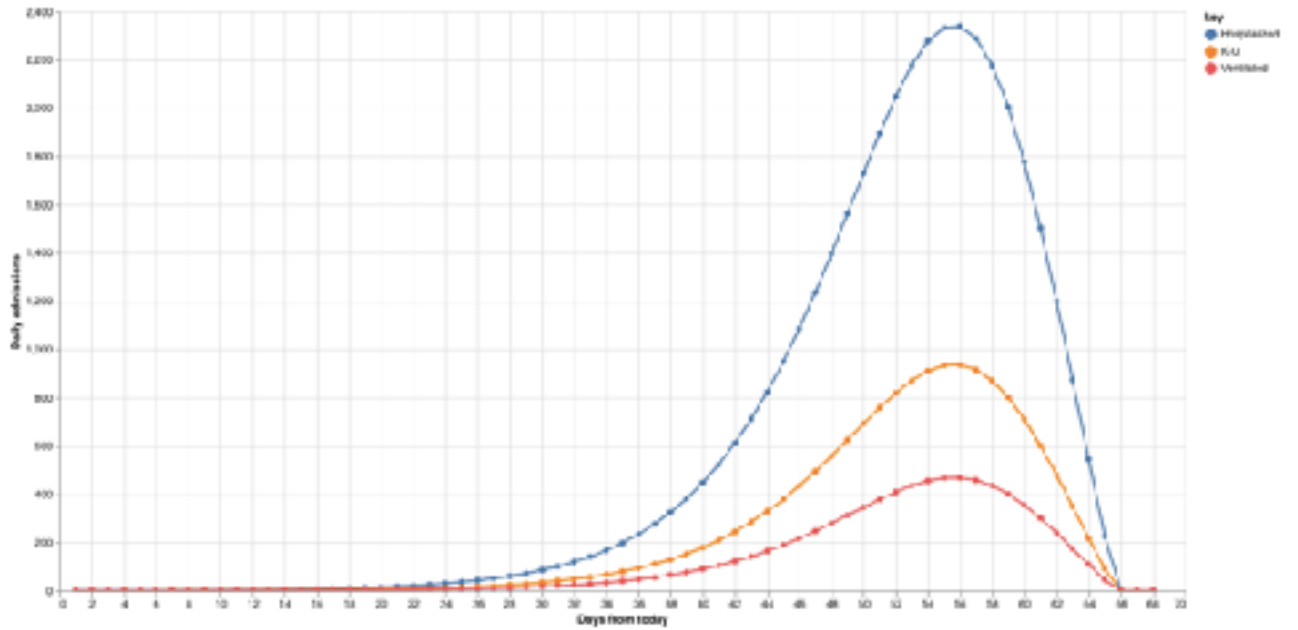
We will have nurses, business leaders, school teachers, mothers, fathers, and our grandparents who will die with us unable to do anything but watch it happen.

We will run out of ventilators and those who need them will then die. This will lead to a four-to-five fold increase in the overall Covid-19 death rate, compared to a system which is not in crisis.

Social isolation measures to date are manifestly inadequate to stop, or even significantly slow down, the rate of infection.

Recent daily increases in confirmed cases point to a doubling of cases every three days, this is consistent with a system where no significant social isolation measures are in place.

If no further action is taken we can expect DAILY demand in Perth for hospital beds, ICU beds and ventilators to look like this:

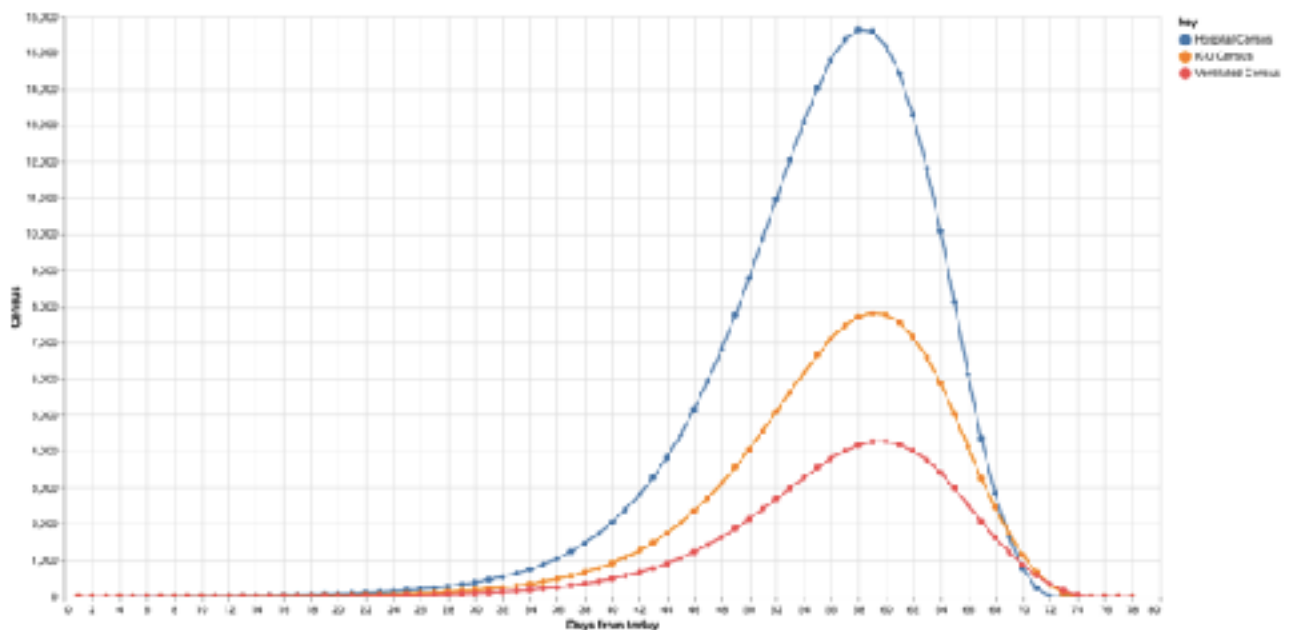


At its peak, in mid-to-late May, you can expect NEW demand for over 400 ventilators PER DAY. In practice, almost all of these patients will die.

Below, we attach a projection of the total number of beds, ICU beds and ventilators which would be occupied at one time. It peaks at over 15000 - approximately three times the number of beds available in Perth.

And peak need for ventilators will be over four thousand in a system where we have less than two hundred. Again, most of those needing a ventilator will die.

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However, the immediate actions named above can make a difference:

Predicted Peak Demand for Beds, ICU and Ventilators for Perth Region - Four Day Doubling Time

Social Distancing reduction in normal social contact as a percentage	Date of Peak Demand	NEW Admissions on that day (all)	Total Beds needed on same day (Census)	NEW ICU Admissions on that day	Total ICU needed on same day (Census)	NEW Ventilator Admissions on that day	Total Ventilators needed on same day, (Census)
10 per cent	21 May 2020	1883	12050	736	5836	358	3046
20 per cent	1 June 2020	1365	8903	546	4374	273	2368
30 per cent	15 June 2020	934	6194	373	3079	157	1678
40 per cent	12 July 2020	550	3873	224	1974	112	1099
50 per cent	21 August 2020	262	1817	135	918	52	507
Source:	Fiona Gate University https://pan.cuhk.edu.hk/2020/04/22/the-50000-cases-of-covid-19-in-perth						
Assumptions:	Calculated on March 20 at which time there were 61 confirmed cases in Perth and assumed three hospitalised cases (two known and one death). Input assumptions: Currently Hospitalised 3 cases, Doubling time at zero social distancing: four days. Hospitalisation rate 9 per cent of TOTAL infections, ICU rate 1 per cent of TOTAL infections, ventilator rate 1 per cent of TOTAL infections. Hospital length of stay: 7 days, ICU length of stay 9 days, Vent length of stay 10 days. Regional population 504000.						
Notes:	Due to low numbers of admissions on date of calculation, Perthnet returned a 100 per cent detection rate, which is optimistic. Peak demand was calculated based on new admissions. Elsewhere census peak demand lags and is slightly higher than the figures reported for the same day.						

Social distancing must be increased and enforced so that West Australians are made to halve their social contact, at a minimum. This will reduce the onset of peak demand by a full three more months and reduce peak daily hospital admissions by over 1000 per day.

Quarantine of Covid-19 positive cases and contacts must be enforced. Schools must close. WA State borders need to shut except for the most essential travel.

We feel the community is ready to make the sacrifices required and we are not prepared to let this monumental disaster happen without loudly speaking out because we don't want to watch people die. You have the power to change the future.

People will forgive the imposed hardships they may suffer but they will not forgive us if we, knowingly, do not act now to stop the demise of thousands of Western Australians.

Yours Sincerely,

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 Head of Department, Infectious Diseases, St John of God Subiaco Hospital

Dated:

And the undersigned:

- Dr Mihitha Ariyapperuma (Ari), MBBS FRACP, Medical Oncologist
- Dr Omar Azzam, MBChB MRCP(UK) FRACP, Nephrologist and General Physician
- Dr Neil Banham, MBBS FACEM, Emergency Physician
- Mr Mayank Bhandari MBBS MS FRACS PhD, Hepatology-Pancreatico-Biliary and Transplant Surgeon
- Dr Devind Bhullar, BMedSc MBBS FRACP FCSANZ FACNEM, Interventional Cardiologist
- Dr Lewis Blennerhassett, MBBS, FRACS, Plastic Surgeon
- Professor Shirley Bowen BMed MM FACSHM FRACP, Infectious Diseases Physician
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- Dr Quentin Summers, MBBS FRACP MD, Respiratory Physician
- Dr Christopher Stanley, MBBS FRACP, Respiratory Physician
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