<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid>

**[Matt Ridley](https://www.spectator.co.uk/writer/matt-ridley)**

**A cure for Covid may arrive faster than a vaccine**

Spectator [25 April 2020](https://www.spectator.co.uk/magazine/25-04-2020)

A striking feature of Covid-19 is how medieval our response has had to be. Quarantine was the way people fought plagues in the distant past. We know by now that it will take many months to get a vaccine, whose job is to prevent you getting the disease. But what about a cure once you have caught it: why is there no pill to take? The truth is that, advanced as medical science is, we are mostly defenceless against viruses. There is no antiviral therapy to compare with antibiotics for treating bacteria.

Arguably, virology in 2020 is where bacteriology was in the 1920s. At the time, most of the experts in that field — including Alexander Fleming and his mentor, the formidable Sir Almroth Wright (nicknamed Sir Always Wrong by his foes) — thought a chemical therapy that killed bacteria without harming the patient was a wild goose chase. Instead, they argued, the way to fight bacteria was to encourage the body’s immune system. ‘Stimulate the phagocytes!’ was the cry of Wright’s semi-fictional avatar Sir Colenso Ridgeon in George Bernard Shaw’s play *The Doctor’s Dilemma* (referring to white blood cells). Vaccines should be used to treat as well as prevent infections, thought Wright and Fleming. Fleming then turned this theory upside down with his discovery of penicillin in 1928.

There are two reasons for this failure to have anything on the shelf that can be used to treat viruses: one biological, the other economic. The biological problem, as Amesh Adalja of Johns Hopkins University argued in a prescient call to arms just before the pandemic struck, is that viruses do not have their own biochemistry, because they borrow ours.

So unlike, say, tuberculosis, there is not much to attack. As any doctor will tell you, antibiotics are no use in fighting a virus. They interfere with machinery found only in bacteria, but there is no equivalent machinery in viruses — which are just a bunch of genes (15 of them in the case of Sars-CoV-2) that borrow our body’s machinery to replicate themselves.

The problem is that viruses differ from each other, so treatments that work for one seldom work for another. The drugs that work against HIV-1, the main cause of Aids, sometimes do not even work against HIV-2,a milder version of the virus. Those that work against herpes don’t kill the very similar cytomegalovirus. One influenza drug works only against influenza A and not B. One antiviral kills just one genotype of hepatitis C. It is no coincidence that the antiviral treatments capable of attacking more kinds of virus, such as ribavirin, are also the most toxic to the patient, because they tend to attack the machinery of the host as well.

This is where the economic argument comes in. Highly specific drugs do not repay the vast sums necessary to get them through clinical trials to prove their efficacy. Many viruses lay out patients for only a short time — perhaps a matter of days. So patients do not come back for repeat prescriptions, further denting the incentive to develop the drug. Aids and herpes are long-lasting exceptions — sexually transmitted diseases need to lie low inside your genes to give you time to move on to a new partner — which is why they have attracted attention from pharmaceutical firms. By the time some drugs were ready to be tried against ebola in the 2014-15 epidemic in West Africa, it was over.

**Protease inhibitors**

None the less, the battles against HIV, ebola and Sars have left us with many more candidates for curing Covid-19 than we would otherwise have. The long search for Aids cures was eventually won with the help of drugs called protease inhibitors, which work by preventing the ‘cleavage’ (precise breaking) of a protein molecule, essential to the manoeuvre by which the virus gets into a cell.

Protease inhibitors tend to be highly specific, so the HIV ones are not necessarily useful against Sars-CoV-2. A different protease inhibitor, however, called camostat mesylate, already approved for use in Japan as a treatment for pancreatitis, is showing promise. It was found in 2012 to work against Sars in the laboratory. If successful, camostat mesylate will be useless against most other viruses, making it unprofitable in normal times, but in a pandemic of this size, Japan’s Ono Pharmaceutical won’t be out of pocket.

**Remdesivir**

Invented by Gilead Sciences, the California firm that developed several HIV therapies, this compound fools the cell into using a fake version of a particular molecule when copying the virus’s genes, which are made of an alternative version of DNA called RNA. In theory such a trick should work against any virus that uses RNA for its genes and should not hurt patients because their genes are made of DNA. In 2015 remdesivir worked against ebola in monkeys, but in the 2018 epidemic in Congo it failed to make sufficient difference to ebola patients compared with other treatments.

In the lab, remdesivir kills a variety of coronaviruses and a recent report found that it cured cats of a coronavirus infection. During the current epidemic, it has been rushed into treatment on a compassionate-use basis in America for people who are dying. Preliminary results are promising and have caused a flurry of recent optimism, and the results of larger, controlled trials are eagerly awaited. However, remdesivir is unlikely to be the silver bullet because it is probably best if taken early in the infection, but you would not want to take it if you had a mild bout. It’s administered intravenously and has some nasty side effects.

**Favipiravir**

There is more hope for favipiravir, sold as Avigan, one of the few antiviral treatments showing promise against more than one kind of virus. Bizarrely, it’s made by a subsidiary of Fujifilm, which diversified into chemicals and pharmaceuticals to avoid the fate of Kodak. Invented during the search for a herpes cure, it has since shown promise against influenza. Though good in the laboratory, it was only partially effective against ebola in Guinea in 2014, but initial trials on 80 coronavirus patients in China this year have suggested that it can speed up the recovery time for Covid patients, perhaps cutting it in half. So Fujifilm is now rushing to increase production and the drug has been cleared for use against coronavirus in Japan. The good news is it’s a pill, not an injection, and has few side effects except in pregnant women, where it is not safe.

The urgency surrounding a viral pandemic is fertile soil for exaggeration. Tamiflu, for influenza, is one of the world’s best-selling drugs, and governments spent billions acquiring stockpiles of it during the 2009 swine flu panic, to the benefit of Roche in particular. A lengthy campaign by the *British Medical Journal* has challenged the effectiveness of Tamiflu, pointing out that it has not been shown to work in randomised controlled trials. The drug’s defenders say this is unfair, as the medication’s partial effectiveness is so well established that it is now unethical deliberately to give half the patients in the trial no drug. In any case Tamiflu will not work against coronavirus: it targets an enzyme only used by influenza.

**Monoclonal antibodies**

If chemical treatments do not work, so-called monoclonal antibodies might. If someone recovers, their own body produces antibodies that smother the virus. These days it’s possible to mass-produce exact copies of the antibodies that work, using genetic engineering. Known as monoclonal antibodies, they proved to be the best way to treat ebola patients in Congo in 2018, when the US biotech firm Regeneron came up with a cocktail of human antibodies using genetically engineered mice. Regeneron has rushed a new cocktail of Covid-19 antibodies through the same procedure and hopes to have it ready to test in early summer. Scaling it up for mass production will not, however, be as easy as it would for a chemical pill.

**Hydroxychloroquine**

French studies suggest that hydroxychloroquine, the malaria medication championed by Donald Trump, may well be at least a partial cure, especially if used in conjunction with the antibiotic azithromycin. But clinical trials are still awaited. It is not yet clear how it works: after all, malaria is neither a virus nor a bacterium, but a parasite. But hydroxychloroquine is used against rheumatoid arthritis and the autoimmune disease lupus. In the laboratory, it does seem to slow and inhibit the infection of cells by this coronavirus.

Hydroxychloroquine also tends to team up with the metal zinc and there are persistent and reliable reports that zinc either stops viruses replicating or helps the immune response to them. A gold-standard review of clinical trials found that zinc lozenges do shorten the duration of a cold by somehow interfering with virus replication. This does not just seem to be a diminishing-returns effect whereby having too little zinc, like having too little vitamin D, is bad, but once you have enough, having even more is no better. But if it is, up to a quarter of people in developing countries are deficient in zinc, and zinc deficiency is not uncommon among the elderly in western countries, so this may be part of the explanation why some elderly people are more seriously affected. In short, zinc supplements as a cheap medication, unrewarding to big pharma and therefore neglected, cannot be ruled out as a useful thing to try. Intriguingly, too much zinc kills your sense of taste, as does Covid-19 in many cases.

Altogether, I am now optimistic that within a month or two, one of the 30 or more therapies currently being tested is likely to prove effective and safe. Primed by Aids and ebola, we know where to look for chemicals that inhibit viruses, or prevent viruses replicating, in a way that we did not 20 years ago. If people can take a pill that drastically reduces their chances of dying, and clears up their symptoms before they need to be admitted to hospital, then we may not have to wait for a vaccine to end the lockdown and achieve herd immunity.

Written by[Matt Ridley](https://www.spectator.co.uk/writer/matt-ridley)

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[Mr. Bilbo](https://disqus.com/by/euddr/) • [an hour ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4892113017)

The main drawback of Hydroxychloroquine is that it's associated with Donald Trump. No way a liberal GP will be associated with Mr. Trump even if the Hydroxychloroquine saved his patient's life.

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[Shane](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_u954mOagdv/) • [7 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891646603)

The scary thing to consider is that our treatments against bacteria are also destined to return back to their 1920's state, something clearly outlined by Chris Witty's predecessor and the wider scientific community for a number of years. Hopefully, worldwide, things are learnt from this Pandemic and we begin to take more seriously, the growing threat posed by Microorganisms.

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[soysauce1](https://disqus.com/by/soysauce1/) [Shane](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891646603) • [2 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4892012929)

You are so right, my late Mother was a newly qualified doctor a few years before antibiotics were introduced, she told me that there were wards full of people with puss filled untreatable ulcers, down to the bone in cases and all sorts of other horrors,. Then within no time after penicillin was introduced these wards closed almost overnight such were these wonders. She could never understand how when it has been obvious for decades that we were running out of options, its all very well saying there is no money in it for the drug companies but their CEO's and directors and holders can all get infections some which may involve puss filled sores, how stupid will they feel when their loved ones die?

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Very informative; thanks.

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[rational\_being](https://disqus.com/by/rational_being/) • [9 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891574642)

Caveat re quinine derivatives like Hydroxychloroquine for a minority of patients with a variant of the G6PD enzyme. Some men of Middle-eastern or African heritage have a modified G6PD which appears to confer resistance to malaria but also can result in a severe anaemia in reaction to quinine.

G6PD is coded on the X chromosome, so the variant is unlikely to be a problem for women (who have two X chromosomes). Men will inherit it from their maternal grandfather. Under normal circumstances, you would not know if you have the G6PD variant. I would hope that doctors would be on the look-out for people who might get an adverse reaction to Hydroxychloroquine, but I would not want to rely on that. If you are of Middle-eastern or African heritage, you should have your G6PD tested, becuase there are other contra-indicated drugs, also.

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[Kennie](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_Sof5xtxBkE/) [rational\_being](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891574642) • [6 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891701480)

Then I will just stick to a daily Gin & Tonic (or two)

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There probably is not enough quinine in a G&T to causer you trouble unless you are already a bit run down. Enjoy! Keep your morale up - an important part of staying healthy.

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Quarantine was used to control the narrative about the virus by the Chinese Communist party, they cared a lot about staying in power and nothing at all about anything else. The CCP said it worked and the western governments have followed their example out of stupidity and cowardice

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Why are we whipping ourselves into a fear frenzy for a viral infection with the mortality rate of the common flu? I expect on-going management of C19 will be similar to the flu - we will have the option of getting a C19 vaccine each autumn / winter, along with the flu vaccine.

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Simple, save the planet, wreck the worlds economy

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I'm sure everyone has noticed how the air is cleaner, the water clearer over the last few weeks of shut down. I guess we are not doing much damage if it can recover so quickly.

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Where I live we get a lot of planes circling overhead, not much in the way of noise but I have noticed over the years that the vapour trails can turn a clear blue sky into hazy cloud cover just in a few hours.
Not sure if this affects the climate though overall.

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[Ken](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_Y3S48Qud9t/) [Bob3](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891589330) • [8 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891608356)

Are there still as many planes overhead?

[Bob3](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_39JRCWfUNb/) [Ken](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891608356) • [8 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891615078)

Very few

[FoghornLeghornTheThird](https://disqus.com/by/FoghornLeghornTheThird/) • [11 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891505482)

So basically Donald Trump is right.

[adamsson66](https://disqus.com/by/adamsson66/) [FoghornLeghornTheThird](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891505482) • [9 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891570846)

No Orange Man Bad.

[trobrianders](https://disqus.com/by/trobrianders/) • [11 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891489102)

New name for it; the invisible mugger.

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[Stephen Ellis](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_Cz4ZlxMfT4/) • [3 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4888914668)

Brilliantly explained Matt, thanks

[justinae](https://disqus.com/by/justinae/) • [3 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887791565) • edited

There is only one way of transmitting Aids and that is a conscious act by the host and it is easy to put barriers in place to stop its spread.
It seems to me that the Chinese virus has a permanent environment in which to survive and they are the wet markets. The world will always be in danger while ever the host to the virus is allowed to exist.
Why should it be asking too much to get rid of them? Why is the International community hesitating?

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[Rufus](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_5cNUJWTM4v/) [justinae](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887791565) • [10 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891541291)

The Chinese appear to have hijacked the WHO....there are consequences to letting this happen

* + - [4](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[justinae](https://disqus.com/by/justinae/) [Rufus](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891541291) • [8 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891633623)

I listened to a lady representative from the WHO this morning and she directly contradicted the President's initial decision to close entry to the US. The political
element of this organisation was blatant. What has it to gain from straying so far from its purpose?

* + - * [1](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[injected](https://disqus.com/by/injected/) [justinae](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887791565) • [12 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891461616)

Because if you’re poor - really poor - you don’t have a fridge. Buying live meat is the only way to keep it fresh.

* + - [1](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Peter Bell](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_UmFpk4ZES7/) [injected](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891461616) • [12 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891478064) • edited

Maybe the Chinese government can divert some of it's cyber-warfare budget to providing every household with a fridge?

Maybe this is asking too much from a regime that values all human lives so cheaply when set against the advance of an ideology

* + - * [5](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Callipygian](https://disqus.com/by/brexitmolly/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887346033)

God I hope so.

* + [2](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[paullus](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_O7ul4C1SIJ/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886724558)

" If people can take a pill that drastically reduces their chances of dying, and clears up their symptoms before they need to be admitted to hospital," That sounds doable.

* + [2](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Brassmonkey](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_4DQcDAKtFz/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886472271)

So far as I am aware there is no truly effective drug against HIV, SARS or in deed the common flu. Decades and squillions of dollars have been spent trying, without success. A Covid19 vaccine in a few months ? I doubt it but there are conspiracy theories out there, some on Youtube that this is whole panic is being driven by big pharma to get trillions in vaccine research. Lot better if we just learned to live with it and waited for the best anti virus factory in the world, our bodies beat it. As this year has a low mortality rate it's not an unreasonable approach. Maybe Mr Ridley is a shill for Glaxo and Bayer?

* + [3](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Norman](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_Jx48B3e8Jz/) [Brassmonkey](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886472271) • [11 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891516426)

A good friend is a senior NHS consultant in HIV, who tells me that current drugs can render a sufferer symptom-free, un-contagious, and able to live their normal lifespan. If that's not an effective treatment I don't know what is.

[Damaris Tighe](https://disqus.com/by/DamarisTighe/) [Brassmonkey](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886472271) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886559125)

I think he's expecting effective drug therapies in a few months, not a Covid19 vaccine.

* + - [3](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[nlygo](https://disqus.com/by/nlygo/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886457577)

We have to be optimistic. There is no alternative.

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[adamsson66](https://disqus.com/by/adamsson66/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886434348)

HCQ can't work it too cheap and Orange Man Bad.

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[pjar](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_OkGLWVScQf/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886429297)

A pedant writes:

Erm, the illustration at the top of the piece is of DNA... Covid is a single strand RNA virus.

;o)

* + [9](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[anyoldhow](https://disqus.com/by/anyoldhow/) [pjar](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886429297) • [8 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891606210)

Well, yes, but it's good enough for the scientifically illiterate.

[Jolly Radical](https://disqus.com/by/jollyridicule/) [pjar](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886429297) • [11 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891494757)

Strictly speaking, that's closer to nitpicking than pedantry.

[jerry owen](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_Ghu8YPenmI/) [pjar](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886429297) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886567250)

I've only given you an uptick because you are gracious enough to acknowledge your pedantry !

* + - [6](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Huge Heffner](https://disqus.com/by/BrexFast/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886417387)

Superbly written and informative for the layperson (like me)
Thank you Matt

[Jingleballix](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_aHNn1ACB3U/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886392763) • edited

Imperial College and Chris Whitty have received $squillions from the Bill Gates Foundation - mainly for work related to his vaccination programme.

Chris Whitty has said that the lock-down must continue until a vaccine is available. No doubt Imperial College supports this position.

Is there a conflict of interest? The government is acting on the advice of scientists who have a vested interest in wanting to see this virus achieve great virulence. Let us recall, that these scientists’ previous predictions about danger and mass mortality have - so far - turned out to have been wildly inaccurate.

If so why is the government not acknowledging it - and why are investigative reporters not following up on this angle?

Are we being driven to economic chaos because of snake-oil designed to benefit the Bill Gates Foundation?

[23](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

[alecto](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_GMdoUG0vLA/) [Jingleballix](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886392763) • [7 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891663396)

Yes.

[Steve Hayes](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_pMgOJFJfJ1/) [Jingleballix](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886392763) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886707131)

Gates himself is hardly going to be in it for the money, and the wife is a doctor, and he has done good work on disease eradication ever since he stopped torturing us with Windows.

[Jingleballix](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_aHNn1ACB3U/) [Steve Hayes](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886707131) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886721433)

He wants to be in control.......and he probably wants to be beatified.

[alecto](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_GMdoUG0vLA/) [Jingleballix](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886721433) • [7 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891664152)

I'm willing to give him martyrdom!

[KJ](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_7EaNRKDHB2/) [Jingleballix](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886392763) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886466534)

Please name investigative reporters? Serious question, I'd like to follow 'em!

[Kennie](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_Sof5xtxBkE/) [KJ](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886466534) • [6 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891717471)

There are lots of them. BBC, Sky, ITV, Telegraph and even the Speccie all seem to have found lots of new "Reporters" of whom I have never heard, suddenly writing 'articles' or making videos containing their own new theories about this pandemic.

[KJ](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_7EaNRKDHB2/) [Kennie](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891717471) • [5 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891779690)

Lol.

[rosie](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_i6HXMffYdk/) [Jingleballix](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886392763) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886445531) • edited

Are you sure Whitty is in the same boat as Ferguson? (Ideologically.)

[Jingleballix](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_aHNn1ACB3U/) [rosie](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886445531) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886523175)

Yes.......he took £30m from the Gates Foundation in 2008 when working in Africa.

Even if Whitty is utterly impartial.......this connection should be investigated, and made clear to the country.

* + - * [7](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Huge Heffner](https://disqus.com/by/BrexFast/) [Jingleballix](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886392763) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886415625)

No we aren't.

* + - [3](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

[4](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[marylyn ford](https://disqus.com/by/marylynford/) [Huge Heffner](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886415625) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886737937)

Yes we are.

* + - * [3](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Bob3](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_39JRCWfUNb/) [Huge Heffner](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886415625) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886425155)

Well just who is driving us into economic chaos then?

* + - * [4](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Huge Heffner](https://disqus.com/by/BrexFast/) [Bob3](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886425155) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886479944)

Nobody. Its a virus

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[3](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[rosie](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_i6HXMffYdk/) [Bob3](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886425155) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886443587) • edited

Here it is the MSM and Opposition, to bring down HMG and get us back in the EU under Smarmer.

In America it is to bring down Trump.

In France it is to keep the unruly citoyens indoors.

* + - * + [12](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[mmac1968](https://disqus.com/by/mmac1968/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886371755)

I don't recall the world be restricted to cave access prior to penicillin so why now?

* + [4](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Callipygian](https://disqus.com/by/brexitmolly/) [mmac1968](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886371755) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887348733)

Try and think about it. I'm sure the average 15-year-old could conjure some likely reasons.

* + - [3](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Emmanuel Goldstein](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_KWFy16BV6Y/) [Callipygian](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887348733) • [11 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891506276)

That's a good point. Our response to this has been based on what a very average 15 year old would do

* + - * [2](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Callipygian](https://disqus.com/by/brexitmolly/) [Emmanuel Goldstein](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891506276) • [7 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891691113)

Nearly 5000 people died in America over the weekend from this thing: that's a total of nearly 55,000 confirmed deaths (never mind the true number of those never tested and/or died at home) in the USA alone. There are now 965,910 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the US (up 96,740 over the weekend), and it's still only April. We had to do what we had to do.

[Damaris Tighe](https://disqus.com/by/DamarisTighe/) [mmac1968](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886371755) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886556102)

Because now we have a much lower toleration of disease and untimely death. Previous generations took them for granted.

* + - [7](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

[1](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[mmac1968](https://disqus.com/by/mmac1968/) [Damaris Tighe](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886556102) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886862918)

We have a much higher tollerence to disease as we are all inoculated from the vast majority. What we are though as a society is ignorant of death, disease, war on the whole (our soldiers aren't clapped on return but ignored) and risk vs reward ignorant.

* + - * [8](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[BigAl](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_6bFCsR7I58/) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886365066)

Poor scientific content, missing key points and generally misleading.

I know the Spectators approach is to bring together diverse views but recently the amount of poor and hysterical articles has increased to crazy levels.

* + [4](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Callipygian](https://disqus.com/by/brexitmolly/) [BigAl](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886365066) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887349806)

***GONGGGG!*** But thank you so much for coming on the show!

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[John Billot](https://disqus.com/by/johnbleicsuk/) [BigAl](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886365066) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886398493)

Could you be more specific?

* + - [8](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Jonathan Weil](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_gWS9vLjfnc/) [John Billot](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886398493) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886415211)

Right! Quite annoying to cast doubt on the whole article without enlightening us with his superior knowledge...

* + - * [7](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Bob3](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_39JRCWfUNb/) • [5 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886342683) • edited

Surely the best cure in the end is to catch it.

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[Callipygian](https://disqus.com/by/brexitmolly/) [Bob3](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886342683) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887352309)

That assumes that a) one survives and b) one does not suffer serious and/or long-term consequences. Given the reports so far on lung damage, shortness of breath with exertion, and impaired sense of smell, not to mention a), I for one will do everything possible to dodge it!

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[Huge Heffner](https://disqus.com/by/BrexFast/) [Bob3](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886342683) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886416469)

Immunity may be very short.
Some cases in Korea already show reinfection.
Oxford vaccine should be significantly longer

* + - [1](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

[1](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[Bob3](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_39JRCWfUNb/) [Huge Heffner](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886416469) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886422604)

As I understand it a vaccine works by giving you a small does of the virus so you build up an immunity, I cannot see how a vaccine is any better than getting immunity through the real thing.
Most people get a really bad dose of flu once or twice in their life time, they don't catch it every year.

* + - * [2](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Steve Hayes](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_pMgOJFJfJ1/) [Bob3](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886422604) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886709466)

The real thing for some people is somewhere between horrible and mortal. I'm pretty sure that makes a vaccine better

* + - * + [1](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)
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[Bob3](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_39JRCWfUNb/) [Steve Hayes](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886709466) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886822471)

Lets wait and see what the side effects are, the flu vaccine is horrendous for some people

[2](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[marylyn ford](https://disqus.com/by/marylynford/) [Steve Hayes](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886709466) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886736126)

The real thing for most people is no synptoms and no immunity. Only 5% suffer as you describe

[1](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[Huge Heffner](https://disqus.com/by/BrexFast/) [Bob3](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886422604) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886480854)

The Oxford team is using a harmless monkey virus as vaccine, which gives longer immunity than the real virus.

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[Kennie](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_Sof5xtxBkE/) [Huge Heffner](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886480854) • [6 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891703764)

but, will we have enough harmless monkeys?

[2](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[Huge Heffner](https://disqus.com/by/BrexFast/) [Kennie](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891703764) • [4 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891900793)

No, but we could use vicious ones too at a pinch.
(there are plenty of those in Brussels)

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[hitchslap11](https://disqus.com/by/hitchslap11/) [Bob3](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886342683) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886368315)

Not every survivor will develop immunity. Nor is that immunity necessarily lifelong. I did a quick google search for vaccines for MERS and SARS when I saw the headline of this article. There is one, for either.

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[Jonathan Weil](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_gWS9vLjfnc/) [hitchslap11](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886368315) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886414329) • edited

Doesn’t have to be lifelong. Around a year would be enough - or however long it takes to develop a vaccine/effective treatment.

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[Huge Heffner](https://disqus.com/by/BrexFast/) [Jonathan Weil](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886414329) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886416822)

Reinfections already being reported in Korea

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[Jonathan Weil](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_gWS9vLjfnc/) [Huge Heffner](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886416822) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886417798)

How many though? You’d expect a few outliers. Wouldn’t change the overall effectiveness at a population level.

[2](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[Jonathan Weil](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_gWS9vLjfnc/) [Jonathan Weil](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886417798) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886420852)

(Also re S Korea, how confident can we be that the reinfections weren’t false positives first/second time round? It seems testing is an inexact science as yet; probably even less exact early on when some of these S Korean cases would have cropped up originally)

[4](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[Jonathan Weil](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_gWS9vLjfnc/) [Jonathan Weil](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886417798) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886418337)

Full disclosure: I have had it so am very much hoping that I am now immune, at least for a while!

[2](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[Callipygian](https://disqus.com/by/brexitmolly/) [Jonathan Weil](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886418337) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887355099)

Were you tested, or did you 'just' join the dots? Were you afraid or did you get it before the lethality for many was really obvious in the West? (And, how are you feeling now, if I may ask?) All the best.

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[Jonathan Weil](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_gWS9vLjfnc/) [Callipygian](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4887355099) • [4 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891840811) • edited

I haven’t been tested, but my pregnant wife has tested positive; she had fewer overt symptoms than me so seems pretty clear I had it too. In addition, both a paramedic and a GP have given me a confident diagnosis based on my symptoms. I was never consciously afraid for myself, although I did suffer two full-on anxiety attacks, one after a family conference call in which my parents’ safety appeared to be very low down the list of priorities of certain extended family members, the other after my wife appeared to be about to suffer major complications to her pregnancy. On both occasions, the anxiety attack manifested as shortness of breath, which I naturally attributed to covid (which made it worse). Now, seven weeks after first developing covid symptoms, I am still not anywhere near back to normal, although the covid itself is long gone. I now have a combination of post-viral illness with low mood and anxiety. I feel exhausted and sick, as though I had been poisoned. Ups and downs if anything make it worse — is the hope that gets you. The arrival of our (second) child is a deadline for being some use to man or best that I seem certain to miss (I would never have believed this possible a month ago, when I seemed for the first of several times to be almost better). It hasn’t been fun at all.

[1](https://disqus.com/embed/comments/?base=default&f=www-spectator-co-uk&t_i=blt2bed63306951402f&t_u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spectator.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fthe-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid&t_e=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_d=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&t_t=A%20cure%20for%20Covid%20may%20arrive%20faster%20than%20a%20vaccine&s_o=desc)

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[Callipygian](https://disqus.com/by/brexitmolly/) [Jonathan Weil](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891840811) • [4 hours ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4891854931) • edited

Poor you -- thanks for sharing what you've been through. I do feel that it's the real-life experiences like yours that might get (some) people to be less cavalier about a very serious illness. I would say that your recovery, though it seems slow, is well in hand and you'll only get better from here. Anxiety is a terrible drain, and dealing with that is really important, as well as the more obvious physical things. But of course you are also very concerned about your family, esp. wife and new and soon-to-be second child. If I were a pregnant wife, I would say to my husband: Don't worry about trying to be a man, just be healthy, just be here. Because the main thing is hanging in together. Best of luck and do take care. Oh, and one tiny hint: anything that can increase your oxygen intake -- whether it's Kundalini yoga (or any yoga) with various breathing approaches, or simply going for a brisk walk, or doing jumping jacks every now and then -- should help with both your mood and your physical recovery. On the other hand, the idea is to do what feels good, and not to load yourself up with 'shoulds'. If it doesn't feel good, don't do it!

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[Bob3](https://disqus.com/by/disqus_39JRCWfUNb/) [hitchslap11](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886368315) • [4 days ago](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-contenders-and-challenges-in-the-race-to-cure-covid#comment-4886384360) • edited

But what are the dangers from the vaccines?
I guess with £ billions involved they would keep quiet if some became apparent.
The desire for herd immunity through vaccine will be greater than the percentage of people that will suffer ill effects.
I would sooner take my chances with the virus than have to have a compulsory injection every year and have to wear a face mask when going out.
But then the vaccine bullies will kick off, everybody must have it or else the sky will fall in, another excuse for removing our freedoms I expect.