

The Conversation nobody is prepared to have

NPHET is essentially the Department of Health and they are covering their position having presided over a sub-optimal Public Health Service for decades and are used to bullying whoever is appointed as Minister for Health (*in fact Brian Cowan when he was appointed to Health famously declared it as Angola*).

NPHET know they are ill equipped to cope with a public health crisis and are prioritising "not being caught out in the short term" but not caring a hoot about the collateral fallout being caused to general health, mental health, the economy etc because the consequences across those domains are not readily visible yet and '*short termism*' is a well trodden strategy for the Department of Health.

Government went along with NPHET because they are an underconfident coalition living in fear of Sinn Fein who are not behaving like a normal opposition party because they are agreeing with NPHET and want Government to follow the advice and failure to do so will result in SF telling Government they have "blood on their hands" with covid deaths.

It has happened in other countries too because of the undue influence of the WHO whose guidance on PCR testing being the 'Gold Standard' was slavishly followed and used by each local NPHET (e.g. SAGE in the UK) manned by Public Health scientists i.e. lowly qualified civil servants in reality. The media are populist and non forensic and fuelled the fear and scaremongering which was based on inflated numbers of 'cases' which were driven by PCR false positives.

'Herd Instinct' sadly resulted in 'follow my neighbour' and hence the perfect storm or shitshow that we are being asked to endure.

Now, fast-forward and imagine, it is 2028 and you are asked to explain to someone as to how so much carnage was caused by Lockdown in 2020 and 2021 when the excess mortality caused by the virus was relatively miniscule.

Imagine trying to explain how the indirect excess mortality caused by the non-availability of screenings and elective treatments for serious medical conditions, which was actually more than the Covid deaths, was not seriously contemplated by the Government when it rubber-stamped the advice given to it by NPHET to shut the country down to protect the health service and the susceptible categories to the virus.

Imagine trying to explain how the Government accepted the deliberate scare tactics of NPHET who inflated the daily number of Covid 'cases' by defining each and every PCR positive test result as someone who was infectious with the virus and feeding this to the unquestioning national broadcaster for mass consumption by the public.

Imagine trying to explain how this was allowed to happen in spite of the international scientific community pointing to the inherent flaws in such practice of using PCR test results as a key foundation measure on which to formulate Public Health response strategy to the virus especially in the light of the known oversensitivity of PCR testing producing too many false positives.

Imagine trying to explain close contacts of people who received a PCR positive test result were tested also and notwithstanding the return of a negative test result were told to self-isolate for 14 days and that this accounted for large scale staff shortages in our hospitals during the height of the respiratory infection season.

Imagine trying to explain how Hospital Care Workers were not subjected to frequent rapid antigen testing before they commenced their duties to avoid the preventable high rate of transmission of the virus experienced by in-patients.

Imagine trying to explain how NPHET continuously refused to approve the widespread use of rapid antigen testing as a low cost and highly effective means of identifying infectious cases. But then the truth might turn out to be that to move away from the PCR testing, i.e. the 'Gold Standard' would be to cut off the supply of data critical for NPHET to keep the scaremongering going so that Government persisted with the blunt instrument of shutting down the country and the lives of the people.

Imagine trying to explain how the mental state of the people deteriorated under the pressure of lockdown to such an extent that the surge in Psychiatric problems for all ages overwhelmed the health service in the succeeding years to the lockdown and the suicide rate dramatically escalated.

Imagine trying to explain how the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors were decimated for a period of 3-5 years and how 40% of all small to medium sized business closed and never to re-open.

Imagine trying to explain how unemployment remained at 15% for 5 years.

Well when asked about how many actually died from Covid and what was the average age of death, imagine how difficult it will be to try to explain that all of the carnage outlined above was visited upon the people for a death toll of 4,000 in the first 12 months of the virus and 2,000 in the second 12 months with an average age of death of 84 in a country where the life expectancy is 82. It gets even more challenging to explain when more than 80% of those who died were co-morbid with a serious underlying condition.

You see, in the end this is all about the conversation nobody is prepared to have in the here and now in the glare of media as we would rather defer that to a much later date when we are looking back at how our cowardice and our pathetic enslavement to being PC above all else resulted in the single biggest surrender of freedoms and civil liberties in the history of the Free World.

But when we look back we will be looking at how we behaved and how we did nothing to shout stop because we hadn't got the courage to have the conversation around why it was more appropriate to shut down society, the economy and general living because it was more important to be seen to accept suppressive societal and economic measures with an unquestioned context that these in some way were linked directly to the prolonging of the lives of a very small few by a few months. That such Draconian measures were sheepishly accepted by us at the expense of seriously shortening the lives of the many and inflicting wanton destruction on peoples lives and general health and well-being in the process.

Yet it all could have been so different. We could have demanded that Government embrace widespread rapid antigen testing to be carried out at home, at work, at school on a 2 to 3 times a week basis and that people could be trusted with the responsibility to self-isolate if found to test positive. We could have found a pragmatic way to re-open society and the economy and carry on with our lives without the doomed to fail attempts of 'hunting the virus from our shores' as propagated by the misguided and unscientific zealots promoting the Zero Covid Island myth.

But then again, we Irish are very good at being martyrs for the cause. We were a pushover for a domineering Church and years of practice of Lenten abstinence and an obsessional acceptance of guilt conditioned us well for the marathon Lockdowns and obeying the craziest of rules.

We didn't need the force of the military or the police to ensure we complied because we live in the Valley of the Squinting Windows and are very good at squealing on our neighbours if they don't obey and RTE are the willing enforcers just to make sure.

That's what we will have to explain, but it won't be to a stranger or an alien from outer space it will most likely be to our children and grandchildren.