

Notes on 'Community Transmission'

Roger Clarke – 20 April 2020

I've been a bit bemused by the term 'community transmission'.

I can see a relatively early reference on a Dept of Health page dated 3 March 2020, but it's an ignorant politician's pages. It invokes the CMO, but it was very probably conceived and written by PR hacks:

<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-greg-hunt-mp/media/update-on-covid-19-in-australia-community-transmission>

The ABC tried to clarify the matter on 12 April 2020:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-11/what-is-community-transmission-of-coronavirus-covid-19/12142638>

>You may have heard the term "community transmission" being used in coronavirus news stories and updates from authorities.

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>It is used to describe the situation where a person is infected by the virus but they have not been overseas recently or been in recent contact with other confirmed cases.

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>The term basically means authorities are unable to trace the source of the infection.

The existing categories are:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-current-situation-and-case-numbers>

- Overseas-acquired c.65% 6600
- [Assumed] acquired from a confirmed case c.25% 1600

'Community transmission' means 'n.e.i.' (not elsewhere included) c.10% 800

(The data is quick calcs based on the Dept's daily-updated graph as at 20 Apr 2020)

The ABC's article continues:

>"What that means is members of the community who are infected could be circulating that haven't been tagged as infected ..."

That's why my model at <http://www.rogerclarke.com/EC/CVM.pdf> implies that **the Undetected-Infected status is the 64 (billion dollar) question.**

To gain some insight into that issue, we need:

- adequate random-sample testing of the public for the virus
- adequate random-sample testing for Undetected-Recovered instances

Then, combined with studies of people-contact dynamics, we'd have a basis for considering which forms of lock-down are very important to sustain, and what forms of lock-down relaxation are least likely to push the infection rate dangerously upwards.

Meanwhile, it's abundantly clear that medium-term isolation will be necessary among the most vulnerable:

- over 70s
- over-(50s?) with relevant conditions

And it's far from clear that isolation of children is needed.

Unfortunately, the ABC blots its copy-book by suggesting use of that idiotic proposition that there's 'one COVID-19 number to watch' - which puts total faith in one of the most unreliable metrics we've got, the 'number of new cases reported today and yesterday'.