

UK coronavirus policy places people aged 60-69 at increased risk

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The 7.3 million people in the UK aged between 60 and 69 are at increased risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19. Although the government's age threshold for isolation is 70 years and over, data from countries such as China and Italy show that people aged 60-69 years are also at high risk of complications and death from COVID-19.

Writing in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, Professor Azeem Majeed, Head of the Department of Primary Care & Public Health at Imperial College London, said that while this group is at a lower risk of severe illness when compared to those aged 70 years or older, their risk is still considerable.

Case fatality rates for those aged 60-69 are 3.5% in Italy and 3.6% in China. Other countries, including Switzerland and France, encourage those aged 65 and older to enforce strict public health measures due to their increased risk of severe [illness](#) and [death](#) from COVID-19.

Prof Majeed, who co-authored the paper with colleagues from Imperial College London and the

University of Exeter, said: "The UK's policy is at variance with the World Health Organisation, which states that those above the age of 60 years are at the highest risk, requiring additional preventative measures."

"National and global spread of COVID-19 is accelerating. To reduce hospitalisations, intensive care admissions and death we recommend that those aged between 60 and 69 are particularly stringent when implementing [public health](#) measures such as social distancing and [personal hygiene](#)."

The authors conclude: "In the absence of government guidance, people in this group can make their own informed decisions on how to minimise their risks of COVID-19 infection. This can include isolating themselves in a similar manner to that recommended by the UK government for people aged 70 years and over."

More information: Tasnime Osama et al, Protecting older people from COVID-19: should the United Kingdom start at age 60?, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* (2020). [DOI: 10.1177/0141076820921107](#)

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