

Q: Why have certain mandates been lifted despite the fact that the current pandemic is definitely not over?

A from Dr Svetaz: Great question! Politics seems to override public health based on science. And I feel that most people are not ready for the fight. The other piece is that Omicron is so contagious that masks are not protecting as much as they were for other variants. We should stay on the alert for another variants

A From Dr. DeBruin: In general, ethics requires that we use the least intrusive measures possible to achieve our goals. That is to say, there is good justification to limit people's liberty by mandating that they get vaccinated or wear masks if doing so is necessary to protect the public's health, including those among us who are most vulnerable to COVID-19. Some people argue that, now that fewer people are getting ill than previously and we have effective treatments for the disease, it is less justifiable to impose mandates. What we need is an objective discussion of current risks of the illness and benefits of re-issuing mandates, to determine if mandates are still justifiable. I agree with Dr. Svetaz that, unfortunately, discussions of these issues in our country now are so political; the kind of ethical debate we need is hard to promote.

Q: Is anything you are proposing something that could be implemented into the ongoing COVID pandemic?

A from Dr Svetaz: Continue to monitor how many people are affected, sick leave and economic incentives to the same community that we will be more vulnerable now than ever. To continue to monitor and affirm teens in their quest for normalization of a situation that puts them on edge not only for school interruption but out of fear of the unknown and lack of control.

A from Dr. DeBruin: I agree with Dr. Svetaz that it is important to continue monitoring data so we have an evidence base to identify equity issues and inform response, as well as to maintain or expand economic measures like paid family/sick leave and expanded eligibility for health insurance. These are just some examples of measures that we can take to promote equity.

Q: How did the teaching of science adversely affect the public's response to public health? Specifically the reliance on memorization. Did the lack of bedside clinicians

adversely affect the ability of public health to get its message out? Could we make public health more fun? Like cute but effective masks.

A from Dr Svetaz: I do not think it was the teaching, but the collusion with politics and politicians messing with science. I think people tried to make it fun, the others made it scary and threatening.

A from Dr. DeBruin: I'm not qualified to speak about how best to educate people in the sciences. But I do think that we need to work on improving how we communicate to the public during public health emergencies like this pandemic.