

Boldly facing a deadly virus

Letters

Fri 20 Mar 2020 18.53 GMT

Dr Lyn Jenkins proposes that NHS England sets up a homecare service for Covid-19 and staffs it with retired GPs, district nurses and palliative care nurses.



▲ 'I do not wish to die in a hospital in chaos, or use up a ventilator that could be put to better use,' says Dr Lyn Jenkins. Photograph: UIG/Rex/Shutterstock

Polly Toynbee makes the point that hospitals will have to ration ventilators and therefore exclude elderly people because they are least likely to benefit ([Coronavirus will force hospital chiefs to make some terrible choices](#), 17 March).

As an almost 70-year-old retired GP, I consider that I have about a 5% chance of dying from the virus - and have a high expectation of catching it. I do not wish to die in a hospital in chaos, or use up a ventilator that could be put to better use. Nor do I wish my family to suffer a traumatic bereavement as a result of a badly managed death (as a bereavement support volunteer, I am well aware of how the circumstances of death impact on grief).

I have therefore told my GP and those around me that, if I contract the virus, I do not want to go to hospital if I develop the severe form. I would prefer to be cared for at home with adequate drug control of symptoms and oxygen (unventilated) if necessary. I suspect many others would like the same.

I propose that **NHS** England sets up a homecare service for Covid-19 and staffs it with retired GPs, district nurses and palliative care nurses, who will all have had experience in caring for sick and dying patients at home. This would give a realistic option for patients who did not want to go into hospital. It would also ease the burden on hospitals.

Dr Lyn Jenkins

Chesham, Buckinghamshire