



Brazilian National Academy of Medicine and UK Academy of Medical Sciences joint statement on COVID-19

Prevention and management of viral pandemics is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. Tackling epidemics, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, must be a global effort, involving multidisciplinary research teams working across borders and with policy makers, healthcare systems and all sectors of society. Much attention is rightly given to the development of new drugs and vaccines during major outbreaks, but it is equally important to invest in understanding the virus and how to reduce the impact of the epidemic. This encompasses such areas as:

- effectiveness of key public health interventions
- robust assessments of parameters of epidemic spread
- intelligence on key drivers and impacts such as social, economic and political factors and human behavior
- mental health and the need for further studies of interventions on the mental wellbeing of populations
- effective communication with, assistance to, and engagement of the public in a collective societal effort.

Bringing the epidemic under control is critically dependent on developing rapid diagnostics, case identification and isolation, physical distancing, and optimising surveillance methods and international data sharing.

As stated in the Inter-Academy Panel (IAP) document "Letter from Rio", merit-based academies have the capability to mobilize experts worldwide from different disciplines to assist in defining, addressing and meeting such a challenge. These experts can provide independent advice to governments and decision-makers on the best science, technology and innovation under the form of policy-relevant statements, reports and discussion forums, using the best available scientific evidence.

In the present crisis, the Brazilian National Academy of Medicine and the UK Academy of Medical Sciences (UKAMS) are collaborating and sharing experiences to better collaborate in their respective countries with the view that science, science values and scientific approaches to problem-solving remains the best hope for humanity to overcome the present crisis.