

‘You Can’t Postpone Youth’: Those Least at Risk from COVID Pay Highest Price, Says Doctor

Senior medic who resigned for criticising State’s response to pandemic questions HSE data

By [Dr. Martin Feeley](#)

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The senior [Health Service Executive](#) doctor who resigned from his post days after he criticised “draconian” anti-Covid-19 restrictions has insisted that we must “stop scaring the nation” and encourage personal choice.

Dr [Martin Feeley](#), who was the clinical director of Dublin Midlands [Hospital](#) Group, which includes the State’s biggest hospitals, resigned with immediate effect in mid-September.

Writing in today’s Irish Times, Dr Feeley said the number of people who have so far died of Covid-19 in [Europe](#), up to August 10th, stood at 182,639, “slightly above the number who died three years ago as a result of flu (152,000)”.

The number of patients who died in Europe from the 1917-1918 Spanish flu was about 2.64 million – proportionately, this would be equivalent to about 7.4 million deaths of today’s European population.

“It is not for want of good reason that deaths are now referred to as Covid-19-associated deaths,” he writes, adding that 88 per cent of a group of New York patients had “more than one underlying condition”.

The presence of a chronic illness in patients “is the all-important factor in determining the risk, even in the elderly”, he said, saying 83 per cent of the 6,000 nursing home residents who had tested positive for Covid-19 had recovered.

However, Dr Feeley was sharply critical of how the HSE was presenting data about the Covid-19 risks facing overweight people: “The best-kept secret regarding Covid-19 is the vulnerability of overweight individuals.”

The information is not published “for reasons unknown”, he said, while the lack of awareness among the population at large “is exacerbated, if not caused, by HSE-published data on risk factors.

At-risk category

Someone is obese, according to the HSE’s calculations, if they have body mass index of 40 “whereas most international literature uses a BMI of 30”. Using the lower number, a person 178cm (5ft 10in) in height is obese if they weigh more than 95kg (15st).

Under the BMI 40 rule used by the HSE, 3 per cent of the State’s adult population is considered at risk, but this number rises to 23 per cent if a BMI of 30 is applied: “The HSE data therefore grossly understates the obesity risk,” he complains.

Questioning the State’s strategy, Dr Feeley said the costs were being met by younger people, “not by over-65s who are guaranteed their pension”, or those with guaranteed salaries “who decide to impose these draconian measures”.

Saying that many people were facing “an existence, not living”, he went on: “You can’t postpone youth. In essence, those least at risk are paying the highest price both financially and in their quality of life.”

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Our thanks to the Irish Times and to Shane Quinn for brining this article to our attention

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