

The government response to COVID-19 failed to consider the cost of social restrictions on mental health. It also tarnished the reputation of Australia as a country that places a high value on personal freedoms and freedom of conscience including ensuring informed consent without coercion when it comes to health measures. There will be long-term negative ramifications on mental health as well as Australia's influence in the global community.

The government did well to inform people of the dangers of COVID-19 but it should have allowed people to self-regulate. The vulnerable could still have been protected through the wearing of protective gear around them without locking down the general population.

What was lacking in the government response was a focus on early intervention strategies. Instead of exploring them, the government chose to shut down this discussion in the severest way by threatening highly esteemed doctors with the loss of medical registration. There were highly qualified doctors and scientist who were presenting early intervention and treatment strategies which have been proven to be effective. The government should have listened to them.

The cost of building more hospitals would have been less than the costs on the economy from the lockdowns and the cost of the job-keeper initiative. This would also have eased the current pressure on the hospital system.