

**11:10am – 11:25am**

# **Public health messaging - what evidence is there about what makes public health messaging effective in times of crisis**

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# Information overload



**Scientists warn 1 June is too early for schools to reopen in England**

**Independent Sage committee says more time is needed to set up coronavirus track and trace**

**BIG PROBLEMS Obesity and coronavirus: is obesity a risk factor for Covid-19?**

Clare Colley  
19 Apr 2020, 18:32 | Updated: 19 Apr 2020, 20:26

**Smoking and coronavirus: Does smoking prevent coronavirus or are smokers more at risk?**

**Drinking alcohol 'makes people more vulnerable to coronavirus', WHO warns**

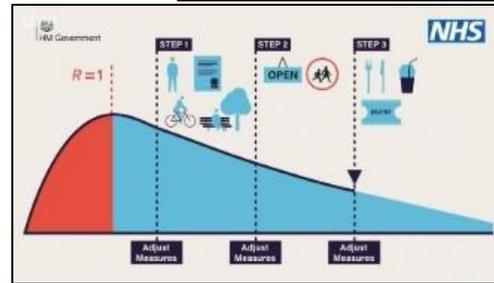
A fresh report by the World Health Organisation has warned that drinking alcohol could make coronavirus symptoms worse for patients as it can weaken immune systems

**GOV.UK CORONAVIRUS ALERT**  
New rules in force now: you must stay at home. More info & exemptions at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) Stay at home. Protect the NHS. Save lives.

SMS + 14:37

**sky news** SkyNews @SkyNews · Apr 6  
**Boris Johnson** has been moved to an ICU after his condition worsened, Downing Street has said.

It is understood that he remains conscious, and that the move is a precaution in case he requires a ventilator.

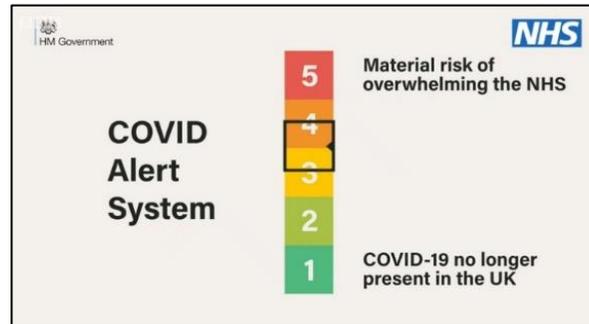
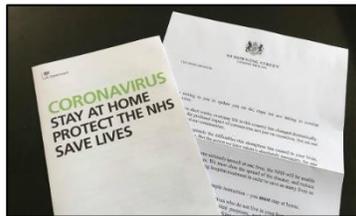


**STAY ALERT  
CONTROL THE VIRUS  
SAVE LIVES**

**Coronavirus: 1.3 billion smokers urged to quit to reduce COVID-19 risks**

The cigarette industry is urged to stop making tobacco, as a study says smokers with COVID-19 are more likely to be seriously ill.

Monday 6 April 2020 19:15 UK



**BBC NEWS** 1m ago  
**Breaking News**  
People in England advised to aim to wear face coverings in some enclosed spaces such as public transport or shops

$$\text{COVID Alert Level} = R \text{ (rate of infection)} + \text{Number of infections}$$



# Issues for consideration

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ANXIETY



ISSUES ABOUT  
TRUST



DIFFERENT  
STAGES



PROCESSING  
HEALTH  
INFORMATION



RISK  
PERCEPTION



UNCERTAINTY



HEALTH  
LITERACY



ALERT  
FATIGUE

## Our aim

To conduct a rapid review of the literature to identify and synthesise evidence relating to **effective communication methods for informing the public of how to manage risks and prevent transmission during times of public health pandemics or epidemics.**



# Objectives

To identify evidence for **effective public health communication strategies** in supporting key behaviour changes required to manage health risks.



To identify **types of communication** useful for different types of messages



To examine the use of different types of messaging for **different time points** during an ongoing pandemic where information may be required to change.

# Methods

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- **Type of interventions/public health communication:**
  - Mobile tech, news broadcasts, newspapers, newspapers, press conferences, social media, post/letters
- **No restrictions on study design**
- **Adult populations (aged 18 and over)**
- **Intervention(s):**
  - Strategies used to communicate uncertainties, different sources of information, timing of recommendations
- **Main outcome(s)**
  - Impact on public acceptance of health messages, compliance with recommendations, perceptions and psychological impact of risk information; changes and shifts of information during the course of the event/emergency.

# Literature search

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- Search strategy
  - Studies published in English
- 4,569 potentially relevant articles and 518 through other sources (pre-print and grey literature)
- 432 full text screening
- 35 included to present preliminary findings
  - 3 systematic reviews
  - 32 individual studies
    - Randomised Control Trial: 2
    - Survey: 9
    - Qualitative design: 16
    - Experimental: 3
    - Rapid review: 1
    - Commentary: 1
- Public Health Crisis include: H1N1 (12), Influenza (3), SARS (2), COVID-19 (1), Ebola (4), West Nile Virus (1), Bird Flu (1), Zika (1)

# Preliminary findings: Identifying barriers

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Different levels of  
preconceptions<sup>7</sup>



Misconceptions  
about self and  
distance to risk<sup>8,9</sup>



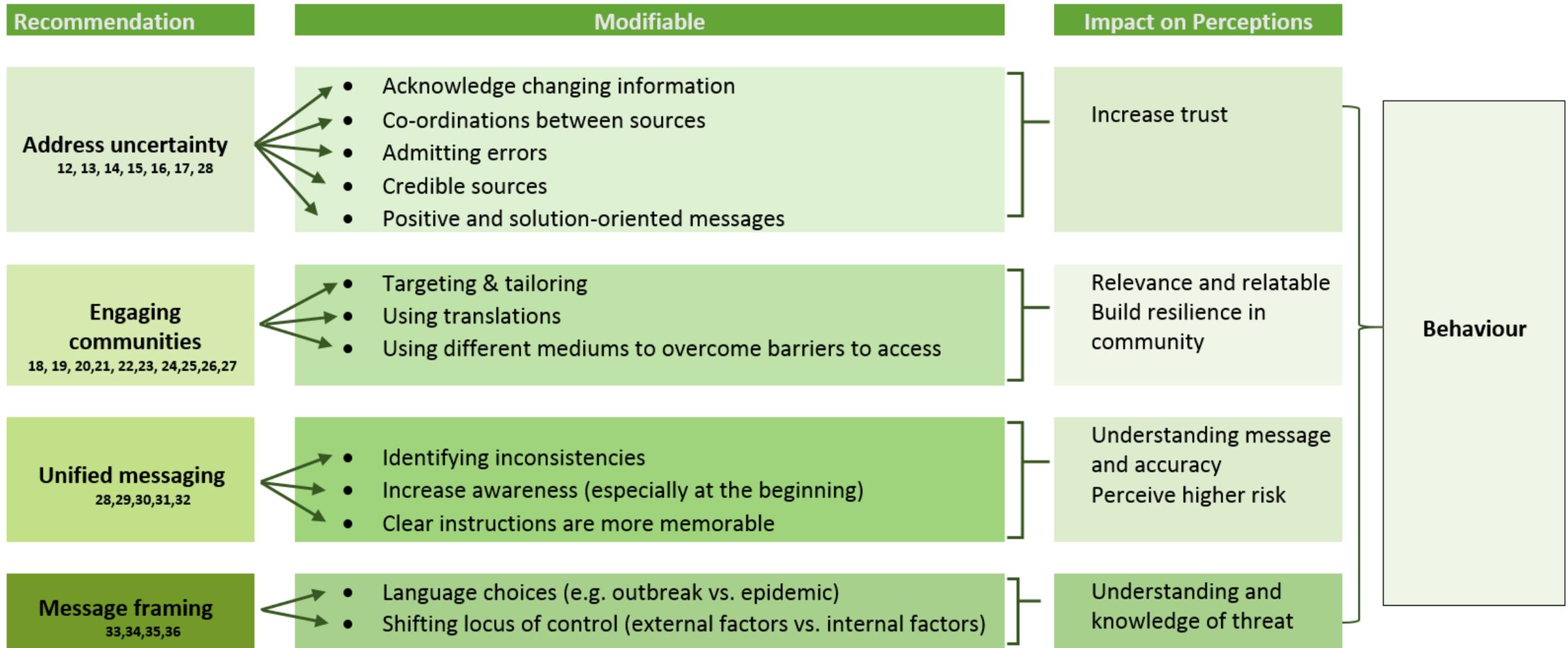
“Boomerang Effect”  
need behavioural  
modelling too not  
just prompts<sup>10</sup>



Simultaneous  
knowledge of threat  
and alert level induces  
panic<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Hickey 2014; <sup>8</sup> Davis 2015; <sup>9</sup> Teasdale 2011; 2014 <sup>10</sup> Davis 2013; <sup>11</sup> Jhummon-Mahadnac, 2012

# Preliminary findings: recommendations



# Conclusions

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Public health messaging is a complex issue - the aim should not just be about increasing knowledge and awareness as these alone will not change behaviours or increase adherence to behaviours



“One size fits all” approach is alienating and increases likelihood to ignore the messages however, there needs to be a balance of consistency and tailoring taking into account preconceptions



**Next steps** ... continue synthesising data and writing a report to give clear recommendations and how to address barriers