

SPI-M-O: Consensus Statement on COVID-19

Date: 3rd November 2021

All probability statements are in line with the framework given in the Annex.

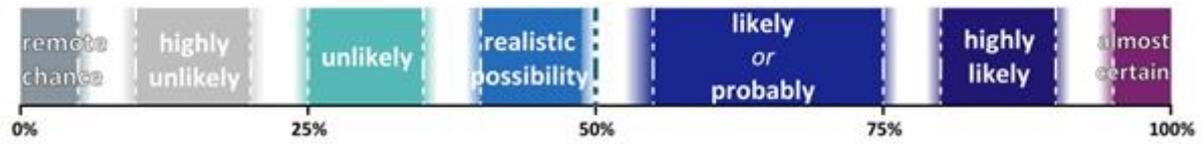
Reflections on Autumn and Winter modelling

1. SPI-M-O previously considered results from three academic groups who independently modelled scenarios for the COVID-19 epidemic over autumn and winter 2021/22.¹ These explored potential epidemic trajectories under different assumptions for behaviour in the population, uptake of booster vaccinations, and waning of immunity. Results were sensitive to the modelling assumptions and available data at the time.
2. Since this modelling, the number of hospital admissions in England has increased and is now close to the upper bounds of uncertainty intervals for the scenarios modelled. Information has also emerged on the Immensa testing incident and emergence of the Delta sublineage AY.4.2 in the UK.
3. Nevertheless, the consensus within SPI-M-O remains that, in the absence of a new variant of concern, it would currently take both a rapid increase in transmission rates and repeated waning of protection from vaccination to lead to hospital admission levels close to those seen in January 2021.
4. Continued monitoring of the epidemic and vaccination coverage remains vital. In particular, the current rollout of booster vaccinations is slower than the scenario that SPI-M-O were asked to model, and it is unclear whether the extent of re-infections in the population is consistent with modelling assumptions. Data on AY.4.2 also remains inconclusive. In two analyses presented to SPI-M-O, there is not yet conclusive evidence on whether there is a transmission or growth advantage of AY.4.2 relative to the dominant Delta lineage. Should evidence emerge that this is the case and/or the rollout of booster vaccinations continue to lag, then the number of hospital admissions may be higher than previously modelled by SPI-M-O.
5. Data gaps continue to limit SPI-M-O's understanding of the pandemic. In particular, SPI-M-O are missing timely and detailed data on the uptake of booster vaccinations and third

¹ [SPI-M-O: Summary of modelling for scenarios for COVID-19 autumn and winter 2021-22](#); SAGE 96 14th October 2021

primary doses, and re-infections. SPI-M-O also currently does not have access to data on AY.4.2 (as defined by UKHSA).²

Annex: PHIA framework of language for discussing probabilities



² Addendum (9th November 2021): UKHSA are now providing booster and reinfection data, as well as UKHSA definitions for AY.4.2, in their routine extracts to modellers.