

'Pandemic fatigue' hits Europe. Science alone will not corral COVID, WHO says

European countries will need to “move beyond biomedical science” to overcome Covid-19 as “pandemic fatigue” and new infections rapidly rise across the continent, [the World Health Organization said.]

[Hans Kluge, the WHO's Europe director, said](#) that while fatigue from months of uncertainty and disruption was measured differently in different countries, aggregated survey data from across the region suggested that in some cases it had reached levels of over 60%.

Medical science alone would not be enough to get through the crisis, he warned, with authorities needing the “courage and empathy” to listen properly to the public and develop policies based on a better understanding of people's needs and behaviours.

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For strategies to fully succeed, the public needs to own them, Kluge said: “Consultation, participation and an acknowledgement of the hardships people are facing are key. The community should be considered a resource as well as a recipient or beneficiary.”

He cited the examples of a Danish municipality that invited university students to work with authorities to work out how to preserve the student experience while protecting health, and of Norwegian childcare workers developing their own rules for re-opening kindergartens.

With end-of-year festivities approaching, Kluge also said pandemic fatigue would have to be countered “in new, innovative ways”, with creative approaches needed to “restore social pleasure, while protecting communities”.

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