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Questions

Questions that came to my mind during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Conspiracy theories

- What is the origin of conspiracy theories about, for instance, the relationship between COVID-19 and 5G?
- Why do so many laymen with very modest spreadsheet skills make bold statements about the state and future of the pandemic?
- Is the belief in conspiracies inherently human?
- Who benefits from conspiracy theories?
- Is "fake news" the cause of conspiracy theories or does it only amplify them?
- Can we delegate the regulation of fake news to commercial companies like Facebook and Twitter?
- How can we combat fake news?
- How can we balance the regulation of fake news and the freedom of the press and the freedom of expression?

Science and policy making

- It was claimed that the policy of the Dutch government during the COVID-19 outbreak was strongly based on science and used advice from experts in virology and epidemiology. Was this good and/or sufficient?
- Which disciplines were missing, if any?
- How closely can scientists and policy makers cooperate?
- Has the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) damaged the trust of the general public in academic research?
- What can we do as researchers to better avoid confusion between our role as a scientist and other possible societal or industrial roles?
- What can we do as researchers to keep or even strengthen the trust of the general public in research?

Tracing app

- Is there any evidence that COVID-19 contact tracing apps can be effective?
- Is there any technical evidence that the Dutch "CoronaMelder" contact tracing app guarantees privacy?
- If so, which insights from behavioural sciences can help to convince the general public of this fact?
- What are potentially more effective tracing approaches?

Preparing for the future

- As ICT researchers, what research questions can we study to help us prepare for the next pandemic?

Answers, please.