

Dear all,

Well we find our-selves in rather strange times! Welcome to the 4th Blog!

I must first apologise for the apparent radio silence! There is in fact a 3rd blog but on the expected day for publishing this we also had the lock down announcement! (So I shall save that for future weeks.) **

I'd like instead to share with you my reflections of working in isolation and lockdown and what this has meant for me, and what it might mean for the future of general practice.

The First 5 community has been really tested in this time. As a group we are newer into the workplace which is challenging at the best of times, but, we are nothing if not adaptable and the electronic and online social spaces that we find ourselves plugged into (such as the [Facebook group here](#) or signing up to the free [Shiny Mind App here](#)- teamnet) have helped us stay strong and resilient and rapidly adaptable.

In the first 2 weeks of this I was in quarantine as there was a cough in the house. Fortunately, apart from an odd loss of smell there were no other symptoms for me. However, this meant being confined to the house, learning to work primarily from home, and forgoing the 5 or 6 events, extra-curricular activities and socialising I cram into my week. It was a bit of a change to say the least!

Whilst this time stuck inside could have been rather frustrating for someone as extraverted as me, it did give me some time for reflection and exploration and I put my mind towards learning a new skill, something that had never quite risen to the top of my priorities. (For some of my inspiration here, I'd recommend giving this Ted Talk a Go – [“Now is the time to start working on your bucket List”](#) – Dr Richard Armitage – a local GP!)

So I decided to stop procrastinating and start learning how to edit video and produce educational resources (and allowing the use of some creative flare, and small starring role in replacement for my AmDram group, currently on hold). I finally had some time and focus to start to learn what I had been putting off for months. You can see my first video on working from home: The [“Light Hearted Guide to Getting Started” here](#) as well as some other videos produced recently. Since then there has been a flurry of activity in the virtual space with resources for returning to work such as the [“IT Tips for Returners”](#) document, as well as the [“eGP Learning”](#) channel of podcasts and videos going into overdrive with lots of great resources!

Not only this, there has been time for reflection. The reduction in some of the busyness of my usual week has allowed me to focus on perhaps some neglected aspects of my life. My self-care has improved and I'm taking more time to spend with family and to exercise, finding some beautiful spots whilst walking or jogging (jogging - something I never thought I would do) just a short distance from the house. Taking time to enjoy sunshine, greenery, wildlife and serenity which is has maybe been missed as I rush through life at my usual breakneck pace.

So this is the first of my reflections in this odd situation in which we find ourselves. There have been some surprising personal benefits arising from adversity. This is reflected in many

of my friends and fellow First 5s who have found time and focus to learn new skills, found different ways of channelling our strengths and energies, both in work life and at home.

This has been a time of great flux for all of us, but in the fire of this pandemic I think we will all emerge stronger, more experienced and better able to take on the challenges we invariably face in this fast-changing world.

Until next time! (and hopefully it won't be as long). Stay well 😊

James

[@jammiestdodgers](#) – feel free to contact me if you would like to be put in touch with any aspects of support, WhatsApp groups for First5s, First 5 support etc. Or just a general chat!

*** Incidentally, this entry ended up as a 3 page epic, so to avoid overwhelming you I shall release it in shorter instalments.*