COVID-19: The coronavirus lessons the UK government chose to ignore

Timeline of events with early warnings relevant to UK health and safety planning

1937
Coronaviruses identified in animals

1960s
Coronaviruses identified in humans

2005
International Health Regulations (2005) bound every country to prioritize & dedicate domestic resources & recurrent spending for pandemic preparedness

2009
- H1NI influenza pandemic
- Pandemic flu planning reports for PPE in main US medical journal
- UK swine flu outbreak killed hundreds of people

2011-16
2011/12/14/16
UK flu preparation plans tested and found wanting

2014
WHO/ILO Health Wise Action Manual: Work Improvement in Health Services

2014-16
Ebola outbreak

2015
Challenges of obtaining PPE in a pandemic flagged in US by major research group

2017
UK Government rejected advice to give PPE to all frontline NHS staff in a flu epidemic

2018
- WHO Occupational Safety and Health in public health emergencies: guide
- WHO Managing Epidemics: key facts on major deadly diseases. OHS , PPE covered

2019
- **10/2019.** Global Preparedness Monitoring Board flagged global lack of preparedness for emergencies including respiratory pandemics
- **10/2019.** Global problems of obtaining PPE in a respiratory pandemic identified by Johns Hopkins report
- **17/11/2019.** First human case of COVID in China reported in December 2019

2020
January 2020.
First COVID case reported in UK

11 January
First COVID death reported in China

20 January
First COVID case in US reported

30 January
WHO declares a global public-health emergency over COVID

2 February
First COVID death outside China reported in Philippines

9 February
First COVID case contracted and reported in UK

10 February
British Medical Journal (BMJ) reports lack of access to PPE and staff testing for NHS staff

11 February
- WHO announces that the new coronavirus disease will be called "COVID-19"
- Reports of UK rushing to secure COVID-19 PPE for nurses

13 February
First COVID case outside China in Thailand reported

15 February
First COVID death in France from a different place of infection

21 February
- First Italian COVID outbreak occurs
- First 3 COVID cases detected in France and reported in France
- UK GPs unable to get hold of Covid-19 PPE and BMA calls for action

25 February
First confirmed COVID case in France

26 February
WHO. Emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19: methods for detection, prevention, response and control.
https://openwho.org/courses/introduction-to-ncov (accessed March 26 2020)

27 February
WHO Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19. 27 February 2020 Version 1.4

3 March
WHO flags shortage of PPE for health workers endangers healthcare workers

8 March
Reports of UK hospitals beginning to run out of PPE for medical staff

18 March
WHO. Coronavirus disease (covid-19) outbreak: rights, roles and responsibilities of health workers

19 March
WHO. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) technical guidance: Infection prevention and control .

21 March
- Multiple reports of NHS staff protection 'short of WHO guidelines' and lacking
- Hand hygiene & hand sanitiser access and uses in Scottish hospitals – OHS issues

25 March
Health staff continue to report PPE supply problems

28 March
- Continued shortage of PPE for social care staff
- Scottish police report federation members providing their own hand sanitisers
- Italian doctors' association reports the death of 50 doctors from COVID
- First UK surgeon reported to have died from COVID contracted in UK hospital
- UK's first 'front line' doctor died after contracting COVID

(Sources cited in paper plus Eurosurveillance 2020 report, Businesessinsider.com)

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