

Mrs Helen McDowall – Written Evidence (LBC0062)

Statistics, lies and bias in population- level research on living

organisms: I hope for a move away from the experimental quantitative probability-studies and pseudo- science of the 20th Century, with their unstable variables; conducted in artificial conditions; which cannot predict outcomes with any degree of certainty; which generalise from the specific, thus generating useless data and conclusions on which to base policy. I hope for a more 'evolutionary- law based science' which studies the living organism/ people within their natural habitat at multiple levels of influence, to explain adaptive changes in the human body/brain/CNS, thought and behaviour.

Evolution at all levels -physical, genetic, cellular, cultural, social, familial, ideological and behavioural) happens in response to change (gradual or sudden) in the habitat. Change is not instigated easily by the individual if the habitat will not support that change. Living organisms adapt, migrate or become extinct in response to a change in habitat. The notion of 'personal choice' is largely illusory. The primary driver for changing undesirable behaviour is the environment in which you wish it to occur or be eliminated from. You must facilitate desirable behaviour (make it easier to do than not do) and conversely, make undesirable behaviours effortful and unrewarding. Human beings tend to take the lazy route to goal attainment!

Individual organisms (or similar groups of organisms) have a variable 'adaptation potential' (McDowall, 2014), some of it innate – inherited genetic/cultural/geographic predispositions that confer advantage or disadvantage in changeable conditions, but most importantly, they can be learned if the individual has necessary ability and opportunity to make adaptation possible. Therefore, maximising opportunity to exploit ability, regardless of background, must be prioritised. Education, welfare, travel and health care are basic universal human rights (Abraham Maslow) and should be provided free of charge as in Denmark. It comes at a price of 50% tax, few people owning their home, but they have a much happier, stable, fair and equal culture we would do well to emulate (Beyond Freedom and Dignity, B F Skinner, 1971)). You never know where the next polymath or entrepreneur will come from!

Stop the brain- drain. Have fully- funded research facilities attached to hospitals in the UK. Pharmaceutical development, research and dispensing to be integral to the NHS. Up to 70% wastage on over- prescribed, coercion-marketed products that have little proven effectiveness for many, are a waste of our money. Further, a move away from crisis- management and symptom management to preventative medicine and social welfare is **long overdue.**

Environment: Plastic to be declared 'toxic waste' subject to heavy fines for littering, production and unclosed lifecycle 'loops'. Plastic has affinity for toxins that adhere to them (oil-based in particular) as well as the plasticisers, colourings, additives and polymers involved in their production (from oil!). Nanoplastics are now found in every living thing. Their endocrine- disrupting

effects include certain cancers, (particularly associated with stored fat in mammals – think obesity -crisis), infertility, birth-defects, immunity inflammation and allergies. We need a big clean -up and fast....

Climate change/global warming: If world war, mass migration and pestilence is to be avoided, you need to get your act together now. **Runaway** climate change and mass planetary extinction is less than a decade away.

Oust the elephant from the room! Religion and 'terrorism': The opium of the masses. It is imperative you distance the UK from the United States and countries that have world- domination- styled, delusional belief- systems within their constitution – “Those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad”. Religion is mad because it is not representative of reality. Like Star Wars or Fairies at the bottom of your garden. Religion must be treated separately to other issues that divide us because **it is not true** and somebody in authority needs to come out and say so please...

Prejudice against people who are regarded as in some way dissimilar to ourselves has protected us from real threats - like microbes we don't have immunity to and ideas that might threaten the 'status quo', since we first left Africa in small family tribes of around 150 people. **Not all prejudice is bad.** A **phobia**, incidentally, is a fear disproportionate to the threat posed. It is not phobic to fear mad people who have demonstrated many times their willingness to slaughter in the name of their supernatural, fictitious god, anyone who will not convert to their way of thinking. Religious privilege, the protestant work ethic and the Western assumption that religion= good and non- religion = evil, must be challenged. This applies equally to Christianity as to Islam. Some preaching I have witnessed is fuelling hatred, exclusion, suicide and alienation and it goes on unchecked every Sunday in a church near you.....filling congregations with lies, nonsense and fear that the end of the world is coming and prayer works..... Remember Waco? Yes, it could happen in the UK. You must separate 'belief in the impossible from selflessness, altruism (inclusive fitness), caring for others and small kindnesses that secular people do every day.

I don't want to believe. I want to know. This requires truth, honesty and realism from world leaders, not fantasy, based on an historical novel dressed- up as truth. Throughout history gods of both sexes and none have come and gone. As unbelievable now as one day the Christian /Islamic 'god' will be.

Disused churches would be far better used as community hubs for **everyone** rather than the exclusive clubhouses they have become.....

Air Pollution: Lockdown has taught us we don't need to commute to work or to attend meetings, or take our children to school in cars, or fly, or import so much stuff we don't really need. We must be more self- sufficient and buy more locally produced, less processed and seasonal produce, reduce our portion sizes and eat and drink better quality, humanely reared neat fish and eggs and adopt a less meat and dairy-heavy diet.

'Workstations' in local communities with shared facilities that you can cycle/walk to? All the social benefits of the office and being close to home and family support without the commute!

Obesity crisis: Explains discrepancy in Covid19 death/ survival rates (comorbidity) and diabetes, stroke, heart disease prevalence. My personal project in 2017 was on obesity in health service staff and their credibility as lifestyle- change advisors. I found that obesity (27% higher in the NHS) an overt sign of unhealthy lifestyle, not only decreases source- credibility for dietary advice, but also to a lesser extent, for any other health advice that is perceived as being under the control of the individual, e.g. smoking, drug abuse. The nurse who demonstrated successful sustained weight loss was most effective. Please bear this in mind when considering who is giving advice. The role of placing temptation in the way e.g. snack dispensers in hospital waiting rooms where people are under stress, is vital in the fight against obesity. Who looks after the health carers should be a priority to set an example to others.....

Tackling obesity: Environment first (remove temptation), make it easier and cheaper to buy healthy food(facilitation), reduce the working week to four days, finish at 14.00, so people have time to collect their children from school and cook proper family meals, exercise, engage in non- work activity and better their work/life balance, their productivity and happiness at work (Living Danishly, Helen Russell, 2016).

Money is a virtual concept: It does not really exist! Want to end world debt? Write it off. Press the restart button! Could we have a world where everyone has 'enough' and is happy about it? Why not? Does Consumerism' make you happy? Flatten the earnings curve. Every person is regarded and rewarded for making an equal contribution to quality of life for everyone whether you be a dustman or a brain surgeon.

Conclusion:

We delude ourselves that human beings are placed above other animals and are thus immune or protected by 'god' from the laws of evolution and extinction, in a spirit of hopeful complacency, ignorance and denial. And it could be so very different..... please

The time for averting a global mass extinction event; for reducing overpopulation where there exist limited and unsustainable resources to support it; for ending our exploitation of our planet and needless cruelty to every living thing; is now.

It is time for Homo Sapiens to grow up; to recognise our common humanity and responsibility for our actions, regardless of our subtle and superficial differences.

We have the chance to evolve into something better than we areWe can do this if we think big enough and act soon enough....IF...

27 July 2020