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Khan, Hafiz T.A. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1817-3730> (2021) Likely post-covid-19 challenges for older people. In: Ageing People and Society, 22 March 2021, Turkish National Commission for UNESCO. (Unpublished)

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Likely Post-Covid-19 Challenges for Older People

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Symposium on
Ageing People and Society

Organised by Turkish National Commission for UNESCO
22 March 2021, Turkey

Outline of talk

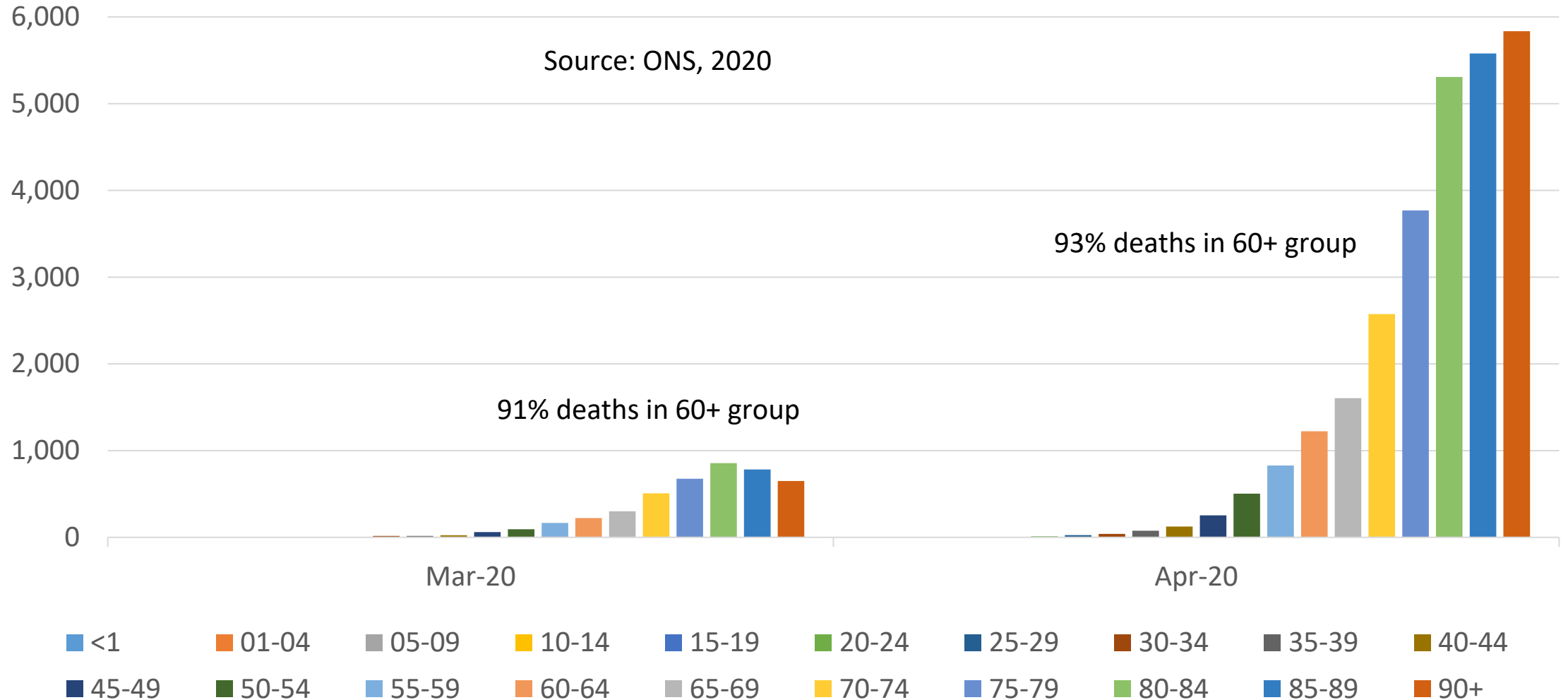
- Deaths in older people due to COVID-19.
- Lessons learned from COVID-19 to safeguard older people within existing health system.
- Likely future challenges for older people in society.

COVID-19 affects everyone today

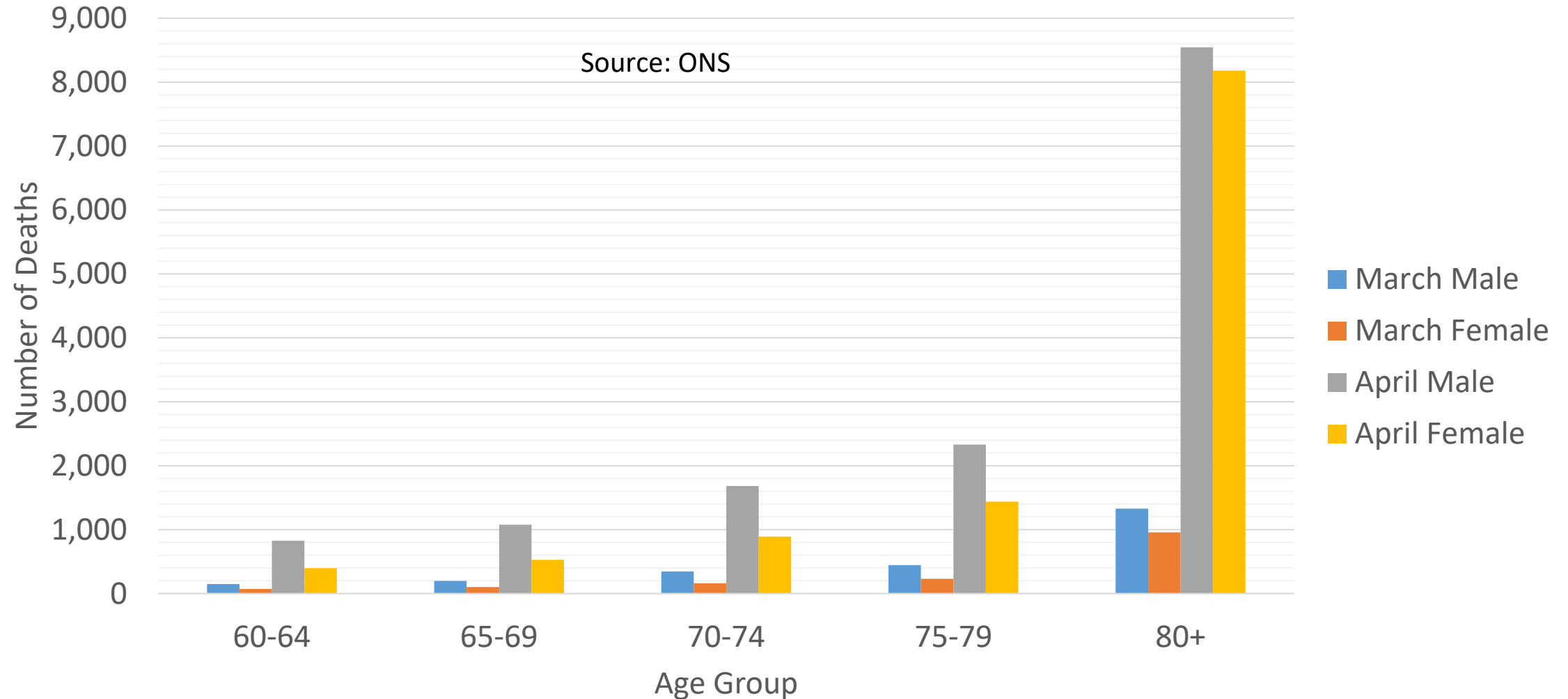
COVID-19 pandemic affects all segments of the society, including young adults

- Unemployment rate has increased across countries
- Remittance has dropped in many countries, affecting families dependent on this
- Family support and healthcare services are affected
- Elderly are more vulnerable due to pre-existing ill health

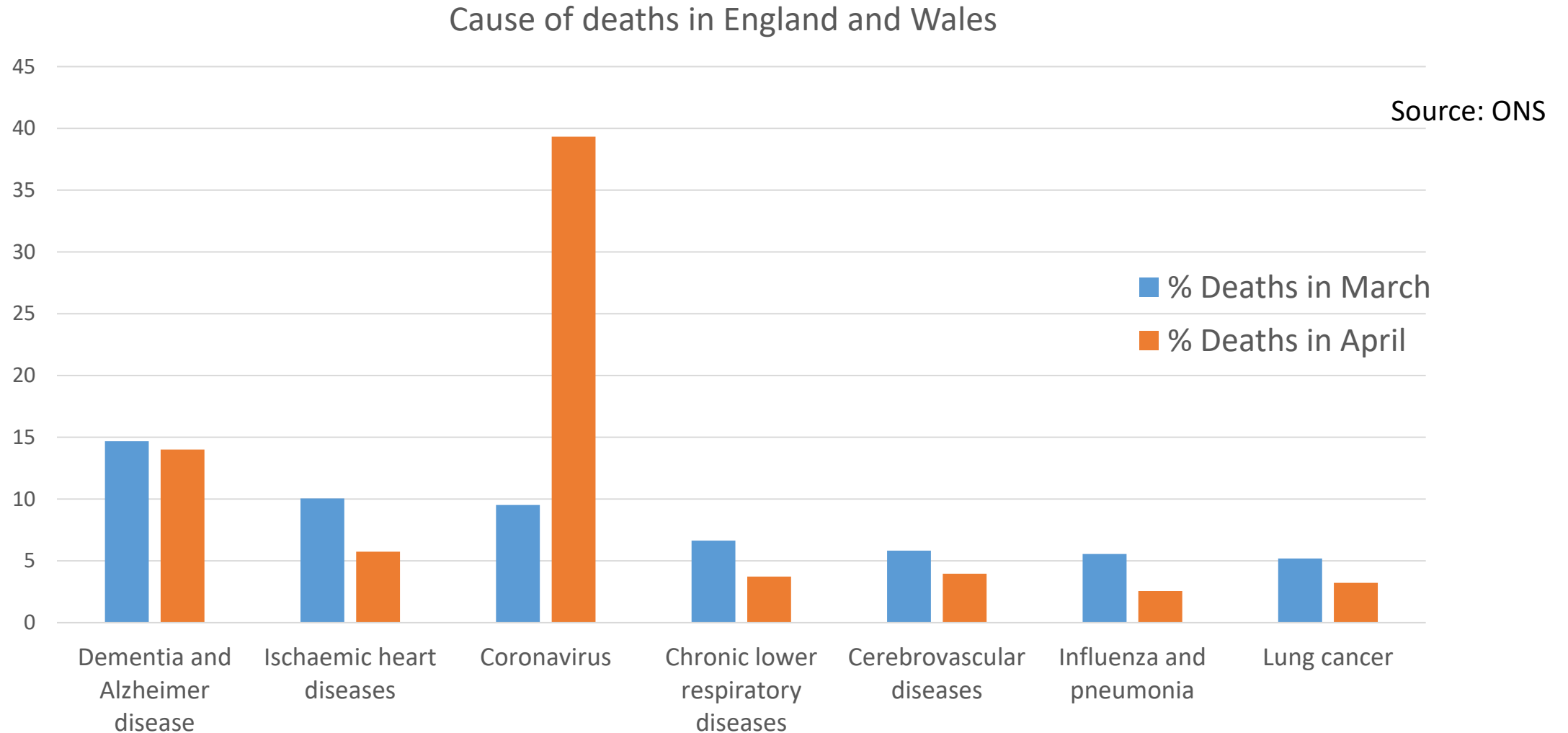
Number of deaths due to COVID-19 in England and Wales



Deaths by age and gender in March/April 2020, England and Wales



Leading causes of deaths in England and Wales 2020



Lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemic crisis

- COVID-19 is a complex problem in a complex system.
- Quarantine, spread, isolation, lockdown, masks, social distancing, hand hygiene, blood tests, vaccine, immunity: all these words are now part of our daily speech.
- Shaking the NHS (one of the best health system in the world).
- Lack of leadership, coordination, and mismanagement.
- Global pandemic needs integrated global response, but we see blame game among world leaders and international organization WHO.
- PPE shortage, protecting frontline healthcare workers, protecting elderly in residential and nursing care homes.
- Older people are very vulnerable and some die without necessary support and care.
- Families were shocked and helpless as they have lost their love one.

Post COVID-19 Challenges

- Pandemic trauma will continue for sometime among older people as they are the most at risk in the situation.
- Older people will need greater support in post-COVID era.
- Government, family, friends, relatives, and volunteering sector. Providing such support as before will be a big challenge.
- Uncertainty, tension, and paradox are inherent and must be accommodated rather than resolved.
- COVID-19 experience shifts from an acute national disaster to a chronic policy crisis.
- All clinicians, scientists, policy-makers, and citizens need to move on from imagining that the uncertainties can be resolved that they may never be.
(*Rutter et al. BMJ, 2020*)

Post COVID-19 Challenges

- Most countries will be fighting for the economic recovery in post-COVID-19.
- Worry is that elderly issues might get less priority.
- Adequate financing for elderly care will be a big challenging.
- Health and long-term care insurance will go up.
- There will be less trust and confidence on nursing care home services.
- Regaining a trust will be a big challenge in post-COVID era.
- Survivors needs additional mental health support as well.
- Many issues are now difficult to predict for the elderly.
- More research is needed to understand on this post-COVID era.

Conclusion

- Older people are affected most due to COVID-19.
- Over 90% of all deaths are among 60+ age group of people.
- Older males are in greater risk than females counterparts.
- Pre-existing health condition is a risk factor for COVID-19.
- The elderly became extremely vulnerable and isolated during the pandemic.
- Trust and confidence gap on care service providers and society.
- In post-COVID, older people will live with trauma and mental health problems. Finance to these would be a big challenge to a country.

Questions?



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