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**From:** [REDACTED]

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**Subject:** RE: European Science Advisers Call

**Received:** Thur 1/28/2021 12:52:23 PM

[Genomic surveillance update 26 jan 2021 pdf.pdf](#)

Dear colleagues,

Please find here a recent report on the Belgian genomic surveillance.

I have also a provoking question for you:

- 1) Currently, many present the situation of B117 as an **epidemic within the epidemic**. A more transmissible strain with higher Rt that will inevitably break through our NPI, unless you go to full lockdown
- 2) May I propose an alternative hypothesis:
  - a. There is only **one epidemic** with different variants competing between each other
  - b. One variant has a selective advantage and outcompetes the other variant, e.g. by better binding to the receptor
  - c. Wherever a network of susceptible people is available, the virus will enter, but B117 will take the place available because of better binding to the cells. In many outbreaks we do notice a mix of variants involved (eg in schools, hospitals, etc...), so B117 will outcompete, but that does not necessarily imply that it will cause more infections at the end, it just fills up the available space. Compared to other variants it seems to have a higher Rt value, but this is nearly a relative phenomenon
  - d. So we only **manage one epicurve**

Is hypothesis 2 flawed in your opinion or also a justified view?

Looking forwards to hear some thoughts.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

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-----Original Appointment-----

**From:** [REDACTED] (GO-Science) <[REDACTED]@go-science.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** Monday, 18 January 2021 14:03





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