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The UK has led work over many years to encourage the synthesis and use of evidence – from the first randomized-controlled trial to prevent scurvy in sailors, to the more recent innovative What Works Centres to promote the use of evidence in a range of policy areas. As part of this evidence-based movement, over the last 20 years the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has transformed the use of evidence in healthcare practice, as well as in wider public-health initiatives and social care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically reinforced the need for high-quality evidence to inform policy and practice, and has also highlighted the negative consequences of social media and associated misinformation. In this context, the work of the Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges is hugely important, and should be seen as essential reading for all policymakers around the world.

