

3 Studies That Show Lockdowns Are Ineffective at Slowing COVID-19

The collateral damage of lockdowns is well documented. Their benefits, however, remain murky.

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Image Credit: pxhere



Jon Miltimore

Across America and Europe, many government officials are resuming lockdowns and tightening restrictions in the face of **rising COVID-19 cases**, hospitalizations, and deaths.

The collateral damage of lockdowns, which has been well documented, includes widespread **poverty, depression**, bankruptcy, and **unemployment**. Meanwhile, the benefits of lockdowns remain murky.

Several studies show there is little correlation between government restrictions and lower COVID mortality rates. Here are three of them.

1. The Lancet, July

A **study** published on July 21 in *The Lancet*, a weekly peer-reviewed general medical journal founded in 1823, indicated that government lockdowns were ineffective.

Researchers collected data from the 50 countries with the most cases and found lockdowns were not associated with mortality reductions in critical COVID-19 cases, although factors such as obesity, smoking, and life expectancy were.

“...government actions such as border closures, full lockdowns, and a high rate of COVID-19 testing were not associated with statistically significant reductions in the number of critical cases or overall mortality,” the study concluded.

2. **Frontiers in Public Health, November**

Similarly, a **study** published by *Frontiers in Public Health* several months after *The Lancet* paper found neither lockdowns nor lockdown stringency were correlated with lower death rates. Researchers crunched data from 160 countries over the first 8 months of the pandemic, testing numerous factors—such as public health, demographics, government policy, economy, and environment—to determine how each correlated with COVID-19 mortality.

“Stringency of the measures settled to fight pandemic, including lockdown, did not appear to be linked with death rate,” the researchers concluded.

3. **Tel Aviv University Study, October**

Research from Tel Aviv University **published in October** on the website *medRxiv* said that strict lockdowns may not save lives. Researchers analyzed mobility data collected from iPhones and found no statistical association between lockdown severity and the number of COVID-19 fatalities.

“We would have expected to see fewer Covid-19 fatalities in countries with a tighter lockdown, but the data reveals that this is not the case,” the researchers **explained**.

Bonus: Bloomberg Analysis of Oxford University Stringency Data, May

In a May *Bloomberg* article titled “**The Results of Europe’s Lockdown Experiment Are In,**” data journalist Elaine He shared several visuals based on work done by the University of Oxford’s Blavatnik School of Government, which tracked a range of government stringency measures across Europe.

COVID mortality, He said, did not appear to be associated with lockdown stringency.

“While not a gauge of whether the decisions taken were the right ones, nor of how strictly they were followed, the analysis gives a clear sense of each government’s strategy for containing the virus,” He writes.

Some — above all Italy and Spain — enforced prolonged and strict lockdowns after infections took off,” He continues. “Others — especially Sweden — preferred a much more relaxed approach. Portugal and Greece chose to close down while cases were relatively low. France and the U.K. took longer before deciding to impose the most restrictive measures.

But, as our next chart shows, **there’s little correlation between the severity of a nation’s restrictions and whether it managed to curb excess fatalities** — a measure that looks at the overall number of deaths compared with normal trends,” the report concludes. (emphasis mine)

Public health officials believe they can manage a virus through effective central planning, but this is folly and hubris. Human behavior and action are incredibly complex, far too complex for bureaucrats and political

officials to control through policy directives (many of which are prima facie **senseless**).

Pandemics are serious problems, but the belief that they can be effectively managed by central planners who refuse to recognize the limits of their own knowledge and power poses a much graver threat to human freedom and prosperity in the long-run.

In his Nobel Prize-winning **speech**, economist F.A. Hayek warned that such a hubris had the potential to make man “not only a tyrant over his fellows, but ... the destroyer of a civilization which no brain has designed but which has grown from the free efforts of millions of individuals.”

The recognition of the overwhelming limits to his knowledge should teach the student of society a lesson of humility, Hayek believed.

Tragically, our leaders are about to receive a strong dose of it.