

No clear, significant benefit to lockdowns

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“Lockdowns more lethal than Covid” -Dr. Modry

Sometimes it seems a rational discussion of lockdowns is beyond Canadians. However, more and more the credible voices are confirming what has been suspected from the start: Lockdowns don't work and are actually harmful.

Stanford for example, is among the most prominent U.S. universities. Having studied ten countries, Stanford researchers found, “There is no evidence that more restrictive non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI's, also meaning ‘lockdowns’) contributed substantially to bending the curve of new cases in England, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain or the United States in early 2020. By comparing the effectiveness of [lockdowns] on case growth rates in countries that implemented more restrictive measures with those that implemented less-restrictive measures, the evidence points away from indicating that more restrictive NPIs provided additional meaningful benefit above and beyond less restrictive NPIs.”

Their peer-reviewed report, issued 5th January, 2021 compared outcomes in eight countries that implemented extensive lockdowns – Great Britain, Germany, France, the U.S., Iran, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain – with two that had not, South Korea and Sweden, concluding, “The possibility of large decreases in daily growth due to more restrictive NPIs is incompatible with the accumulated data.”

In other words, locking people down made no difference. Meanwhile in Ontario, one of the province's former chief medical officers sent an open letter to Premier Doug Ford in January, saying: “Lockdown was never part of our planned pandemic response, nor is it supported by strong science.” Dr. Richard Schabas had been Ontario CMO for ten years, and was personally involved with the 2003 SARS crisis, as chief of staff at York Central Hospital.

Schabas wrote in support of North York MPP Roman Baber, who had been expelled from the Ontario Conservative caucus after writing to Ford that: “The lockdown isn't working. It's causing an avalanche of suicides, overdoses, bankruptcies, divorces and takes an immense toll on children.” Schabas noted Baber had been correct in his criticisms and in his call for an end to the Ontario lockdowns.

Lockdowns are said to be necessary to slow the spread of Covid, so that health systems are not overwhelmed.

Not everybody agrees the health system is in danger, however. In Alberta a highly qualified cardiovascular surgeon, Dr. Dennis Modry, questioned Premier Kenney's rationale for continued lockdowns in a December open letter. “We are nowhere close to overwhelming our healthcare system. As of December 9, 2020 there were 654 COVID-19 patients in 8,500 beds, or 7.7 per cent of capacity. There were only 112 patients in 272 ICU beds, or 41.2 per cent of operational capacity, however, you have stated publicly that the ICU capacity can be increased to 1,081 beds. This implies that, at present, only 10.4 % of potential ICU beds are filled.” Modry called lockdowns ‘more lethal than Covid.’

In Canada, modeling with little predictive value and gee-whiz reporting of it by sensation-seeking media, caused widespread anxiety. So has conflicting advice from public officials. No wonder it's hard to talk about responding to Covid. But finally, thanks to some serious scholarship and expertise, the question is on the table: If there is no significant benefit to destroying one's economy, putting millions out of work, condemning millions more to isolation and risking the lives of people whose medical treatments are interrupted by the emptying out of hospitals, why are we doing it?

For more information, see the Justice Centre Report:
Flying Blind: Governments' hasty decisions to lock down Canadians while damaging public health and the economy
<https://www.jccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-12-03-Flying-Blind.pdf>