

Did Sweden Get COVID Right?

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✓ Fact Checked

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › While most other countries instituted stay-at-home orders and shuttered schools and businesses, Sweden did not
- › While high schools and universities closed and gatherings of more than 50 people were banned, elementary and middle schools, shops and restaurants have remained open in Sweden during the pandemic
- › Evidence suggests Sweden may be at or nearing the herd immunity threshold, which occurs when the number of people susceptible is low enough to prevent epidemic growth
- › Stanford's Nobel-laureate Michael Levitt is among those in support of Sweden's lighter restrictions; Levitt successfully predicted the trajectory of COVID-19 deaths in China and has stated that the pandemic would not be as dire as many have predicted
- › Scientists from France found there was no significant transmission of COVID-19 in primary schools, either among the students or from students to teachers
- › Sweden continues to stand by their handling of the pandemic, despite heavy criticism; the country's state epidemiologist, Anders Tegnell, even described the rest of the world's lockdowns as "madness," considering the steep side effects they ultimately cause

From Dr. Joseph Mercola

Since COVID-19 first entered the scene, exchange of ideas has basically been outlawed. By sharing my views and those from various experts throughout the

pandemic on COVID treatments and the experimental COVID jabs, I became a main target of the White House, the political establishment and the global cabal.

Propaganda and pervasive censorship have been deployed to seize control over every part of your life, including your health, finances and food supply. The major media are key players and have been instrumental in creating and fueling fear.

I am republishing this article in its original form so that you can see how the progression unfolded.

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In the U.S., even as the COVID-19 curve appears to have flattened, and death rates for some groups have fallen to almost zero,¹ dire warnings about an ominous "second wave" continue.

Likewise, Sweden, a country that has handled the pandemic differently than most of the globe, is being chided for its looser restrictions and lack of lockdowns, even as data suggest their refusal to implement a full shutdown of their society may have been the best approach after all.

While most other countries instituted stay-at-home orders and shuttered schools and businesses, Sweden did not. While high schools and universities closed and gatherings of more than 50 people were banned, elementary and middle schools, shops and restaurants have remained open during the pandemic.²

Now, news outlets are trying to use Sweden as an example of what not to do to fight COVID-19, citing a high death toll. "The country's mortality rate from the coronavirus is now 30% higher than that of the United States when adjusted for population size," CBS News reported,³ but this doesn't tell the full picture of how Swedes have fared in comparison to the rest of the world.

Sweden May Be Close to Reaching Herd Immunity

If a novel virus is introduced to a population, eventually enough people acquire natural immunity so that the number of susceptible people declines. When the number

susceptible is low enough to prevent epidemic growth, the herd immunity threshold, or HIT, has been reached.

With SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, some estimates have suggested that 60% to 70% of the population must be immune before HIT will be reached, but researchers from Oxford, Virginia Tech, and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine⁴ found that when individual variations in susceptibility and exposure are taken into account, the HIT declines to less than 10%.⁵

Independent news source Off-Guardian⁶ cited data from Stockholm County, Sweden that showed an HIT of 17%,⁷ as well as an essay by Brown University Professor Dr. Andrew Bostom, who explained:⁸

"... [A] respected team of infectious disease epidemiologists from the U.K. and U.S. have concluded: 'Naturally acquired immunity to SARS-CoV-2 may place populations over the herd immunity threshold once as few as 10-20% of its individuals are immune.'"

And, as pointed out in Conservative Review:⁹

"... Naturally acquired herd immunity to COVID-19 combined with earnest protection of the vulnerable elderly – especially nursing home and assisted living facility residents – is an eminently reasonable and practical alternative to the dubious panacea of mass compulsory vaccination against the virus.

This strategy was successfully implemented in Malmo, Sweden, which had few COVID-19 deaths by assiduously protecting its elder care homes, while 'schools remained open, residents carried on drinking in bars and cafes, and the doors of hairdressers and gyms were open throughout.'"

Off-Guardian continues with Stanford's Nobel-laureate Michael Levitt, who is among those in support of Sweden's lighter restrictions. Levitt successfully predicted the trajectory of COVID-19 deaths in China, including when the deaths would slow, and has stated that the pandemic would not be as dire as many have predicted.

Have Sweden's COVID-19 Deaths Peaked?

What's more, in an interview with The Stanford Daily, Levitt stated in May 2020, "If Sweden stops at about 5,000 or 6,000 deaths, we will know that they've reached herd immunity, and we didn't need to do any kind of lockdown."¹⁰

As of July 17, 2020, there were 5,619 deaths in Sweden due to COVID-19,¹¹ and in a study released by Levitt and colleagues June 30, 2020, which analyzes COVID-19 outbreaks at 3,546 locations worldwide, it's predicted that Sweden's total COVID-19 deaths will plateau at about 6,000.¹²

So far, Levitt is spot-on, and it appears, indeed, that Sweden's COVID-19 deaths have slowed, peaking at more than 100 deaths per day and now, midsummer, tallying in the low teens. The intensive care unit at Stockholm's Sodertalje Hospital has also cleared out, housing 77 cases during the pandemic's peak and only four cases as of July 17, 2020.¹³

Sweden's Epidemiologist Calls Lockdowns 'Madness'

Sweden continues to stand by their handling of the pandemic, despite heavy criticism. The country's state epidemiologist, Anders Tegnell, even described the rest of the world's lockdowns as "madness," considering the steep side effects they ultimately cause.

Levitt suggested that not only did lockdowns not save lives, but likely cost lives due to social damage, domestic abuse, divorces, alcoholism and other health conditions that were not treated.¹⁴ Bloomberg reported:¹⁵

"It was as if the world had gone mad, and everything we had discussed was forgotten," Tegnell said in a podcast with Swedish Radio ... 'The cases became too many and the political pressure got too strong. And then Sweden stood there rather alone.'"

Tegnell stated that shutting down schools was also unnecessary during the pandemic, and scientists from the Institut Pasteur in France indeed found that there was no significant transmission of COVID-19 in primary schools, either among the students or from students to teachers.¹⁶

"The study also confirmed that younger children infected by the novel coronavirus generally do not develop symptoms or present with minor symptoms that may result in a failure to diagnose the virus," study author Bruno Hoen added.¹⁷

Meanwhile, while Sweden has encouraged its citizens to engage in social distancing, mask usage is another story, and Tegnell has stated that there's little evidence for wearing face masks.¹⁸

Stanford Expert Slams Lockdowns

Outside of Sweden, other experts, including epidemiologist Dr. John Ioannidis of Stanford University, have also spoken out against statewide lockdown measures in response to COVID-19. Ioannidis suggests that 150 million to 300 million people may have already been infected globally and may have developed antibodies to the virus, and the median infection fatality rate has remained low at about 0.25%.¹⁹

As continues to be demonstrated, the elderly and those with underlying health problems appear to be most vulnerable, and protecting such populations should have been a priority. But lockdowns for young, healthy people are far more questionable. Speaking with Greek Reporter, Ioannidis said:²⁰

"The death rate in a given country depends a lot on the age-structure, who are the people infected, and how they are managed. For people younger than 45, the infection fatality rate is almost 0%. For 45 to 70, it is probably about 0.05-0.3%.

For those above 70, it escalates substantially, to 1% or higher for those over 85. For frail, debilitated elderly people with multiple health problems who are

infected in nursing homes, it can go up to 25% during major outbreaks in these facilities."

Overall, Ioannidis said the mathematical models that predicted hospitals would be overrun by COVID-19 patients were "astronomically wrong," and although a handful of U.S. hospitals did become stressed, no health systems were overrun.

"Conversely," he said, "the health care system was severely damaged in many places because of the [lockdown] measures taken," while lockdown measures have also significantly increased the number of people at risk of starvation while leading to financial crisis, unrest and civil strife.²¹

What's more, one study even found that 81% of people not exposed to SARS-CoV-2 were still able to mount an immune response against it, which "suggests at least some built-in immune protection from SARS-CoV-2 ..."²²

US Surgeon General Opposes Mask Mandate

With mask usage becoming an increasingly polarized debate, U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams encouraged mask usage but spoke out against making them mandatory due to concerns that it could lead to rebellion.²³

In my interview with Denis Rancourt, Ph.D., a former full professor of physics, and a researcher with the Ontario Civil Liberties Association in Canada, we also discussed the controversial topic of masks. Rancourt did a thorough study of the scientific literature on masks, concentrating on evidence showing masks can reduce infection risk, especially viral respiratory diseases.

If there was any significant advantage to wearing a mask to reduce infection risk to either the wearer or others in the vicinity, then it would have been detected in at least one of these trials, yet there's no sign of such a benefit. He said in our interview:

"It makes no difference if everybody in your team is wearing a mask; it makes no difference if one is and others aren't. Wearing a mask or being in an

environment where masks are being worn or not worn, there's no difference in terms of your risk of being infected by the viral respiratory disease.

There's no reduction, period. There are no exceptions. All the studies that have been tabulated, looked at, published, I was not able to find any exceptions, if you constrain yourself to verified outcomes."

This is another area where Sweden has stayed ahead of the curve, as they've resisted asking the public to wear masks based on lack of evidence of effectiveness and the risk that they offer wearers a false sense of security. Tegnell did state that officials are considering whether to recommend masks during use of public transportation, but stressed masks "definitely won't become an optimal solution in any way."²⁴

Sweden Speaks Out Against WHO Warning

In late June 2020, the World Health Organization counted Sweden among European countries at risk of seeing a resurgence of COVID-19. The warning was based on WHO data showing Sweden had 155 infections for every 100,000 inhabitants in the past 14 days, a higher rate than in most of Europe.²⁵

Tegnell, however, said that this was a "total misinterpretation of the data" and WHO was confusing Sweden with countries just at the outset of their epidemics. Instead, any rise in infections is likely due to increases in testing, Tegnell said, adding, "They didn't call to ask us. The number of admissions to intensive care is at a very low level and even deaths are starting to go down."²⁶

Time will tell whether Sweden's strategy, which avoided lockdowns and widespread mask usage, turns out to be the right one after all, but some believe the writing is already on the wall.²⁷

"Dr. Michael Levitt and Sweden have been right all along," Off-Guardian reported. "The only way through COVID-19 is by achieving the modest (10-20%) Herd Immunity Threshold required to have the virus snuff itself out.

The sooner politicians – and the press – start talking about HIT and stop talking about new confirmed cases, the better off we will all be. Either way, it's likely weeks, not months, before the data of new daily deaths will be so low that the press will have to find something new to scare everyone. It's over."

Sources and References

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