COVID-19 – Have we ignored the full picture?

The impact of COVID-19 has undeniably been felt globally with many governments imposing significant restrictions on everyday life in an attempt to combat its spread. Despite the severe restrictions on our lives, evidence is mounting showing that lockdowns are causing significant side effects and harms to the populations enduring them [1].

Despite the unprecedented sacrifices the UK population has made, the Government has given little to no consideration of the side effects of lockdowns and restrictions [2], and has done even less to justify and discuss these with the general public.

Just a few of these impacts seen to date include:

Non-COVID Health

Three million missed cancer screenings [3] due to impact on hospitals. **4,622** excess deaths from heart and circulatory diseases during first lockdown [4].

Economic

£210 billion response by the UK Government so far [5], [6], an equivalent of £6,500 for every UK taxpayer and rising. For comparison the annual NHS budget is **£153 billion** [7]. A significant amount of government spend is going to businesses that could otherwise be open safely and self-sufficient.

Mental Health

One in five adults likely experiencing some form of depression [8], double the pre-pandemic rate. **The young**, **women** and those from **socially disadvantaged backgrounds** experienced the worst mental health outcomes[9].

Business and Livelihoods

750,000 jobs lost since the start of coronavirus [10], with many more expected. 1**4%** of businesses fearing imminent closure [11].

3 million self-employed workers have missed out on financial support [12].

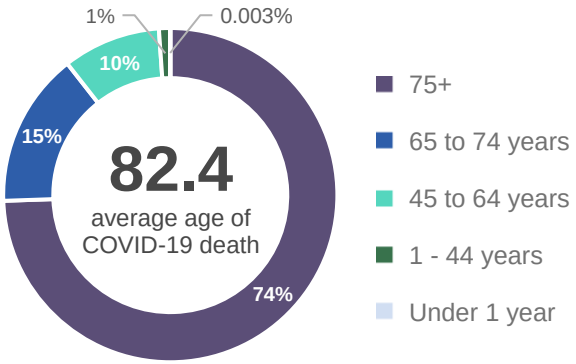
But what about the risks of coronavirus, should I not be worried?

While COVID-19 can be terrible to a small portion of the population, the vast majority of the population are not affected in the same way, with an estimated overall survival rate as high as **99.3%** [13].

Thankfully deaths are nowhere near the levels models used by the government as justification to enforce a second lockdown [14]. Additionally, many hospitals across the country are at normal levels of capacity for this time of year[15].

This raises the question whether resources and funding would be better focused on helping those likely to feel the impact of coronavirus, rather than the blunt and unproven strategy of locking down an entire population, destroying jobs livelihoods, metal health and wellbeing in the process.

UK COVID Deaths by Age Group [16], [17]



Where does this leave us?

Given the significant harm restrictions are having and the overstated level of risk claimed by the government and media, is it not time we thought whether on balance we are doing more harm than good?

The UK Government has failed to produce trustworthy evidence to justify the significant sacrifices the public are having to endure.

Furthermore, with increasing debate on whether these restrictions are reducing the impact of COVID [18], [19] should we stop to ask… **is it time we started making decisions for ourselves again and stopped accepting the demonstrable harms to our lives, jobs and wellbeing?**

Further reading: Evidence Not Fear, Lockdown Sceptics, The Spectator Covid Tracker
References as indicated and correct/available at time of writing, v1.1
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