

# BUSINESS WORLD

## Science didn't change: Mask mandates still don't work

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February 17, 2022

The thing with COVID-19 is that it essentially made news media inutile. So much so that satire now comes across as the more believable. Thus, this classic *Babylon Bee* headline: “Indisputable, Irrefutable, Unquestionable, Unchanging Science Changing Again” (Feb. 11).

The satirical article continues: “Yes, the unmistakable SCIENCE on masks, vaccine effectiveness, treatments, lockdowns, and comorbidities was actually mistaken, but don't forget that this pandemic has been prolonged only because people doubted the SCIENCE.”

### **FACT CHECK: LOCKDOWNS STILL DON'T WORK**

Lockdowns are now practically being proven on a daily basis as the wrong call of the century. Of course, the new Johns Hopkins Institute for Applied Economics paper (“A Literature Review and Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Lockdowns on Covid-19 Mortality,” January 2022) demonstrated that lockdown policies are absolutely deranged but this is something experts have been saying from the beginning.

Stanford University's Scott Atlas asserted from April 2020, with a month's data behind him, supported by studies from Stanford and New York University Medical Center, that the overwhelming majority of people do not have any significant risk of dying from COVID, that population immunity is prevented by isolation policies, and that lockdowns actually prolong the problem.

That in turn is supported by Thomas Meunier's “Full lockdown policies in Western Europe countries have no evident impacts on the COVID-19 epidemic” (May 2020), that insistent lockdown policies tried by some countries were of no effect compared to the more basic social distancing policies. Which in turn is backed by Hua Qian and others' recent study (“Indoor transmission of SARS-CoV-2,” April 2020), which showed that 80% of coronavirus infections happen inside the home.

### **FACT CHECK: MASK MANDATES DON'T WORK**

The same could clearly be said about public mask mandates — They just don't work:

“Masks have been the most visible part of America's pandemic response, but one of the least consequential. The fact that 500,000 people worldwide died during the Omicron surge means it's time to change tactics, and focus on what went wrong that led to so many hospitalizations and deaths.

“There’s no avoiding it: The benefits of universal masking have been difficult to quantify. One controlled study in Bangladesh showed a small but statistically significant benefit — among people who consistently used masks, 7.6% got symptomatic infections compared to 8.6% in the control group.” (“Mask Mandates Didn’t Make Much of a Difference Anyway” by Faye Flam, Bloomberg, Feb. 11, 2022)

Again, this isn’t new: rational, sane, commonsensical people pointed this out at the pandemic’s start — “The only two sizeable studies evaluating masks in the context of COVID-19 failed to demonstrate statistically significant reductions in confirmed viral transmission either for surgical masks (one study) or for cloth masks (the other).” Thus, “the first study, conducted from April to June 2020 in Denmark ... failed to find a benefit.”

The other study, “a much larger study in Bangladesh” from November 2020 and January 2021, found practically the same thing and also raised “questions about long-term feasibility.”

But wait, there’s more: “masks could accelerate disease spread in a much more striking manner ... masks are repeatedly reused and infrequently washed, leading to the possibility that they are inadvertently serving as homemade disease cultures.” (“How Effective Are Cloth Face Masks?,” Cato Institute, 2021/2022)

To reiterate, people have been saying this from the beginning: “We know that wearing a mask outside health care facilities offers little, if any, protection from infection. Public health authorities define a significant exposure to COVID-19 as face-to-face contact within six feet with a patient with symptomatic COVID-19 that is sustained for at least a few minutes (and some say more than 10 minutes or even 30 minutes). The chance of catching COVID-19 from a passing interaction in a public space is therefore minimal. In many cases, the desire for widespread masking is a reflexive reaction to anxiety over the pandemic.” (“Universal Masking in Hospitals in the COVID-19 Era,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, May 2020)

Unfortunately, this incredibly grievous and vain insistence by policymakers, medical “experts,” and many in media to force mask wearing on the public were also made to apply — for two senseless years — to the healthy young, the one demographic that study after study has shown as the least affected by COVID. It is no coincidence that linguistic experts are now noting rising cases in speech impediments amongst children, as the latter need to see their parents’ faces in order to learn how to talk.

Quite predictably, mask fanatics refer to a recent US Center for Disease Control study alleging mask benefits. This is the same CDC that announced in February 2020 that it does not “recommend the use of facemasks to help prevent novel coronavirus.” In any event, Steve Kirsch, Executive Director for the Vaccine Safety Research Foundation, dismisses the CDC findings as “deeply flawed. It is published in the CDC’s favorite medical journal: the *MMWR Report*, a medical journal with an impact factor of 17.5.” Bottomline, mask benefits are “zero and indistinguishable from doing nothing.”

## **WHEN SATIRE IS MORE REAL**

Which leads us back to the *Babylon Bee*: “This new variant of unvarying SCIENCE may be seen as vindication for the thousands of medical experts who were summarily shamed, berated, mistreated, discredited, demoted, or even fired for ever doubting the indubitable SCIENCE or ever suggesting the SCIENCE may change, which it has done and continues to do.”

Add Joe Rogan to that list. Alex Berenson. Jordan Peterson. Add this column as well. And all the others that kept sanity during this pandemic.

The problem really, as the *Babylon Bee* points out, is that liberal progressives are “Deeply Afraid Things Could Go Back to Normal” (Sept. 29, 2021). Which makes one wonder if the *Babylon Bee* is still really engaged in satire or actual news.

Either way, people in government, the medical profession, and media need to be held accountable for the tragedy they wrought on countless innocent people. And remember: these are the same people pushing for forced vaccination.