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Health and medical information grounded in science

Lockdowns have killed millions



Over the course of this pandemic I have often wished that Hans Rosling was still alive. For those who are unaware, he was a medical doctor and a professor at Karolinska Institutet who had a particular interest in global health and development. In 2012, Time magazine declared him one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

During the last few months of his life, in 2017, [he wrote an excellent book called “Factfulness”](#), that summed up most of his thinking, and described how many of the things people “know” about the world are completely wrong. Hans Rosling is something of a hero of mine, and if he was still alive, I’m sure he would have contributed to bringing some sanity to the current situation. With his global influence, I think people would have listened.

Two of Hans Rosling's former colleagues at Karolinska Institutet, professor Anna-Mia Ekström and professor Stefan Swartling Peterson, have gone through the data from UNICEF and UNAIDS, and come to the conclusion that least as many people have died as a result of the restrictions to fight covid as have died of covid directly.

And while almost all the people who have died of covid have died in rich countries and been old, the vast majority of people who have died of lockdown have died in poor countries and been young. This means that the number of years of life lost to lockdown is many times greater than the number of years of life lost to covid-19 ([as I've written about on this blog previously](#)).

The specific causes of death are malnutrition, caused by shutting down the global economy, lack of vaccination, caused by shutting down childhood vaccination programs, and treatable diseases like tuberculosis and HIV, that have been prioritized down as a result of efforts to fight covid-19.

These unintended consequences of the efforts to fight covid have caused the rate of childhood deaths to increase in 2020 for the first time in decades. The two professors also note that rates of childhood marriage and of teen pregnancy and abortion have increased significantly as a result of taking children out of school. They have been interviewed about their findings on SVT, the Swedish public broadcaster. If you speak Swedish, [you can watch a documentary that discusses their conclusions here](#).

I have to say, I'm very impressed with SVT for producing this documentary, and daring to put a lot of the numbers in perspective. The documentary clearly shows that covid-19 is nowhere near as deadly as the 1918 Spanish flu, and is in fact very much in line with the flu pandemics of 1957 and 1968. And they note that more people died of smoking last year than of covid. But we haven't made smoking illegal. And they also note that anti-democratic governments in many countries have taken advantage of the pandemic to move forward their positions, get rid of opposition, and limit human rights.

Lockdowns are inherently racist and elitist, with unclear benefits but proven harms. We all need to stand up and tell our governments that we don't support what they