

“PANIC VIRUS”

Written by M. Levitt
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CORONAVIRUS IS “PANIC VIRUS”

“ITS JUST PART OF THE MADNESS”

(Scientist Michael Levitt)

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As the "stay home, save lives" crowd confronts the fact that their beloved "experts" were, in reality, about as well-informed as the rest of us when they made the fateful recommendation that the imposition of lockdowns - in most cases legally enforced - was the best option for combating the spread of SARS-CoV-2, a Nobel-prize-winning scientist from Stanford said in an interview published Sunday that, according to *his* models, the lockdowns didn't save lives, but actually caused more deaths.

According to [the Telegraph](#) , Michael Levitt correctly predicted the initial trajectory of the pandemic, but was ignored by now-disgraced Imperial College epidemiologist Niall Ferguson, whose warnings were embraced by the UK government as justification for the lockdown, despite the fact that the projections proved to be extremely flawed and dramatically overestimated the virus's potential for devastation. As early as march, Levitt warned that Ferguson's projections had over-estimated the potential death toll by "10 or 12 times".

Instead of helping the situation, Fergusons' projections created an unnecessary "panic virus" which spread among global political leaders, Prof Levitt told the Telegraph.

Prof Levitt, a British-American-Israeli who shared the Nobel prize for chemistry in 2013 for the "development of multiscale models for complex chemical systems", has said for two months that the planet will beat coronavirus faster than most other experts predict.

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"I think lockdown saved no lives," said the scientist, who added that the Government should have encouraged Britons to wear masks and adhere to other forms of social distancing.

"I think it may have cost lives. It will have saved a few road accident lives - things like that - but social damage - domestic abuse, divorces, alcoholism - has been extreme. And then you have those who were not treated for other conditions."

Data from various studies has offered a mixed picture about the effectiveness of the lockdowns. The number of cases and deaths has undoubtedly plunged in the US and across Europe since strict lockdowns were almost universally enacted, **but many wonder whether governments are being overly cautious, perhaps to a dangerous degree.**

Though his models have been vindicated by the passage of time, Levitt said his initial concerns about Ferguson's models were largely ignored due to what he calls the "panic virus", despite the fact that there's recent precedent for epidemiological models over-estimating the impact of other outbreaks, including H1N1 and Ebola.

Having assessed the initial outbreak in China and from the infected Diamond Princess cruise ship, he predicted by March 14 that the UK would lose around 50,000 lives. Prof Ferguson's modelling that same week estimated up to 500,000 deaths without social distancing measures.

"I think that the real virus was the panic virus," Prof Levitt told the Telegraph. "For reasons that were not clear to me, I think the leaders panicked and the people panicked and I think there was a huge lack of discussion.."

The 73-year-old has no background as an epidemiologist, but he assessed the outbreak in China and prepared a paper based on his own calculations. Most countries, he predicted, would suffer a Covid-19 death rate worth around an extra month in excess deaths over the calendar year.

"In Europe, I don't think that anything actually stopped the virus other than some kind of

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burnout," he added. "There's a huge number of people who are asymptomatic so I would seriously imagine that by the time lockdown was finally introduced in the UK the virus was already widely spread. They could have just stayed open like Sweden by that stage and nothing would have happened."

Professor Levitt has now analysed the data from 78 nations with more than 50 reported cases of coronavirus. His investigations proved the virus was never going to achieve the type of exponential growth that the researchers at Imperial were predicting at the same time.

At this point, Levitt believes the virus has reached a point of saturation across Europe and parts of the US making lockdowns much less effective. At this point, they're probably causing far more harm than benefit.

*The virus "has saturated", he believes, across Europe. "I think the lockdown will cause much more damage than the deaths saved," he added. "When I saw the briefing (from Prof Ferguson) I was shocked. **I had a run-in with him when I actually saw that Ferguson's death rate was a year's worth - doubling the normal death rate. I saw that and said immediately that's completely wrong. I think Ferguson over-estimated 10 or 12 times. We should have seen from China that a virus never grows exponentially. From the very first case you see, exponential growth actually slows down very dramatically.***

"The problem with epidemiologists is that they feel their job is to frighten people into lockdown, social distancing. So you say 'there's going to be a million deaths' and when there are only 25,000 you say 'it's good you listened to my advice'. This happened with Ebola and bird flu. It's just part of the madness."

*Prof Levitt says the global evidence shows the virus fades in dry heat and in much of the western world "there seems to be some kind of immunity". "The main worry I would have would be in China," he said when asked about the prospect of a second outbreak. "I am 73 and I feel very young," he added. **"I don't care about the risk at all. As you get old the risk of dying from disease is so high that this is the time to buy a motorcycle, go skiing!"***

Even as the NYT and WaPo search for every shred of evidence to support the view that the reopening in the US will lead to a second wave, they're finding that there's not nearly as much

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as they'd hoped - **which is why projections are their new favorite tool.**

3 Shawwaal 1441 – 27 May 2020