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HEALTHCARE K-12 EDUCATION POLITICS

Stanford epidemiologist warns that coronavirus crackdown is based on bad data



GREG PIPER - ASSOCIATE EDITOR
MARCH 19, 2020

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'Like an elephant being attacked by a house cat'



“If we had not known about a new virus out there, and had not checked individuals with PCR [virus] tests, the number of total deaths due to ‘influenza-like illness’ would not seem unusual this year. At most, we might have casually noted that flu this season seems to be a bit worse than average.”

This was not written by some right-wing crank claiming coronavirus is a conspiracy to deny President Trump a second term, or **an excuse to bring down capitalism.**

It’s from a sobering and illuminating essay by Stanford University epidemiologist John Ioannidis, co-director of its Meta-Research Innovation Center, published in the life sciences news site **STAT.**

The coronavirus-driven crackdowns on public life by state and local political leaders are being made in a data vacuum, Ioannidis warns, and extreme government measures to prevent infections may actually lead to *more* deaths.

“The current coronavirus disease, Covid-19, has been called a once-in-a-century pandemic,” he says. “But it may also be a once-in-a-century evidence fiasco,” with policymakers relying on “meaningless” statistics based on unreliable samples:

Three months after the outbreak emerged, most countries, including the U.S., lack the ability to test a large number of people and no countries have

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reliable data on the prevalence of the virus in a representative random sample of the general population. ...

Patients who have been tested for SARS-CoV-2 [COVID-19] are disproportionately those with severe symptoms and bad outcomes. As most health systems have limited testing capacity, selection bias may even worsen in the near future.

The one situation where an entire, closed population was tested was the Diamond Princess cruise ship and its quarantine passengers. The case fatality rate there was 1.0%, but this was a largely elderly population, in which the death rate from Covid-19 is much higher.

The general ignorance of journalists when it comes to reporting scientific research is making the response worse.

Consider the complicating factors when trying to project that one cruise ship's mortality rate "onto the age structure of the U.S. population": It's based on *seven deaths*, in a population (tourists) that "may have different frequencies of chronic diseases" than the general population.

The "reasonable estimates" for the general population range from 0.05 percent to 1 percent (the elderly tourist cruise line death rate), Ioannidis writes:

A population-wide case fatality rate of 0.05% is lower than seasonal influenza. If that is the true rate, locking down the world with potentially tremendous social and financial consequences may be totally irrational. It's like an elephant being attacked by a house cat. Frustrated and trying to avoid the cat, the elephant accidentally jumps off a cliff and dies.

MORE: Student threatened for calling socialism more dangerous than coronavirus

 **Stanford Department of Medicine**
@StanfordDeptMed

Congratulations to #StanDOM's John Ioannidis has been elected to @theNAMedicine for his "outstanding professional achievements" related to #diseaseprevention & #healthresearch. stanford.io/2GSdD2R



15 9:37 PM - Jan 9, 2019

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The Stanford scientist notes that “mild” coronaviruses (not COVID-19) have much higher case fatality rates when infecting “elderly people in nursing homes” (**the main cluster of cases in the Seattle area**), and account for up to a tenth of respiratory hospitalizations.

Ioannidis further notes the difficulty of nailing down what might have killed a person with multiple infections, citing an autopsy series of elderly victims of respiratory viruses: “A positive test for coronavirus does not mean necessarily that this virus is always primarily responsible for a patient’s demise.”

His own “mid-range guess” for the COVID-19 mortality rate – 0.3 percent of the general population – would produce 10,000 deaths, but that would not even register a blip “within the noise” of estimated deaths from “influenza-like illness.”

Without better data (and yes, the Trump administration irredeemably botched the testing), policymakers are using “prepare-for-the-worst reasoning” to impose “extreme measures of social distancing and lockdowns”:

Unfortunately, **we do not know** if these measures work. School closures, for example, may reduce transmission rates. But they may also backfire if children socialize anyhow, if school closure leads children to spend more time with susceptible elderly family members, if children at home disrupt their parents ability to work, and more. School closures may also diminish the chances of developing herd immunity in an age group that is spared serious disease.

The conventional wisdom to “flatten the curve” – managing the load on the health system through social distancing – could even backfire, Ioannidis writes:

Yet if the health system does become overwhelmed, the majority of the extra deaths may not be due to coronavirus but to other common diseases and conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, trauma, bleeding, and the like that are not adequately treated. If the level of the epidemic does overwhelm the health system and extreme measures have only modest effectiveness, then flattening the curve may make things worse: Instead of being overwhelmed during a short, acute phase, the health system will remain overwhelmed for a more protracted period. That’s another reason we need data about the exact level of the epidemic activity.

He warns policymakers to consider the consequences of “lockdowns of months, if not years, [where] life largely stops.”

If we’re going to risk the “financial crisis, unrest, civil strife, war, and a meltdown of the social fabric” caused by such extreme measures, “we need unbiased prevalence and incidence data for the evolving infectious load to guide decision-making.”

Many pixels have been spilled mocking the Trump administration for its indifference to rigorous science, with some criticisms more fair than others.

But Ioannidis’s analysis should be taken the most seriously by state and local leaders, who actually have the power to destroy their economies and civic life, and the scientifically ignorant media who feed them doomsday coverage.

h/t [Robby Soave](#)

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IMAGE: Stanford Department of Medicine/Twitter

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Greg spent several years as a technology policy reporter and editor for [Warren Communications News](#) in Washington, D.C., and guest host on C-SPAN's "[The Communicators](#)." He co-founded the alternative newspaper *PUNCH* and served as a reporter, editor and columnist for [The Falcon](#) at Seattle Pacific University.

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Name

**George Avery** • a month ago

I am an epidemiologist and health services researcher, one with particular expertise and experience in public health emergency preparedness. I have been saying the same thing as John - I spoke for about 45 minutes last week with a reporter from ProPublica, trying to explain the concept of ascertainment bias and why the case fatality rates being tossed about were horribly exaggerated. Frankly, the real impact from a health standpoint in the US was likely to be no worse than the 1956 or 1968 influenza epidemics, even without the extreme measures. In fact, we are reaching a point where the long-term damage from the panic-driven response may well be worse than the impact of the disease.

109  |  • Reply • Share ›**alice** → George Avery • a month ago

absolutely.....this is a mediapowered panic for DEMDEMIC

57  |  • Reply • Share ›**Jeanne Hintze** → alice • a month ago

I forget who already posted...it is not pandemic but DemPanic

37  |  • Reply • Share ›**George Hall** → Jeanne Hintze • a month ago • edited

They shredded people's 401k's and investments for the sake of a PRC-DNC operation to try to get Trump kicked out of office in November. As usual, since leaders in PRC and the DNC are promoted by merit, it is failing. Gasoline will be a dollar a gallon all year, for example. We basically produce or own or import oil from Mexico and Canada now, thanks to Trump and to the American oil industry technologists and leaders. So Russia, Iran, and OPEC are screwed, and Americans will end up with extra weekly cash in their pockets all year.

27  |  1 • Reply • Share ›**StevenRobert** → George Hall • a month ago

If people get a check in the mail, and it looks like they will, it may mitigate some of the effects of being off work for a couple of weeks. Longer than that and it will start to really have a deep effect on the economy and everyone.

9  |  • Reply • Share ›**disqus_G6Y4kqHlxv** → StevenRobert • 21 days ago

1200 is minuscule to most families.

4  |  • Reply • Share ›**Barry Woodhouse** → George Hall • a month ago

Won't waste much time arguing with an arrogant, right-wing blow-hard. Apply at info-wars or as errand boy for Sean Hannity, George. And don't compete in a Useless Babble contest with trump - he's the all time champ.

1  |  22 • Reply • Share ›**compugraphd** → Barry Woodhouse • a month ago

This post only proves how single minded the "Antitru" crowd is. All roads lead to "I hate Trump" -- they don't care about facts -- they make up their own. (you know "my truth" and "your truth"????)

8  |  • Reply • Share ›**Bob Alexander** → Barry Woodhouse • a month ago • edited

Only according to you rabid anti-American Red Leftist Pathological Liars, Losers, Haters, Bigots & ANTIFA/BLM SewerScum Shills, huh,

Lyin'Loser?

ripe

7 ^ | v 1 • Reply • Share ›



ursafan40 → Barry Woodhouse • a month ago

You won't argue because you aren't bright enough to have a cohesive position.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Orwellian Nightmare → Barry Woodhouse • 19 days ago

Woodhouse to the Woodshed... now

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



retiredandtired → Barry Woodhouse • 20 days ago

as the saying goes...alfa hotels come in all sizes

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Melody Lanzatella → Barry Woodhouse • 19 hours ago

And yet, that is exactly what you've done. Spent time here showing off your ignorance to all. In 6 months you'll be singing a different tune. (unless you are one of the pedo's that has had his "livliehood" destroyed.)

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Melody Lanzatella → George Hall • 19 hours ago

Well, the financial gains for ppl all over the world, when all is said and done are going to be enormous! (I cant go into explaining it all, but it will happen.) But, that doesnt help anyone NOW!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Justin Truedope → Jeanne Hintze • a month ago • edited

A panDEMic.. is literally a Dem in a panic! ;-)

9 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



disqussted999 → Jeanne Hintze • a month ago

It's not just about the DemoSociopaths, it's also about the banksters that run this country. Their private-for-profit so-called "Federal" Reserve Bank is and has been in deep sht, along with its mafioso bankster colleagues (think Citigroup, MorganStanley, GoldmanSucks, JPMorgue, BoA, et al), because of hundred of trillions in bad bets (derivatives) they have made, and because of fraudulent deals.

While the ~300Million citizens of the US will supposedly get somewhere around \$1Trillion, with a few \$trillion supposedly going to small and medium businesses, well over \$9Trillion will go (actually is already going and has gone) to the banks and the billionaires and trillionaires that own them and be covered by another ~\$1/2 Trillion just to make sure they don't lose any money (and who knows how high that number will actually be in the end as the banksters managed to get included in the bill the stipulation that they don't have to reveal a fkng detail of what they do with that money to WeThePeople that they are stealing it from). And that's after they handed out \$29Trillion to themselves, and even their foreign overseas banks that are a part of their bankster mafia, back in 2008 and 2009. They tried hard to cover that up, too.

Don't look where everyone tells you to look. Look to the "ruling class"...the "elites"... and especially to the Fed bankster mafia and their bankster friends, if you want to know wherthis pandemic of fear and panic and destruction of economies and of our rights came from and what it's a coverup for, under the guise of a virus that has been shown to be less dangerous than the influenza virus that has been with us for decades.

4 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Richard Plunkett → disqussted999 • 19 days ago

Spot-on.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Lovok → Richard Plunkett • 18 days ago

Agreed.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Barry Woodhouse → Jeanne Hintze · a month ago

Oh, how very clever. Typical of trump supporters and other right-wing outliers, thought is pushed aside in favor of snarky 'tags' and insults. It's sure that your not-so-clever reworking of "pandemic" will be making the rounds on those media outlets that fill the appetites of idiots for useless babble. Save your effort - trump does that quite well, and your surely don't want to distract from his babbling.

^ | v 13 · Reply · Share ›



Bob Alexander → Barry Woodhouse · a month ago

So babbles the sleazy trashy low-info feeble-minded really rabid elitist anti-American disgustingly sick perverted naive incredibly gullible ignorant delusional bats#*t crazy Racist Red Leftist Pathological Liars, Losers, Haters, Bigots & ANTIFA/BLM SewerScum Shills, huh, Useful Idiot?

5 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Melody Lanzatella → Bob Alexander · 18 hours ago

Um, use-LESS idiot.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Bob Alexander → Melody Lanzatella · 3 hours ago

Nah, the ChiCom Shills find such folks to be especially Useful Idiots!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Orwellian Nightmare → Barry Woodhouse · 19 days ago

On Soros Payroll..

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Melody Lanzatella → Barry Woodhouse · 18 hours ago

Barry, it has NOTHING to do with "Trump supporters" or "right wing" ANYTHING anymore! WAKE UP! I mean, it IS the GREAT AWAKENING! So, it's about that time! Look around! Open your eyes and ears! The citizens of the WORLD are fed up! We are the MANY! We will NOT be bullied by the global elites any longer! ALL that they stand for, and ALL that they engage in (in the DARK and shadowy, despicable corners) are now AWASH in LIGHT! It is NO LONGER an American fight! IT IS A GLOBAL FIGHT!! GOOD AGAINST EVIL!! It is all over but the crying for you and your ilk!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Entirely Separate → Barry Woodhouse · a month ago

<https://www.bing.com/videos...> FYI

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



TexanForever → alice · a month ago · edited

Right you are !! ... In my clin. psych. grad studies I took pharmacology classes alongside pre-med students. I understand The Scientific Method and how unethical "investigators" sometimes cheat when doing studies to make the results come out the way their Big Pharma sponsors pay them to ome out. The integrity of the experimenter is of prime importance, as are peer reviews. (I'm 89 YO)

30 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



drdirt_atl → TexanForever · a month ago

A successful experiment exactly produces the expected result.

7 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



George Hall → TexanForever · a month ago

I had a customer tell me once that she had been in medical research and when asked she said yes they were ordered to fudge results.

8 ^ | v 1 · Reply · Share ›



Bob Alexander → George Hall · a month ago

There seems to be an epidemic of that problem amongst the "global

warming" charlatans!

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



retiredandtired → George Hall · 20 days ago

and?

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



compugraphd → TexanForever · a month ago

ב"ה

Yeah, as in "I want to make a new vaccine -- people are starting to catch on to the vaccine scam and we need to scare them so they won't protest against the draconian vaccine laws that we pushed to make a bleepload of money and not end up in jail" Usually when I test something it's to see what the results are, not to create "desires" results

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



retiredandtired → TexanForever · 20 days ago

82 here with 3 grad degrees and post doc work..was researcher for USArmy Av and FAA...agree you can slant/fake/suppress research results but Big Pharma as the dark side reference ..that is a political view/ideology

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



George Hall → alice · a month ago · edited

My first surmial early on: it's an escaped pneumonia bioweapon with a 5 to 15 percent mortality rate.

My second surmial after obtaining the supplies and equipment to make liposomal vitamin C and with the passage of time and noting how the fakenews behaved: It's a DNC/PRC operation to destroy the U.S. economy in attempt to cause Trump not to get elected in November, complete with the usual undermining and seditious, traitorous globalists and Obama holdovers in CDC and other key agencies and position, backed by the fake news.

My third surmial: It's about the collapsing fiat money system and all the bubbles.

Fourth surmial: Back to the second surmial.

19 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



stun ned → George Hall · a month ago

Thank God both DNC and PRC have failed. And I pray it backfires and removes the murderous blood soaked butts from power.

11 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Bob Alexander → stun ned · a month ago

It will.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Daris Darrison → George Hall · a month ago

Fauci is definitely a Dem sleeper.

5 ^ | v 1 · Reply · Share ›



esther7777 → Daris Darrison · a month ago

He is also heavily involved in ILLEGAL bio research, the 'doctors' involved in creating these genocidal bioweapons need to be put on trial and hung for crimes against humanity. There is ZERO reason to create these virus's except for war. ZERO. in 2015 the 'Science Journal' reported a transfer of a coranavirus to China, Under Obama, now why would our NIH create a virus for China you ask? Because they PAID FOR IT. PURE GREED

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Bob Alexander → esther7777 · a month ago

DAYUM!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



hoot → Daris Darrison · a month ago

You are mental case.

^ | v 1 · Reply · Share ›

 **Bob Alexander** → hoot • a month ago

Why?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **Bob Alexander** → George Hall • a month ago


The ChiCom virus is working as anticipated, so far! This article needs wider distribution.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **jack johnson** → alice • a month ago


Agreed.....Robby is a frequent guest on Tucker Carlson`s show but I doubt this will fit into Tucker`s fear mongering. We are heading into a global depression that will kill more than 1000 Wuhan viruses.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **Dr-Artaud** → jack johnson • a month ago


Indeed, that the heck is up with Carlson? Driving to the President's Mar a Lago resort to warn the president to take this seriously. Is Carlson hiding a degree we don't know about?

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **Ted** → alice • a month ago

That should be DEMPANIC.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **Barry Woodhouse** → alice • a month ago

Alice, Apply to serve as a lackey for Alex Jones, or Sean Hannity. Your mindless "Demdemic" is typical of trump supporters and other right-wing outliers - thought is pushed aside in favor of snarky 'tags' and insults. It's sure that your not-so-clever reworking of "pandemic" will be making the rounds on those media outlets that fill the appetites of idiots for useless babble. Save your effort - trump does that quite well, and your surely don't want to distract from his babbling. You might note that most of the world's nations have implemented measures of quarantine and closures. But America's right-wing refuses to acknowledge the existence of other nations - except monitoring Russia from their back porch.

^ | v 6 • Reply • Share ›

 **Peabody** → Barry Woodhouse • a month ago


Refuse to acknowledge the existence of "other nations." I think we're pretty familiar with another country called Mexico. You know, the drug trafficking failed narco-state on the southern border you enlightened communist want to invite in by the tens of millions?

Let me ask you something big shot, how much immigration is enough? Is there a number or should we just fill this country with the noble and hard working illegal aliens and exchange citizenship with residency? Is the concept of citizenship obsolete? Huh?

How about assimilation? Can we do that or must we acknowledge the existence of other nations except our own?


Got a number?

8 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **Bob Alexander** → Barry Woodhouse • a month ago


As is usual for you Lyin'Losers, you are so chock full-o'-schiff, an enema would blow your head right out of your lying-azz, huh, Lyin'Loser?

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **alice** → Barry Woodhouse • a month ago

definitely hit a nerve....you started out strong...but sadly drifted off to Russia..that was sad....

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **FarOutlier** → George Avery • a month ago • edited

Well, let us be honest. Nobody cares. The sheeple are deep into their "omg we are all going to die" syndrome. I am NOT an epidemiologist or a health services researcher, but I am an Engineer and I am not bad with numbers. The numbers of reported covid cases are trivial in a planet of some 7 billion people. The number of deaths are not

round off error size. 40,000 dead from the flu and America ignores it, but goes batshit crazy over about 190 American deaths of covid, a bit more than the number of murders in Chicago so far this year, but not by much.

I do NOT blame epidemiologist for the insanity. You have to know this is out-of-hand.

Every bit of info given to the press is spun into their tale of death and destruction. If

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