



Written by [Dennis Behreandt](#) on October 7, 2020

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## Lockdown Madness

**Progressives promised frightened citizens that lockdowns were for their own good. This pernicious lie has caused not only massive economic upheaval, but needless deaths.**

Probably few Americans have heard of Sunetra Gupta. As a brief summary, Dr. Gupta is one of the world's leading epidemiologists and also an acclaimed novelist. She graduated from Princeton University in 1987 and earned her Ph.D. from Imperial College London in 1992. Today she is professor of theoretical epidemiology at Oxford University's Department of Zoology.



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Again, for emphasis: She is one of the world's leading epidemiologists. In 2009, she was awarded the Royal Society Rosalind Franklin Award in recognition of her scientific achievements. For those who do not recall Rosalind Franklin, she was a chemist and x-ray crystallographer whose work was instrumental to the effort to understand the structure of DNA.

In an interview in 2018 with Developing Experts, a U.K.-based home education organization, Gupta described her youthful interest in physics and then described her current work. "Now I work on infectious diseases," she said, "but I apply some of the ideas that physicists have had about physical systems to try and understand how infectious diseases evolve and what we can do, on a practical level, to try and stop them from causing the havoc that they do."



**Comparing dangers:** One of the world's leading epidemiologists, Dr. Sunetra Gupta is opposed to lockdowns as a public health response to COVID-19. "The costs of lockdown are too high at this point," she has said. (Photo: [colorado.edu](#))



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On a practical level for COVID-19, she doesn't think indiscriminate lockdowns are the right approach. In June, according to the U.K.'s *Guardian* newspaper, she said the lockdowns were hurting people and should be lifted. "It's becoming clear that a lot of people have been exposed to the virus and that the death rate in people under 65 is not something you would lock down the economy for," she told the paper. "We can't just think about those who are vulnerable to the disease. We have to think about those who are vulnerable to lockdown too. The costs of lockdown are too high at this point."

The costs of the lockdowns have always been too high, because the lockdowns have always been unnecessary and inappropriate. While many, if not most, people have been persuaded to buy into the fear being spread by the mainstream media, socialist Democratic politicians, and RINOs (Republicans in Name Only), the fact is that the pandemic never represented the calamitous danger posed for it in popular caricature.

This is and has been the opinion of Dr. Vernon Coleman, for example. In a recent video, Dr. Coleman argued: "It has been painfully, depressingly clear since March that the lockdowns, the social distancing, the face masks and all the rest of the nonsense had absolutely nothing to do with the coronavirus. Back in February and March, I called the panic a hoax. This wasn't because I didn't believe that the virus existed. I called it a hoax, and still believe it a hoax, because I believed that the threat of the coronavirus had been dramatically exaggerated. And that belief has never wavered and now the evidence supports my assertion." Dr. Coleman studied medicine at Birmingham Medical School and began practicing medicine in the U.K. in 1970. In his bio he notes that he has appeared frequently as an expert guest on U.K. television and media, including the BBC, and has written more than 100 books that have sold more than two million copies.

Likewise, Nobel laureate Michael Levitt has been a consistent voice of reason in addressing the pandemic. In a recent op-ed for another U.K. paper, the London *Telegraph*, he and co-authors Uri Gavish (a biomedical consultant), Udi Qimron (head of clinical microbiology and immunology at Tel Aviv University), Eyal Shahr (epidemiologist at the University of Arizona), and Ifat Abadi-Korek (research director, Assuta Medical Center), pointed out that it should have been obvious from the outset that the coronavirus pandemic was not going to be catastrophic.

"Back in January, not long after the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan, the number of deaths ceased to follow the exponential growth scare," they noted. This suggested, they continued, that more people were already somewhat or entirely immune to the virus than suspected.



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**Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak:** Despite frightening stories about the threat of the pandemic, Nobel laureate Michael Levitt noted in a recent article that already in January “the number of deaths [had] ceased to follow the exponential growth scare” in Wuhan. *(Photo: AP Images)*

“China, a country of almost a billion and a half people, eventually registered less than 5,000 deaths, and South Korea (51 million people) — about 300. The obvious explanation for those negligible mortality rates — highly prevalent preexisting immunity — was widely ignored. The world chose to believe that the tough lockdown in Wuhan, along with restrictions in other parts of China, somehow eradicated the virus.”

But it wasn’t the lockdowns, mask wearing, or social distancing that stopped the virus. Instead, Levitt and his co-authors note, the plausible explanation is “cross-reactivity.”

“People had been exposed to relatives of SARS-CoV-2,” they write, “which are common causes of the common cold, and their T-cells memorized features they share with SARS-CoV-2,” giving them some immunity.

Because of this, Levitt and his co-authors note, the lockdowns and other invasive policies rabidly and doggedly preferred by statist worldwide were unnecessary. And, they conclude, should be stopped.

“In short, it is extremely likely that most of us are at least partially immune to Covid-19,” they write. “Let’s accept this fact and try to quantify it. Continued self-destruction is a bad alternative.”

Indeed, lockdowns have been a terrible alternative. Lives have been lost due to government panic and decree, livelihoods have been destroyed, industries have been upended, citizens have turned against each other over divisive mandates, and supply chains of critical materials and supplies have been disrupted. All of this because statist governors and mayors, mostly Democrats but including RINO quislings, have been eager to burn to ash the Bill of Rights.

## Lockdowns: A Catalog of Destruction

The first thing to note about the lockdowns is that they have been aimed by their partisans, guided-missile-like, at destroying American liberty. The ethical foundation of this country was expressed by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration when he noted that all people, created equal, are “endowed by



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their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” By forcing people to stay in their homes, not visit their friends and families, limiting their access to goods, services, and entertainment, and more, the despots in our nation’s statehouses, counties, and cities have quite literally attempted to cancel the “pursuit of Happiness.”

This was noted by none other than Attorney General Bill Barr. Speaking at Hillsdale College, Barr noted: “You know, putting a national lockdown, stay-at-home orders, is like house arrest. Other than slavery, which was a different kind of restraint, this is the greatest intrusion on civil liberties in American history.”

Because of this radical disruption of the American way of life, the harms to the people of the nation have been extreme. These harms start with the economic consequences of the lockdowns.

You can begin to appreciate the scale of the economic devastation the lockdowns caused by examining unemployment. At the end of March, when the lockdowns became extensive throughout the United States, jobless claims skyrocketed.

“The number of initial claims surged in the initial phase of government lockdowns, hitting almost 7 million for the week ending March 28,” Robert Hughes recounted for the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER). Even though the jobless situation has improved considerably since then, the number of unemployed Americans remains concerning. In August, the unemployment rate was at a still-high 8.4 percent, after peaking at 14.7 percent in April, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

It’s easy to look at such numbers as merely statistics. But those numbers represent real people who are out of work. And that means they are not earning an income that is needed to provide food, clothing, and shelter for themselves and their families. Moreover, it means they are not producing goods and services needed by others. And because these unemployed workers are themselves facing reduced circumstances, their own demand for goods and services is reduced. And still that is not all, because the newly unemployed will seek assistance from various programs, both state-run and private, that redistribute wealth and provide charitable relief. The end result is a significant drag on the economy.

To see the impact of this drag on the economy, just examine the trends in GDP for the year so far. Commenting on the corona economy, also for AIER, Richard Ebeling, professor of ethics and free enterprise leadership at The Citadel, wrote in September: “During the first quarter of the year, U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by 5 percent (at an annualized rate) and then by a whopping 30.7 percent in the second quarter of 2020 (at an annualized rate).”





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**Indiscriminate lockdowns** forced businesses around the nation and the world to close. The result was devastating to the economy and to livelihoods: Jobless claims have remained at historic highs for as many as 26 weeks, according to economist Robert Hughes. *(Photo: AP Images)*

Much of this drag on the economy has been hidden by regulatory and monetary sleight of hand and by the flight of wealthier people from cities to suburbs and the countryside in search of escape from both current urban turmoil and the prospect of further urban disruptions in the future. These people have spent accumulated capital on property, goods, and services in rural and suburban areas, masking or reversing some economic declines in those areas. But the cities they are abandoning face increasing economic problems. Witness New York City. A poll commissioned by the Manhattan Institute found that “44 percent of high-earning New Yorkers have considered leaving the city in the past four months.” Those workers “make up 80 percent of New York City’s income-tax revenue, making the city especially vulnerable to tax-base erosion,” the institute pointed out.

One of the manipulations distorting the economy is the Federal Reserve’s attempt to juice economic activity via monetary inflation. The monetary manipulators at the Fed have said they intend to pursue higher rates of inflation, which is done by inflating the money supply. The infusion of new dollars into the economy reduces the value of already-existing dollars, putting upward pressure on prices (prices of goods in stores go up, hurting the poorest Americans the most). But, it becomes cheaper to borrow money, because the amount of money available to borrow increases. The result, however, is that stocks rise (as they have lately despite market turmoil), giving the impression of a roaring economy. Don’t be fooled: The apparent positive results of monetary manipulation of this sort are often transitory, creating distortions and bubbles that later burst, sometimes catastrophically.

## Destroying Life

In addition to destroying freedom and destabilizing the economy, the lockdowns have caused direct physical harm, increasing psychological problems, crimes, and suicides, and even driven down the availability of medical and healthcare services for conditions other than COVID.

Medical professionals and others around the world have begun to point out the obvious: that these lockdowns are unnecessary and dangerous. In Belgium, for example, an open letter signed by nearly 2,000 healthcare professionals, including nearly 400 doctors, calls the lockdowns unjustified and more



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dangerous than COVID-19. “The current crisis management has become totally disproportionate and causes more damage than it does any good,” the open letter notes. “‘A cure must not be worse than the problem’ is a thesis that is more relevant than ever in the current situation,” the letter continues. “We note, however, that the collateral damage now being caused to the population will have a greater impact in the short and long term on all sections of the population than the number of people now being safeguarded from corona.”

Though the numbers of increased deaths the lockdowns are responsible for can only be speculated, we know the numbers are extremely high.

For example, healthcare facilities noted that they had seen dramatic *decreases* in the number of cardiac and cancer patients visiting hospitals. *Time* magazine reported on one such case in late August.

“Before the pandemic, about 1,000 new patients came to Boston’s Dana-Farber Cancer Institute for treatment consultations each week,” *Time* reported. “When COVID-19 hit Massachusetts this spring, the number of new consultations fell by half.”

This was a nationwide phenomenon. Data from the CDC’s Research and Development Survey (RANDS) show that nearly 40 percent of adult Americans had difficulty or were unable to access healthcare services (“including urgent care, surgery, screening tests, ongoing treatment, regular checkups, prescriptions, dental care, vision care and hearing care”) during the lockdowns.

Several studies have underscored the deleterious impact of lockdowns on access to care. For cancer care, services declined across the board and, said one study, “cancer screenings declined drastically, with breast cancer screenings dropping by –89.2% and colorectal cancer screenings by –84.5%.” This study, published in the journal *JCO Clinical Cancer Informatics*, warned: “The steep decreases in cancer screening and patients with a new incidence of cancer suggest the possibility of a future increase in patients with later-stage cancer being seen initially.” And late-stage cancer often means fatal cancer, as well as additional need for aggressive, invasive treatments that themselves cause pain and suffering, even when those treatments are successful.

For cardiac patients the news was just as bad. A paper published in *Open Heart*, an official journal of the British Cardiovascular Society, found: “There has been a greater than 50% drop in the number of patients presenting to cardiology and those diagnosed with myocardial infarction. All areas of cardiology service provision sustained significant reductions, which included outpatient clinics, investigations, procedures and cardiology community services such as heart failure and cardiac rehabilitation.”

Dr. Lisa Rosenbaum, reporting for *The New England Journal of Medicine* on the reduction in access to healthcare services during the pandemic, pointed to the opinion of Dr. Zoran Lasic, a New York-based cardiologist. “I think the toll on non-Covid patients will be much greater than Covid deaths,” Lasic said, according to Rosenbaum.



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**Stress:** Lockdowns have separated families and friends, drastically increasing rates of depression and suicide. According to psychiatrist Dr. Leo Sher at the Icahn School of Medicine, “There is a high probability that suicide rates will increase in many countries of the world.” (Photo: AP Images)

Psychologically, the stress of the pandemic fearmongering, the instantaneous overthrow of American life by lockdown tyranny, the loss of jobs, and the dramatic increase in uncertainty in the ability to pay bills, feed families, or access healthcare — all began to drive increases in suicide.

By mid-May, healthcare providers were warning that they were seeing more and more suicides and suicide attempts. On May 21, KGO-TV, the local ABC affiliate in San Francisco, reported: “Doctors at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek say they have seen more deaths by suicide during this quarantine period than deaths from the COVID-19 virus.”

Kacey Hansen, a veteran trauma nurse of 33 years, told the station that the trend was unprecedented in her experience. “What I have seen recently, I have never seen before,” she said. “I have never seen so much intentional injury.”

The trend caused one doctor to call for an end to the lockdowns. “I think, originally, this (the shelter-in-place order) was put in place to flatten the curve and to make sure hospitals have the resources to take care of COVID patients,” Dr. Mike deBoisblanc told the news station. “We have the current resources to do that and our other community health is suffering.”

Continuing, he commented on the dramatic increase in the number of suicides. “We’ve never seen numbers like this, in such a short period of time,” he said. “I mean we’ve seen a year’s worth of suicide attempts in the last four weeks.”

Dr. Leo Sher of the Department of Psychiatry at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, summarized the threat of COVID-19 and associated lockdowns on mental health and suicides for a report in the journal *QJM*, which was founded in 1907 under the title *Quarterly Journal of Medicine* and is published by Oxford University Press.

According to Dr. Sher, “The psychological sequelae of the pandemic will probably persist for months and years to come.”

Elaborating, he continued: “Social isolation, anxiety, fear of contagion, uncertainty, chronic stress, and economic difficulties may lead to the development or exacerbation of depression, anxiety, substance



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use, and other psychiatric disorders in vulnerable populations.”

Breaking down the threats that are likely to cause increased incidence of suicides, Dr. Sher pointed out that just about all the various impacts of the lockdowns, including economic uncertainty, fear of contagion, social isolation, and chronic stress, play significant roles. He concluded: “There is a high probability that suicide rates will increase in many countries of the world. This problem may be especially difficult in the U.S.”

A bleak outlook indeed. And one caused by power-hungry politicians.

## Total Harm Minimization

The statist insistence on indiscriminate lockdowns in reaction to COVID-19 has been, without question, far more damaging than the disease itself. Far from minimizing the danger presented by the pathogen, the lockdowns have added a wide array of additional threats and dangers to those presented by the virus.

Moreover, the insistence from authorities that lockdowns are designed to keep people safe from the pathogen can no longer be taken seriously. The lockdowns have persisted and even been strengthened and extended even as their impact on the course of the pandemic is dubious at best. In Australia, the state of Victoria is now one of the world’s most thorough police states, ostensibly because the threat of the virus is so extreme.



**Oppression:** Lockdowns are far from over, with the Australian state of Victoria becoming, alongside North Korea, the world’s chief totalitarian state. But in the United States, too, the trend is for ever more zealous COVID enforcement, as demonstrated by the treatment of Alecia Kitts, an Ohio mother tased and arrested for a mask violation while sitting alone at a middle-school football game in late September. *(Photo: AP Images)*

How bad is the outbreak in Victoria? According to official government data, as of September 20, there have been 20,042 cases and 761 deaths. There are 6.6 million people living in Victoria state. This means only 0.01 percent of Victorian citizens have perished from COVID-19, while only 0.3 percent have tested positive. Putting this another way, 99.9 percent of residents of Victoria have not died from the virus. Still, political leaders in the state of Victoria have erected a totalitarian police state based on this “outbreak.” In August, according the U.K.’s *Independent* newspaper, Shane Patton, Victoria’s chief





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commissioner of police, warned: “On at least three or four occasions in the past week we’ve had to smash the windows of people in cars and pull them out of there so they could provide their details because they weren’t telling us where they were going, they weren’t adhering to the chief health officer guidelines, they weren’t providing their name and their address.”

Your papers please, or else.

But this type of over-the-top statist response is not confined to Down Under. In the United States, for example, a terrifying example of statist tyranny comes from Hardin County, Kentucky. There, out of an abundance of caution, and though having no symptoms, Elizabeth Linscott sought COVID-19 testing ahead of a planned trip to visit her parents in another state. When her test came up positive, local officials insisted that she and her husband sign documents that would limit her travel unless she called and received health department permission first. She and her husband refused to sign.

Local TV news station WILX 10 described what happened next.

A couple of days after she denied signing the Self-isolation and Controlled Movement Agreed Order, Linscott said the Hardin County Sheriff’s Department arrived at her home without warning. Her husband, Isaiah, was home.

“I open up the door, and there’s like eight different people, five different cars,” he said. “I’m like, ‘What the heck’s going on?’ This guy’s in a suit with a mask. It’s the health department guy, and he has three papers for us — for me, her and my daughter.”

The couple was ordered to wear ankle monitors. If they travel more than 200 feet, law enforcement will be notified.

“We didn’t rob a store. We didn’t steal something. We didn’t hit and run. We didn’t do anything wrong,” Elizabeth Linscott said.

Indeed, public health measures, if there are to be any, should seek total harm minimization. This is the reasonable concept that health authorities should weigh the costs imposed by proposed measures on all aspects of society and health in an effort to ensure that a proposed “cure” does not cause even more problems than the “disease” in question. In a broad sense, total harm minimization is an approach to the Hippocratic concept *primum non nocere* — first, do no harm. Dr. David L. Katz, founding director in 1998 of Yale University’s Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center, has been a vocal opponent of indiscriminate lockdowns and the harms they add to the disease impact of COVID-19. The proper response, he has argued, is to pursue a policy of total harm minimization. As spelled out in policy points he has presented to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, this policy is “aimed at mitigating the direct harms of COVID19, and the indirect harms of societal upheaval and economic collapse.” It recognizes that quarantines should protect those that actually are at risk (the elderly, for example), while not unnecessarily blocking a return to normal that “should culminate in herd immunity and the ‘all clear.’”

Total harm minimization is much more in keeping with a deontological ethical framework in that it is respectful and protective of the natural rights of the citizens as integral to successfully protecting health outcomes during a pandemic. It does not ignore and destroy those rights in single-minded pursuit of some desired outcome regardless of collateral damage. The latter approach — ends-justify-the-means teleological ethics — is the basis of the police state lockdowns favored by politicians who are



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willing and eager to sell out their fellow citizens in pursuit of either their own power and aggrandizement or some other esoteric statist goal.

We've already seen enough collateral damage from statist interventions. And, we'll be seeing serious lingering social, health, and economic impacts from these interventions for months, if not years, into the future.

As it was true before, it remains true today: To end the pandemic and prevent unnecessary harm, the tyranny preferred by our burgeoning population of despots must be ended.

Freedom is still the cure.



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