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The Horrific Costs of Government Covid Policies

How much has the Covid-19 “pandemic” cost the U.S. economy? How about globally? What about economic costs to the average American family? To very poor families in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, especially those already at the near-starvation level? Have costs due to government-mandated Covid policies surpassed the benefits that those policies (ostensibly) were imposed to confer? Have government policies resulted in lives lost, and, if so, how many?



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These are important questions for which it is difficult to find precise, cut-and-dried answers. One reason is that there are many complex variables involved in cost-benefit analyses of the multiplicity of Covid policies (lockdowns, quarantines, mask mandates, testing, vaccine passports, social-distancing, etc.) and the various degrees to which local, state, and national governments have imposed them.

The more troubling reason we don’t have satisfactory answers to these questions is that politicians and technocrats who have foisted these unprecedented, draconian restrictions on us have not even bothered to ask these questions. Having ramped up public hysteria with relentless Covid propaganda that amounts to pandemic porn, they have essentially said we will spend “whatever it costs” — even if it means money we don’t have, running up trillions of dollars of debt with which our children and grandchildren will be burdened — to spare us from the “existential threat” from a virus with a lethality little greater than that of the common flu.

Politicians worldwide echoed then-New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who, in March 2020, said, “My mother is not expendable. Your mother is not expendable.... We’re not going to accept the premise that human life is disposable, and we’re not going to put a dollar figure on human life. The first order of business is to save lives, period. Whatever it costs.”

No sane, moral person holds that human life is disposable, but as a matter of public policy, public officials regularly do (and should) “put a dollar figure on human life,” so to speak. That is not being callous; it is being responsible and moral. When central planners take trillions of dollars from taxpayers for a supposedly beneficial “public” purpose, they are reducing the amount of money which those citizens have for food, fuel, healthcare, medical care, education, and other purposes. The poorer the taxpayer is, the greater will be the negative impact of the government’s extraction from his income. There are real life-and-death consequences to costly government policies. The financially struggling janitor/mechanic/teacher/farmer/family breadwinners who can’t afford to get their cancer screening or scheduled surgery because the state has confiscated so much of their income may, as a result, lose years of their lives — not to mention losing health and quality of life.

Andrew Cuomo and politicians like him know they are engaging in rank demagoguery when they ignore standard cost-benefit analysis and posture as moral paragons while profligately spending other people’s hard-earned money.



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\$11 Trillion, \$16 Trillion, \$50 Trillion?

In October 2020, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) issued its report on the Covid pandemic, "A World in Disorder," observing that global spending on responses to the virus had, up to that point, already topped \$11 trillion, with an additional \$10 trillion anticipated in loss of future earnings due to the virus. Published the same month as the GPMB report, another study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, co-authored by former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and Harvard University economist David Cutler, estimated the "cumulative financial costs of the COVID-19 pandemic related to the lost output and health reduction will be more than \$16 trillion, or roughly 90% of annual GDP of the United States."

"For a family of 4," the authors suggest, "the estimated loss would be nearly \$200,000. About half of this amount is the lost income from the COVID-19-induced recession; the remainder is the economic impact of shorter and less healthy life."

"Output losses of this magnitude are immense," the authors continue. "The lost output in the Great Recession was only one-quarter as large. The economic loss is more than twice the total monetary outlay for all the wars the United States has fought since 9/11, including those in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria." This unprecedented government spending binge is beyond "immense"; it is stupendously gargantuan! Dr. Ari R. Joffe, a professor of pediatric medicine at the University of Alberta, points to studies indicating the loss in terms of GDP will be "easily US\$50 trillion over the coming decade." Other economic estimates simply say "tens of trillions."

How much of this lost income, lost output, and health detriment is due to the virus itself, and how much is due to reaction to the virus (i.e., government policies imposed as the "cure")? Is it not worth investigating to see whether the government's confiscation of a vast percentage of private wealth is ultimately harmful and being misspent in ways that are exacerbating the problem? Curiously, neither the GPMB nor the Summers/Cutler study answers those crucial questions. Considering the sources, that is not surprising. The GPMB, a joint project of the UN's World Health Organization and the World Bank, is co-chaired by radical globalist Gro Harlem Brundtland (former Norwegian prime minister, former vice president of Socialist International, former UN apparatchik) and Elhadj As Sy, a career UN flunky from Senegal. Serving on the GPMB board of directors are Anthony Fauci and a dozen internationalist confederates of similar ilk. The authors of "A World in Disorder" do not criticize wild Covid spending. Why would they, since GPMB leaders are all on record as enthusiastic supporters of the same? Instead, they specifically insist we must "invest" even more in the "Build Back Better" agenda of the World Economic Forum (WEF) and Joe Biden, as well as sustainable development goals and global health security programs of the UN. It is no surprise that Klaus Schwab and his Davos billionaires club showcase the GPMB reports on the WEF website and feature GPMB leaders at the Davos confabs of the rich and famous.

While not explicitly boosting the UN/WEF agenda as does the GPMB report, the Summers/Cutler study not only fails to address the gigantic issue of misallocation/malinvestment (theft is a more honest term) of trillions of dollars by governments, but also recommends that even more money be "invested" by governments on authoritarian "testing, contact tracing and isolation," which they say "should be established on a permanent basis, not to be dismantled when the concerns about COVID-19 begin to recede." The authors don't even mention the term "lockdown," let alone consider what common sense,



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observation, and numerous studies have now shown: The lockdowns and other Covid restrictions, more than the virus itself, are responsible for much — if not most — of the socioeconomic devastation of the past two years. Summers is a longtime member of the globalist Council on Foreign Relations and a participant in gatherings of the WEF and the ultra-elite Bilderberg Group, so this genuflection to statism is par for the course.

Studies by the World Bank, Brookings Institution, Oxfam International, and other internationalist-minded organizations have provided similarly misguided analyses. They don't make any true cost-benefit analysis, though they often pretend to, knowing they can count on their allies in the Fake News media mob to spread their misinformation.

A typical example is a *New York Times* story of October 21, 2020, "The Coronavirus Has Claimed 2.5 Million Years of Potential Life in the U.S.," reporting on a study by Stephen Elledge, a geneticist at Harvard. Elledge based his findings on the years lost by the reported 220,000 deaths in the United States up to that time attributed to the virus. The *Times* and other media used this study to further whip up hysteria in support of Covid restrictions. Aside from very serious problems with inflated Covid death data — combining "dying with Covid" and "dying of Covid" — the Elledge study fails to properly contextualize the data by pointing out that far more "potential life years" have been taken by government responses to Covid than by the virus itself.

The Deadly "Cure"

Jeffrey A. Tucker at the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER) refers to this overwhelming bias in major media as "lockdown denialism" and cites numerous examples throughout print and broadcast media. For instance, largely ignored is the November 2020 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showing that closure of U.S. primary schools could be associated with an estimated 13.8 million years of life expectancy lost.

A report by the Canadian government agency Statistics Canada found that government-enforced lockdowns killed four times as many people as did Covid. The report, "Provisional death counts and excess mortality," reviewed the number of deaths between January 2020 and April 2021 and found that 5,535 Canadians under age 65 died because of "indirect consequences" of the pandemic. During that same time period, 1,380 Canadians in the same age group died because of Covid itself. The indirect causes, according to the report, included delayed medical procedures and increased substance abuse and alcohol consumption.



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Pandemic hypocrisy: While government edicts shut down schools and churches nationwide, liquor stores and pot shops remained open, contributing to skyrocketing substance abuse amid officially imposed social isolation. *(Photo credit: AP Images)*

The lockdowns, quarantines, social distancing, mask mandates, and other restrictions that destroyed millions of jobs and businesses also spread a plague of fear, anxiety, loneliness, boredom, isolation, desperation, and anger that, in turn, has produced a pandemic of depression, mental illness, suicide, murder, violent crime, spousal and child abuse, family breakup, and more. These tragic social developments have dire long-term economic consequences that defy precise calculation but will be immense.

As a result of lockdowns in 2020, the U.S. experienced the highest unemployment rates since government began collecting that data in 1948. Even before Covid, numerous studies had documented the deadly effects of unemployment. Many additional studies now confirm this. One, by researchers at Duke, Johns Hopkins, and Harvard universities and published by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), finds that the drop in life expectancy in the U.S. due to Covid unemployment shock will likely be “a staggering 0.84 and 1.22 million excess deaths over the next 15 and 20 years, respectively.”

Commenting on the NBER study, Ethan Yang at the American Institute for Economic Research wryly notes that, “contrary to the prevailing narrative, a bad economy kills too.” Sifting through the study’s dense statistics, Yang observes that although increased mortality reaches “peak severity about three years after the unemployment spike,” the “bulk of excess deaths do not occur suddenly but years in the future and they don’t return to normal for up to 20 years down the line.”

In a separate article for AIER, Ethan Yang and Amelia Janaskie write, “In a court of law, the burden of proof falls on those who wish to take away the liberty of the accused. Likewise, in the realm of policy, the burden of proof should be on those who wish to impose laws and restrictions on an otherwise free population.” They note, “This practice is not only morally sound, but practically sound as well. Public health interventions ought to be justified through rigorous cost-benefit analysis and honest conversations about the limitations of the policies involved.” Unfortunately, public officials will not move in this direction unless and until a sufficiently sizable, awakened, and determined segment of the public motivates them to do so.



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