



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 22, 2020

Of Viruses and Verities: Is Shutting Down the Nation Over Covid-19 Making Us LESS Safe?

There have been approximately 225,000 hospitalizations and 20,000 deaths. Ninety percent of the deceased are elderly, and 90 percent have underlying medical conditions.

I'm talking about the flu, by the way, and the toll it takes annually in *just the United States alone*.

As for the Wuhan virus, there are 18,170 confirmed cases in the U.S., with 250 confirmed deaths. Eighty percent of the deceased are elderly, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) tells us, and data from Italy [show that](#) 99 percent had underlying medical conditions. So it's good we're reacting to the disease the same way we do to the flu.

Except we're not, of course.

With the flu we go about our daily lives, not even noting that 61,000 people died during the 2017-18 season alone. With the Wuhan virus, too many people have become Chicken Little.

Some experts warn that this is where the true danger lies, too. After all, there are risks associated with trying too hard to avoid risks.

Just consider a warning by Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai, an MIT scientist who has four Ph.D.'s, invented e-mail, and also spoke at the National Science Foundation on "the science of information on the immune system," [reports Tech Startups](#). As he wrote in a March 9 tweet that has, appropriately, gone viral:

As an MIT PhD in Biological Engineering who studies & does research nearly every day on the Immune System, the [#coronavirus](#) fear mongering by the Deep State will go down in history as one of the biggest fraud to manipulate economies, suppress dissent, & push MANDATED Medicine! <https://t.co/Q5VeOqzWEp>

— Dr.SHIVA Ayyadurai, MIT PhD. Inventor of Email (@va_shiva) [March 9, 2020](#)

For the record, Dr. Ayyadurai, who's running for the Senate in Massachusetts, *doesn't say* we shouldn't take the standard precautions (better hygiene, "social distancing," etc.) against contracting the Wuhan virus. He *does* say that shutting down the economy is counterproductive and that we should focus more on immune-system health (video below).





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Ayyadurai makes an interesting point: Sun exposure facilitates your body's creation of Vitamin D, which buttresses your immune system. So insofar as our Wuhan virus "lockdown" measures keep people indoors, they can be counterproductive in that regard.

Joining Ayyadurai is leading Israeli virologist and infectious-disease expert Jihad Bishara, director of the infectious diseases unit at Rabin Medical Center, Beilinson Hospital in Petah Tikva, Israel. He slams ["the 'unnecessary and exaggerated panic' about coronavirus and urges world leaders to calm \[the\] public,"](#) [writes Tech Startups](#). "Bishara...urged world leaders to calm their citizens about the coronavirus pandemic" and "said people are being whipped into unnecessary panic."

Then there's John P.A. Ioannidis, a doctor, epidemiologist, and co-director of Stanford's Meta-Research Innovation Center. He warned last week that "'we are making decisions without reliable data' that could lead to disastrous results[,] including civil unrest and war," [reported The New American](#) Friday.

"Given the limited testing to date [in most countries], some deaths and probably the vast majority of infections due to SARS-CoV-2 are being missed. We don't know if we are failing to capture infections by a factor of three or 300," TNA related Dr. Ioanidis as saying.

His point is that once the asymptomatic and those with mild symptoms — which [research indicates](#) could constitute 86 percent of all cases — are factored into the equation, the Wuhan virus's mortality rate could end up being *lower than that of the flu*.

Also counseling against panic are Tesla and SpaceX founder [Elon Musk](#) and commentator [Mike Rowe](#). Rowe approaches the matter with humility — as we all should — rightly pointing out that there's much here none of us knows. But the assertion he ([and others](#)) has made, that it's actually "safety third," gets at a truth.

It's not just that many a policy is justified with the rather silly line, "If it saves just one life..." It's that "Better safe than sorry" — which may be uttered to justify Wuhan virus lockdowns — ignores certain realities:

You can be safe *and* sorry.

And sometimes the "safer" course is the one appearing upon cursory analysis the riskier one.

Consider: There are approximately 36,000 traffic-accident deaths in the United States every year. We could eliminate all or virtually all them by lowering the speed limit everywhere to five miles per hour.

Okay, if that's too radical, consider that NASCAR drivers often walk away from the most horrible crashes, mainly because of safety features (e.g., roll cages) built into their vehicles. And many (if not most) traffic fatalities could be avoided if we incorporated such features into passenger cars. But it would cost a *lot* of money.

"You mean, we're putting money ahead of lives!" the Ralph Nader types may exclaim. In a way, yes, though that's a cynical way of putting it.

Money isn't just paper, but represents resources — people's ability to feed their families, obtain quality housing, fund medical care, etc. Put simply, it represents the ability to *preserve life*.

Thus, anything that impacts upon productivity (wealth creation) will hurt people. Of course, a 5-mph speed limit or making cars so expensive they're beyond the average person's reach would hurt productivity because these policies would lead to wasted time and impeded commerce.

Then there's what hurts productivity even more: shutting down most of the economy for any reason,



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including to fight a disease.

Just imagine the consequences if these measures lead to a recession or, perish the thought, a depression. For there are many negative health outcomes associated with poverty.

Note, too, that financial hardship increases the incidence of psychological depression and stress; these phenomena are associated with an increase in self-destructive behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use, smoking, unhealthful eating, and sedentariness; these, in turn, are associated with an increased incidence of a host of diseases. (Domestic abuse also increases when people are stressed.)

So what really is the safer course here, shutting down the economy for fear of the Wuhan virus or not doing so? Might the former not leave us unsafe and sorry?

This is a matter of judgment, of course — and, again, we all lack knowledge. But we can know that judgments won't likely be sound when knowledge is limited, owing to a media that won't tell the truth (as illustrated [here](#) and [here](#)).

We also can know that panicked people don't make good decisions — and are easy prey for manipulation by demagogues.

Image: Gwengoa via iStock / Getty Images Plus

Selwyn Duke (@[SelwynDuke](#)) has written for The New American for more than a decade. He has also written for The Hill, Observer, The American Conservative, WorldNetDaily, American Thinker, and many other print and online publications. In addition, he has contributed to college textbooks published by Gale-Cengage Learning, has appeared on television, and is a frequent guest on radio.



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