

## 'Social Distancing' Is Snake Oil, Not Science

By William Sullivan, American Thinker, 13 May 2020

Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York [says](#) that it's **“shocking” to discover that 66 percent of new hospitalizations appear to have been among people “largely sheltering at home.”**

*“We thought maybe they were taking public transportation,” he said, “but actually no, because these people were literally at home.”*

*“Much of this comes down to what you do to protect yourself,” he continues. “Everything closed down, government has done everything it could, society has done everything it could.”*

**It's your fault, he says to the hospitalized New Yorkers who loyally complied with his government directive.** But here's an interesting alternative theory as to why, mostly, old people who are staying at home are being hospitalized.

***What if the government directive to close everything down and mandate “social distancing” actually made the problem worse?***

Dr. David Katz predicted precisely this outcome on March 20, in an article that is proving every bit as correct in its predictions and sober policy recommendations as Dr. Anthony Fauci has been proven incorrect -- which is another way of saying that the article has proven flawless, so far.

Dr. Katz [writes](#):

*[I]n more and more places we are limiting gatherings uniformly, a tactic I call “horizontal interdiction” — when containment policies are applied to the entire population without consideration of their risk for severe infection.*

*But as the work force is laid off en masse (our family has one adult child home for that reason already), and colleges close (we have another two young adults back home for this reason), young people of indeterminate infectious status are being sent home to huddle with their families nationwide. And because we lack widespread testing, they may be carrying the virus and transmitting it to their 50-something parents, and 70- or 80-something grandparents. If there are any clear guidelines for behavior within families — what I call “vertical interdiction” — I have not seen them.*

**One might be inclined to simply accept this as an unintended consequence of “social distancing,” but accepting that would require there to be some kind of benefit to “social distancing” that would make it worth the cost.**

Is there?

**Very likely, you already instinctively know that the guidelines suggesting that it's somehow helpful to keep a six-foot space between healthy people, even outdoors, is not based on science, but just an arbitrary suggestion we've been conditioned to accept without evidence.**

And your gut feeling would be right. There's a reason that “social distancing” wasn't a buzzword common to the American lexicon prior to 2020. **There's very little science behind “social distancing” at all.**

*“It turns out,” Julie Kelly [writes](#) at American Greatness, “as I [wrote](#) last month, “social distancing” is untested pseudoscience particularly as it relates to halting the transmission*

*of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. On its website, the CDC provides no links to any peer-reviewed social distancing studies that bolster its official guidance.”*

There’s a reason for the lack of peer-reviewed studies on the CDC website. She continues:

*The alarming reality is that social distancing never has been tested on a massive scale in the modern age; its current formula was conceived during George W. Bush’s administration and met with much-deserved skepticism.*

*“People could not believe that the strategy would be effective or even feasible,” one scientist [told](#) the New York Times last month. A high school science project—no, I am not joking—[added more weight](#) to the concept.*

**“Social distancing” is very much a newfangled experiment, not settled science.** And, Kelley writes, the results are suggesting that our “Great Social Distancing Experiment of 2020” will be “near the top of the list” of “bad experiments gone horribly wrong.”

You also don’t have to be a scientist to also instinctively know that “two weeks to flatten the curve” becoming “America must lock down until a vaccine is created” is more social experimentation than science. But what the data have fleshed out, beyond the point of argument, is that the proximity of one human being to another has proven to be a very small factor in determining the impact of Covid-19 infections. What’s far more important is which human beings happen to be in close proximity of one another.

[According](#) to Dr. Steven Shapiro and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center: *Crowded indoor conditions can be devastating in nursing homes, while on the USS Theodore Roosevelt 1,102 sailors were infected, but only 7 required hospitalization, with 1 death. This contrast has significant implications that we have not embraced. Epidemiologic prediction models have performed poorly, often neglecting critical variables.*

The USS Theodore Roosevelt [had a crew](#) of 4,800. Given the acute sample, testing was holistic. This yields an actual infection rate of roughly 23 percent, and among those infected, the fatality rate is 0.09 percent. Among the Roosevelt’s entire crew of assumedly healthy and able-bodied sailors, on a floating Petri dish, during the thick of viral outbreak that shut down all schools and placed healthy citizens across America under house-arrest, the fatality rate was .002 percent.

It seems more than obvious that there is little sense in quarantining the young and healthy. As Dr. Shapiro also observes:

*Our outcomes are similar to the state of Pennsylvania, where the median age of death from COVID-19 is 84 years old. The few younger patients who died all had significant preexisting conditions. Very few children were infected and none died. Minorities in our communities fared equally well as others, but we know that this is not the case nationally. In sum, this is a disease of the elderly, sick, and poor.*

Here’s another thing you likely already know. Politicians and the media are committing to damage control to hide all of these facts from you. In fact, [finding any news relating to Dr. Shapiro’s somewhat revelatory comments online is, so far, quite difficult.](#)

**That’s because, for the people who pushed “social distancing” and destroying the economy as an absolutely necessary evil, this is a matter of self-preservation.** If this information were widely known, citizens might be more inclined to demand that schools and parks and restaurants and malls be opened. But if schools open tomorrow, without testing, and there is not a surge in hospitalizations or deaths, then the obvious question is why the

schools closed in the first place. If restaurants and other shuttered businesses open without a spike in hospitalizations and deaths, then why did they ever close?

There's value in the media and government officials maintaining the public perception that the costs of "social distancing" have been offset by its benefits. But while those benefits are elusive in the data, and require mountains of presumption to imagine that they even exist at all, **the costs of "social distancing" couldn't be clearer.**

As Dr. Steven Shapiro concludes:

*What we cannot do, is extended social isolation. Humans are social beings, and we are already seeing the adverse mental health consequences of loneliness, and that is before the much greater effects of economic devastation take hold on the human condition...*

*In this particular case, the problem we're not going to be able to fix in the short term is the complete eradication of the virus. The problem we can fix is to serve and protect our seniors, especially those in nursing homes. If we do that, we can reopen society, and though infectious cases may rise as in the Theodore Roosevelt, the death rate will not, providing time for the development of treatments and vaccines.*

At this point, this is little more than common sense, and the truth can't continue to be suppressed for much longer. It's becoming more and more obvious that it's well past time to take a more tactical approach to mitigation, as Dr. Katz suggested back on March 20, **allocating resources and efforts toward protecting and caring for those most at-risk, and ending this soul-crushing and economy-crashing experiment with holistic "social distancing."**