

No accounting for Covid-dumb fearmongering

By Adam Creighton, 10 August 2021

Brilliant American lawyer Alan Dershowitz recently [claimed](#) that Covid-19 was “worse than smallpox”. Not as bad, not almost as bad – worse.

The distinguished professor is an intellectually honest, courageous man, given he endured excoriation by fellow Democrats after arguing Donald Trump had not incited violence on any reasonable reading of the law.

Yet Dershowitz’s claim about Covid-19 was idiotic, as the most perfunctory research would [reveal](#).

It’s an extreme manifestation of a shocking decline in critical faculties among intelligent people when Covid-19 is being discussed.

“I call it Covid dumb,” a New York friend, art dealer Eli Klein, tells me. “I often separate that phenomenon from generally dumb because you have a lot of actual smart people who are just Covid dumb; they have allowed themselves to be propagandised.”

Covid derangement syndrome is endemic among US elites. Its sufferers assert and do things that are patently ridiculous or contrary to the old rules of debate.

On a 34C day in New York’s Bryant Park recently, a healthy-looking besuited young man sat alone fastening his second N95 mask as old men enjoyed boules and children played nearby.

But it’s the Covid-dumb experts who cause the most damage.

CNN’s top Covid expert, Leana Wen, who has said adults shouldn’t hug their kids and grandkids even after they are vaccinated, recently revealed she was driving her children for a family holiday rather than flying, to keep them safe from Covid-19. Statistically, driving is much riskier than flying and children are at little, if any, risk from Covid-19.

Last month fellow expert Celine Gounder, a New York University academic, [said](#) Covid-19 was “much worse than the flu” for kids, when even the CDC specifically says it is not.

A year ago Peter Hotez, a dean of medicine at Baylor University in Texas, said it was “simply not possible ... (to) open classrooms; within two weeks, teachers and students will get sick, bus drivers will get sick and staff will get sick ... no one will show up to work”.

None of that occurred, yet that didn’t stop [Hotez from making](#) the same argument two weeks ago. “We know what’s going to happen. Mother Nature told us this over and over again: with each wave of Covid, this thing is going to accelerate with catastrophic consequences,” he said.

It’s almost as if experts can spout any old fearmongering rubbish they like without any concern they’ll be held accountable.

CDS is all too common in Australia. A few days ago, University of NSW strategic health policy consultant Bill Bowtell, revered as a fount of knowledge on how to fight contagious disease, claimed NSW, where the army is ensuring people don't leave home, had followed a Florida-style approach to Covid.

[Florida](#) has had, in fact, barely any Covid restrictions for well over a year. Its 22 million people are getting on with their lives.

Yes, cases have surged there recently, as they have in every US state, but more than 10 per cent of the state's ICU beds are still free. Miami bars and restaurants are pumping, I'm told.

In 2019, before collective psychosis struck with ferocity, Australia's pandemic influenza plan was updated, a 232-page [document](#) carefully put together by relevant experts. It defined a mild pandemic, on page 22, as one where "the majority of cases are likely to experience mild to moderate clinical features. People in at-risk groups may experience more severe illness."

That seems a fair description of Covid-19. Yet Abul Rizvi, an otherwise intelligent former deputy secretary of the Department of Immigration, declared days ago that he helped write the plan and he could "see nothing in the (Australian pandemic) plan that supports that assertion".

By the way, the plan ruled out internal border closures and recommended against school closures except in extreme Spanish flu-type situations. "The level of disruption is likely to outweigh the benefits," it said, albeit in an era where trade-offs still existed.

There was nothing in it about the army, nothing about locking down whole cities for months.

Scientists are suffering CDS, too. The Burnet Institute, one of the bodies the Australian government relies on for Covid-19 modelling, concluded in what was billed as a "world-first study" that Melbourne's mask mandate had "turned the epidemic around".

After mask mandates were introduced in Melbourne in July last year, the number of new cases started to fall a few weeks later, the authors showed, using fancy statistics. Wow. Buried away at the bottom of the article was a concession: "Interestingly, introduction of masks in Melbourne coincided with a decrease in the growth rate in rural areas, where masks were not introduced."

It's interesting, indeed, because it demolishes the whole study, which was already farcical because it didn't mention how the introduction of mask mandates elsewhere in the world had preceded huge spikes in cases. And never mind that Melbourne has had numerous subsequent outbreaks since with masks in place.

Rational people used to update their beliefs when confronted with new data.

In recent weeks Covid-19 cases have fallen in India, Britain and now perhaps Indonesia – nations with vastly different vaccination levels – again obliterating the argument that coercive measures were necessary to curb outbreaks.

More or less all experts were emphatically of the view this would not occur, including "Professor Lockdown" Neil Ferguson in Britain, who said earlier a huge Covid-19 outbreak

was inevitable. Unfortunately, CDS sufferers block out all data and arguments that undermine totalitarian responses to mild pandemics.

I always thought manias were something that happened only in the history books. Let's hope it's over soon.

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