

The Columnist

<https://thecolumnist.org/news/newsitem/report-9-or-professor-lockdown>

03.10.2022

Translation and photos by the Columnist

Report 9 or "Professor Lockdown"

By Christian Kreiss



More deaths from lockdowns than from Covid?

BBC

A remarkable discussion about past lockdown measures takes place in the [UK](#). The previous British finance minister Rishi Sunak dramatically intensified this discussion some time ago.

On August 25, the state news channel BBC reported Rishi Sunak's statements to The Spectator magazine: Ministers were forbidden to discuss collateral damage (trade-offs) of the lockdowns; it was wrong to run a government fear campaign. The government "script" was an unjustified fear narrative. The benchmark was set: "There are no negative consequences."

Internal criticism in the Scientific Advisory Group (SAGE) has not been published. Moreover, BBC noted that Rishi Sunak's statements are likely to meet with the

approval of much of the Conservative Party. The Ministry of Finance under Sunak has long opposed many Covid measures, sought to end covid testing as early as possible, refused to purchase antivirals, and did not back the vaccination plan.



Rishi Sunak. Photo: AP Photo / Justin Tallis.

Daily Mail

Since March 2020, the British state television channel has been remarkably critical of the government's policy toward Covid-19. BBC is not the only outlet reporting that is critical of government actions; a week earlier, on August 19, 2022, the Daily Mail published an article titled "Impact of lockdowns could cause more deaths than Covid: Fears rise over silent health crisis as Office for National Statistics finds nearly 10,000 more deaths in last two months than five-year average – none of which are virus-related." According to the report, the number of fatalities since June was 14.4 per cent higher than the five-year average.

Since the beginning of June 2022, not including Covid deaths, nearly 10,000 more people have died than in five years. The report said that this figure is more than three times the number of deaths from Covid during the same period.

The Telegraph reported that the Department of Health may have ordered an investigation. That is because the lockdowns delayed cancer, diabetes and heart disease treatments. The British Heart Foundation said it was "deeply concerned" by

the findings. The Stroke Association said it had predicted this rise in deaths for quite a while.

The Daily Mail quoted private physician Dr Charles Levinson: "Hundreds and hundreds of people die every week; what happens? In my opinion, postponing doctor visits and treatment is the driving force. The daily Covid statistics claim national attention, while these horrific numbers get little attention. A full and urgent government investigation is needed immediately."



The Spectator

However, The Spectator's very detailed interview with Rishi Sunak, the printed version of which came out on August 27, caused a particular stir. Sunak's main claims were that there had been no proper cost-benefit assessment of the anti-Covid measures, that dissent had been excluded or not mentioned by both the government and the SAGE scientific advisory body, that he had been forbidden to talk about collateral damage, and that his criticisms of the fear narrative had been rejected. One of his essential claims is that the public was thoughtlessly intimidated and kept in the dark about the likely collateral damage. "We helped spread it: with the threatening messages, by empowering scientists, and by glossing over the side effects."

The role of science

The Spectator article highlights the central role of the scientists involved and those deprived of a voice. Initially, until about mid-March 2020, scientific advice was to abandon lockdown or postpone it. "That all changed when Neil Ferguson and his team at Imperial College published their famous "Report 9". The Report's 9 dire predictions if Britain did not impose strict and lasting lockdown measures proved in retrospect to be a "gross exaggeration," The Spectator wrote. The assumptions and results were never verified. A cost-benefit analysis never took place.

Report 9, "Professor Lockdown" and Imperial College London

Report 9 was published on March 16, 2020, by British epidemiologist and professor of mathematical biology Neil Ferguson of the prestigious Imperial College London, along with 30 other researchers. Based on a mathematical epidemiological model, this scientific study dramatically impacted the Anglo-Saxon world and, shortly after that, almost the entire rest of the world. It spoke of the most significant health threat from a respiratory virus since the 1918 flu epidemic. If no policy response was taken, the report predicted 550,000 deaths for the UK and 2.2 million deaths for the US, as well as 30-fold overcrowding of hospital beds.

The report recommended a hard lockdown consisting of case isolation, social distancing for the entire population, and a general household quarantine or school and university closures. This was the only way to avoid overloading the health care system and a shortage of hospital beds until a vaccine was available. The hard lockdown, even if temporary relief is possible, should last "about 18 months or more" until the vaccine becomes available. The document modelled a hard lockdown for an initial five months.

The impact

Report 9 had a sensational impact. Shortly after its release, numerous countries worldwide imposed a hard lockdown with mostly the exact measures Ferguson and his peers had proposed. By the end of May, 150 countries had closed schools, affecting 1.2 billion schoolchildren, about 70 per cent of the world's schoolchildren.

Report 9 was perhaps the most consequential scientific paper of all time. Neil Ferguson was subsequently dubbed "Professor Lockdown" in the British press. Until 2021, almost all lockdown measures around the world and their rationale were based on the arguments in this paper.

It is more surprising that, according to The Spectator and Rishi Sunak, no scientific examination has yet been made of the claims made in Report 9, even though the information in the article was "greatly exaggerated".

The track-record of "Professor Lockdown"

How did the gross misstatements of Report 9 come about? Let's take a brief look at earlier forecasts by Neil Ferguson. In 2002, he predicted up to 150,000 deaths from BSE (mad cow disease) not in cows but in humans. There were about 2,700 deaths then, representing a 55-fold overestimate. For swine flu in 2009, he predicted 65,000 deaths in the UK, but there were 457, a misestimate by a factor of 142. And for bird flu in 2005, he predicted 200 million deaths worldwide, but there were only 455, a misestimate by a factor of 439,000. The man seems to have no luck with predictions.

But one constant runs through all of Professor Neil Ferguson's catastrophic misjudgments: he always and only erred in favour of the vaccine or pharmaceutical industry.

Why was he appointed as the fundamental scientific figure in the [Covid](#) fight? Who exactly put this man in this leading role? Who decided that he should have received such media impact and coverage while other renowned scientists with far less abstruse statements did not find a hearing in public but were even defamed? Why or better: What for? A sane person would never trust an expert with such a track record of systematic false statements.



Neil Ferguson is the lead epidemiologist at Imperial College.

What's behind this?

An interesting constant throughout the Ferguson paper is the mantra-like repetition of the need for vaccination. No vaccination, no chance for everyday life – why?

In 2020, Imperial College London received more than USD 79 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Vaccine Foundation, totalling nearly USD 190 million from 2010 through the fall of 2020. Ferguson's work also appears to be directly co-funded by the Gates Foundation. Imperial College works closely with the pharmaceutical industry. A few examples: a joint lab with GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) was established in 2015; Imperial College regularly hosts speeches by high-profile pharma representatives, such as Sheuli Porkess, Deputy Chief Scientific Officer for the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry in 2019, or Mark Toms, Chief Scientific Officer for Novartis Pharmaceutical UK; Tony Wood, Senior Vice President of GSK in 2018: he gave the opening lecture at the annual conference of the in-house Institute for Molecular Science and Engineering (IMSE), etc. In short, there appear to be long-standing close friendly ties with the pharmaceutical industry and the Gates Foundation, both of which have the greatest interest in providing mass vaccination.

How balanced is scientific research by people or institutes collaborating so strongly with the profit-maximising industry and receiving large monetary payments from vaccine promoters? In my two books on bought science, I have tried to show that this kind of science is very problematic and typically harms the common good or society. And that is precisely what Neil Ferguson did on a tremendous scale. In my view, this is research conducted for industrial profits and to the detriment of the well-being of mankind.

The [health](#), economic, social, and human damage done by the hard lockdowns worldwide is unparalleled in recent economic history. It may have far outweighed the benefits, as is becoming increasingly apparent.

And finally, a little bit about Germany. We also had a media touted scientist appointed chief adviser to the government with quite a poor track record in predicting viral histories: Christian Drosten.

In May 2010, Drosten said about swine flu that "there was a dramatic increase in the number of cases in the south of Germany." He assumed the wave would pass through [Germany](#) from the south within five to six weeks. [...] Drosten urged people to get vaccinated against swine flu. "The disease is a serious general viral infection that causes much more serious side effects than can be imagined from the most dreaded vaccine."

These statements turned out to be misconceptions. And such a virus misprediction has been allowed to significantly influence media and policy measures in Germany since 2020, while severe scientists with much more realistic assessments have been and continue to be vilified. Another interesting question is why Christian Drosten became a university professor without being habilitated.

Conclusion

We should rethink and learn from the UK in dealing with Covid, which faces a much more open, democratic, free, and critical debate about lockdowns and other Covid measures than Germany.