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A LITERATURE REVIEW AND META-ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF LOCKDOWNS ON COVID-19 MORTALITY

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Kommentar:
"Literature reviews" (Literatur-Übersichten) und Meta-Analysen fassen die vorhandene Forschungsliteratur zu einem bestimmten Thema zusammen. Literaturübersichten fassen die inhaltlichen Ergebnisse der vorhandenen Literatur zusammen, während Meta-Analysen neue statistische Auswertungen auf der Grundlage der in verschiedenen Studien veröffentlichten Daten vornehmen. Die hier vorliegende Publikation tut beides.

Fazit der Autoren (siehe Seite 3):
„Diese Meta-Analyse kommt zu dem Schluss, dass Lockdownmaßnahmen wenig bis gar keine Auswirkungen auf die öffentliche Gesundheit haben, aber dort, wo sie angewandt wurden, enorme wirtschaftliche und soziale Kosten verursacht haben. Infolgedessen sind Lockdownmaßnahmen unbegründet und sollten als pandemiepolitisches Instrument abgelehnt werden."

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Johns Hopkins Institute for Applied Economics,
Global Health, and the Study of Business Enterprise

A Literature Review and Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Lockdowns on COVID-19 Mortality

By Jonas Herby, Lars Jonung, and Steve H. Hanke

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The *Studies in Applied Economics* series is under the general direction of Prof. Steve H. Hanke, Founder and Co-Director of The Johns Hopkins Institute for Applied Economics, Global Health, and the Study of Business Enterprise (hanke@jhu.edu). The views expressed in each working paper are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the institutions that the authors are affiliated with.

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Abstract

This systematic review and meta-analysis are designed to determine whether there is empirical evidence to support the belief that "lockdowns" reduce COVID-19 mortality. Lockdowns are defined as the imposition of at least one compulsory, non-pharmaceutical intervention (NPI). NPIs are any government mandate that directly restrict peoples' possibilities, such as policies that limit internal movement, close schools and businesses, and ban international travel. This study employed a systematic search and screening procedure in which 18,590 studies are identified that could potentially address the belief posed. After three levels of screening, 34 studies ultimately qualified. Of those 34 eligible studies, 24 qualified for inclusion in the meta-analysis. They were separated into three groups: lockdown stringency index studies, shelter-in-place-order (SIPO) studies, and specific NPI studies. An analysis of each of these three groups support the conclusion that lockdowns have had little to no effect on COVID-19 mortality. More specifically, stringency index studies find that lockdowns in Europe and the United States only reduced COVID-19 mortality by 0.2% on average. SIPOs were also ineffective, only reducing COVID-19 mortality by 2.9% on average. Specific NPI studies also find no broad-based evidence of noticeable effects on COVID-19 mortality.

While this meta-analysis concludes that lockdowns have had little to no public health effects, they have imposed enormous economic and social costs where they have been adopted. In consequence, lockdown policies are ill-founded and should be rejected as a pandemic policy instrument.

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Key Words: COVID-19, lockdown, non-pharmaceutical interventions, mortality, systematic review, meta-analysis

JEL Classification: I18; I38; D19

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