

Death rates and methods of control

There are a number of emails and comment around claiming the UK and the US have the highest death rates. They often go on to blame their two governments which they do not like and argue there should have been an earlier and tougher lockdown.

The authors should check their facts. We need to look at deaths per million, not at the absolute level, as of course larger countries are likely to record more deaths than smaller countries. On the published figures Belgium has experienced the highest death rate so far, followed by Spain, and then the U.K. The US is considerably lower, below France and Italy which are a little below the U.K.

There are differences in how the figures are compiled. The UK has gone out of its way to maximise deaths attributed to CV 19 by including care home and community deaths when other countries concentrated on hospital deaths. The U.K. has also recorded many care home and community deaths as CV 19 when no test was taken to see if the patient had it, and when it may have been other serious medical conditions they suffered from that killed them.

The UK death rate is worrying, as are the rates of most European countries. In the USA the worst figures have been recorded in New York where a Democrat Mayor enforced a tough lock down early. It may be that very large cities like NY and London are particularly prone to virus spreading, so the absence of such huge cities in countries like Germany that have done a lot better may be part of the reason.

Sweden adopted social distancing but no lock down. Her figures are better than Belgium, France, Italy and Spain who went for a full lock down.

Now UK government officials claim they can test 200,000 people a day and have recruited a lot of trackers it is important every new case is followed up on notification to understand why and how it has been transmitted. There is no simple identity between tough and long lockdowns and low death rates on the numbers we have seen.

We also need evidence from the experts on which health systems have achieved the best recovery rates for patients and which treatment does most to lower the death rates in serious cases. There has been no full statement at U.K. government news conferences about recovery rates from intensive care and which treatments have worked best. There has been the recent adoption of an existing anti viral drug as a helpful treatment after initial resistance to the idea that current drugs could help, whilst we are told some other approved drugs are being tested on CV 19 patients. How did Germany and the USA achieve lower death rates?