Twitter Thread by el gato malo

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for those looking for a compendium of mask studies this set from swiss policy research looks useful and has some good links and discussion.

also attaching 2 past debunkings of widely disseminated US studies that health officials have attempted to

first, the kansas study spread by CDC and so many "twitterdocs" and politicians.

it's a master class in cherry picking and misusing data through truncation.

the data proving it was false was widely available at the time it was published.

https://t.co/qY66ZaNnsn

> CDC claims that masks stopped the spread of covid in kansas by comparing masked and non-masked counties.
>
> counterpoint: this was a cherry pick in terms of date and seasonality.
>
> they ended the "study" aug 23.
>
> then, covid season hit and the masks look to have made no difference. https://t.co/LgyjqPodOC pic.twitter.com/P2cfuZRtDs
>
> — el gato malo (@boriquagato) November 23, 2020

also the mass general study, a classic of the "sun-dance" variant: use no control group and then presume that any action undertaken was the result of some thing you did.

ignore the fact that the whole rest of (unmasked) massachusetts got the same result

https://t.co/IBVypJbjPI

> this is from the study that CDC head robert redfield showcased the other night to "prove masks work"
>
> it it the epidemiological equivalent of doing a sun dance at 5.30 AM and claiming you made that ball of fire in the sky appear
>
> it's assumptive, lacks a control, & proves nothing pic.twitter.com/yTdBa7UFit
>
> — el gato malo (@boriquagato) July 28, 2020

the fact that CDC has been spreading studies like these and using them alongside flimsy lab bench experiments with no clinical outcomes or even real world measurement speaks poorly of both CDC & the evidence for masks

the good studies do not support use

https://t.co/viMzUDYm29

> back in the halcyon days of 2019, before the great politicization of epidemiology turned up into down and down into sideways, the WHO performed a survey of randomized, controlled trials on masks
>
> 1100 citations were winnowed to the 10 best for review.
>
> masks looked ineffective. pic.twitter.com/A04MVVmXhu
>
> — el gato malo (@boriquagato) September 28, 2020

and lab bench droplet projection studies are meaningless.

it's one tiny aspect of a large system and may actually be counterproductive if masks are nebulizing droplets and making virus more aerosol in spread and more deeply penetrating.

https://t.co/nFD9onkjrn

> this is a fascinating thread on possible physical properties of masks, viral spread, & infectivity
>
> in essence, even if a mask stops large droplets, the force of expulsion may nebulize them into aerosols
>
> so, it's possible that aerosol spread of cov is caused/accentuated by masks https://t.co/FiHfMU3NKD
>
> — el gato malo (@boriquagato) October 24, 2020

is this the case and can it dominate droplet spread reduction? maybe. we don't really know. does it account for edge leaks and the benefits of coughing into a hand or handkerchief?

there are 1000 variables. this is why you need actual clinical outcomes studies not lab models

anyone trying to pass those lab models off as proof is essentially arguing "hey, it killed cancer in a petri dish, it will work in your body!" then you drink bleach. oops.

this is not the way actual science is done and it's embarrassing to watch it get passed off as such.

masks are a visible in-group talisman with little or no real scientific backing.

they are playing the role of tribal signifier rooted in superstition and superstition.

calling that science is just doubling down on the same.

i suspect this is why the debate is so rancorous.

no one likes having their holy talismans demeaned or demonstrated to be false and tribes rally around them when challenged.

attacking masks is attacking a religion, not a scientific practice.

such secular religions are tricky. the converts do not realize it's religious in nature. their very dogma is that "it's science"

but it's not. science asks questions and addresses data

this is self delusion about one's own superstitions reinforced by tribal virtue signaling.

the end result is that almost nobody can really convince anybody to change their mind.

but take a deep breath and take a dispassionate look at the data. it may help.

i began with the presumption that masks ought to work.

then i looked for data.

i presumed it was a slam dunk.

but it's not. at all. the data for masks is limited, sparse, situational, and mostly poorly gathered

many of the studies are outright junk

as i read through the literature, it seemed that the better the study design, the less efficacy it showed

ultimately, it changed my mind

and i came to the view that masks look to have no material effect and are likely causing more harm than good even before adding in the psychological factors.

try it yourself. there are lots of studies.

hold your priors loosely, be open to data, and read them.

if you are not willing to do that, (and let's face it, most are not) then you really need to stop claiming to be "on the side of science" because that's what science is.

it's open minded questioning, not regurgitation of dogma and submission to credentialism.

food for thought.

