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Devastating Consequences

 Jeffrey A. Tucker (<https://www.aier.org/staffs/jeffrey-tucker/>) – April 15, 2021 (/custom-search-results/?

 Jenin Younes (<https://www.aier.org/staffs/jenin-younes/>) post_date=04152021 Reading Time: 7 minutes



[**UPDATE:** The paper discussed below was withdrawn from the journal following an editorial investigation. RetractionWatch [explains \(https://retractionwatch.com/2021/04/29/mask-study-was-misleading-and-misquotes-citations-says-elsevier/\)](https://retractionwatch.com/2021/04/29/mask-study-was-misleading-and-misquotes-citations-says-elsevier/) the reasons for this decision. The authors of this article defer to the editors of the journal. We leave the text intact for reference purposes only.]

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Said a YouTube spokesman, "we removed AIER'S VIDEO because it included content that
 contradicts the consensus of local and global health authorities regarding the efficacy of masks
 to prevent the spread of Covid-19."

The ostensibly objectionable remark (<https://www.aier.org/article/great-barrington-declaration-scientists-with-gov-desantis-in-florida/>) came from Harvard Professor Martin
 Kulldorff: "Children should not wear face masks," he said. "They don't need it for their own
 protection and they don't need it for protecting other people either."

Kulldorff and others were addressing the distressing reality that children in many
 jurisdictions are masked, on the streets and in classrooms, despite presenting nearly zero risk
 of severe outcomes from Covid-19 and in the face of substantial evidence that children do not
 often spread the disease.

YouTube has taken it upon itself to censor the opinions of esteemed scientists that depart from
 the orthodoxy on masks. This is not surprising given that masks have become dogma – a
 visible symbol of compliance and fealty to the medical/political agenda that elevates the
 coronavirus above all else.

This dogma was illustrated by Anthony Fauci's response to the situation in Texas, which
 repealed its mask mandate and saw cases plummet. Asked to explain this result, Fauci
 responded (<https://nypost.com/2021/04/10/fauci-not-sure-why-texas-doesnt-have-covid-uptick-after-nixing-masks/>): "I'm not really quite sure....It could be they're doing things
 outdoors." He declined to even consider the fact that perhaps masks are not effective at
 controlling spread of the coronavirus. In other words, the theory that universal masking stops
 the virus is becoming non-falsifiable.

AIER's content has mostly focused on other aspects of lockdowns, yet published several
 pieces on the topic of masks:

- [The Question of Masks](#) ([https://www.aier.org/article/question-of-masks/](#))
- [The Danger of Masks](#) ([https://www.aier.org/article/danger-of-masks/](#))
- [Masking: A Dangerous Trend](#) ([https://www.aier.org/article/masking-a-dangerous-trend/](#))
- [Masking Children: Tragic, Unscientific, and Damaging](#) ([https://www.aier.org/article/masking-children-tragic-unscientific-and-damaging/](#))
- [The Strangely Unscientific Masking of America](#) ([https://www.aier.org/article/the-strangely-unscientific-masking-of-america/](#))
- [A Year of Disguises](#) ([https://www.aier.org/article/the-year-of-disguises/](#))

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The masking issue is gaining importance both in terms of the scientific issues involved and concerns for liberty and social function. First, there are increasing [calls](#) ([https://thefederalist.com/2021/03/18/oregon-health-officials-propose-making-mask-mandates-permanent/](#)) for mask-wearing to be a permanent part of our lives. [This article](#) ([https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/covid-masks-save-american-lives-they-still-can-should-post-ncna1263366](#)), for instance, suggests that masks should be adopted during flu season, spikes in coronavirus cases, and when a person is ill. Second, one of the many journals linked through the National Institutes of Health's suite of scholarly works, [Medical Hypothesis](#) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medical_Hypotheses](#)), has accepted for publication a devastating analysis of the harms caused by widespread, universal masking. The citation is: Vainshelboim B. [Facemasks in the COVID-19 era: A health hypothesis](#) ([https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306987720333028](#)). *Med Hypotheses*. 2021;146:110411.

True, this is not a conventional journal and that is precisely why it exists. It was founded out of a concern that valid scientific observations that depart from current trends will not make it through the conventional peer review process with a thesis that is radical or breaks an emergent mold. The journal, published by the [Elsevier Public Health Emergency Collection](#)

(<https://www.elsevier.com/term=Elsevier%editorial%board> provide a home for vast scientific content needed more than



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Tellingly, this paper is written by a single author, which is to say that one person has stuck his neck out to take responsibility for its contents. John Ioannidis has demonstrated (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1182327/>) that a feature of problematic studies is that they are performed and reported on by large teams of researchers rather than a single author. This makes sense: large teams can distribute responsibility for truth claims. Not so with single author papers. This enhances, but does not prove, the credibility of published research by single authors.

The well-published and cited (https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C22&q=Baruch+Vainshelboim&btnG=) author Baruch Vainshelboim works in the Cardiology Division, Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System/Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA, United States, and has had an affiliation with Pulmonary Institute, Rabin Medical Center, Beilinson Hospital, Petach Tikva, Israel. He obtained his Ph.D. (Universidade do Porto) in clinical exercise physiology in pulmonary rehabilitation and hence has a strong interest in the relationship between health and masking.

The entire paper is worth reading. It cites most known studies and knowledge in the scientific literature prior to the Spring of 2020, including the WHO (https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/330987/WHO-nCov-IPC_Masks-2020.1-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y): “Facemasks are not required, as no evidence is available on its usefulness to protect non-sick persons.”

The author goes on to explain a myriad physiological dangers associated with mask wearing:

In addition and germs component Breathing between the materials. A

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ies bacterial se toxic amination. e space m the mask's on levels of

facemasks including 13 to 202,549 different viruses. Rebreathing contaminated air with high bacterial and toxic particle concentrations along with low O₂ and high CO₂ levels continuously challenge the body homeostasis, causing self-toxicity and immunosuppression.

And some psychological harms of masks:

As described earlier, wearing facemasks causing hypoxic and hypercapnic state that constantly challenges the normal homeostasis, and activates “fight or flight” stress response, an important survival mechanism in the human body. The acute stress response includes activation of nervous, endocrine, cardiovascular, and the immune systems. These include activation of the limbic part of the brain, release stress hormones (adrenalin, neuro-adrenalin and cortisol), changes in blood flow distribution (vasodilation of peripheral blood vessels and vasoconstriction of visceral blood vessels) and activation of the immune system response (secretion of macrophages and natural killer cells). Encountering people who wear facemasks activates innate stress-fear emotion, which is fundamental to all humans in danger or life threatening situations, such as death or unknown, unpredictable outcome. While acute stress response (seconds to minutes) is an adaptive reaction to challenges and part of the survival mechanism, chronic and prolonged state of stress-fear is maladaptive and has detrimental effects on physical and mental health. The repeatedly or continuously activated stress-fear response causes the body to operate on survival mode, having sustained increase in blood pressure, pro-inflammatory state and immunosuppression.

And the conclusion:

The existing preventive medical face infectious disease facemasks. physiologic



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g facemask as and non-f viral and he usage of dverse a, shortness of

breath, increased acidity and toxicity, activation of fear and stress response, rise in stress hormones, immunosuppression, fatigue, headaches, decline in cognitive performance, predisposition for viral and infectious illnesses, chronic stress, anxiety and depression. Long-term consequences of wearing facemasks can cause health deterioration, developing and progression of chronic diseases and premature death. Governments, policy makers and health organizations should utilize proper and scientific evidence-based approach with respect to wearing facemasks, when the latter is considered as preventive intervention for public health.

This article represents a new challenge to the pro-masking position. It argues that masks are not merely a “*talisman*,” as the *Journal of the American Medical Association* said (<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2006372>) in April 2020 (before the authors were forced to retract three months later). The situation is far worse: masks are not just useless, but actively damaging to individual health and social well-being.

To be sure, anyone is free to challenge the conclusions, attack the extensive footnotes, take issue with the interpretation, or otherwise blast what is clearly a hypothesis. However, the journal editors chose to publish this unconventional perspective because it is consistent with vast amounts of the consensus at this time last year, before the orthodoxy suddenly changed (<https://www.aier.org/article/the-question-of-masks/>), and the evidence that has accumulated during the past twelve months. (<https://www.aier.org/article/the-strangely-unscientific-masking-of-america/>) In addition, taking this position today involves serious professional risk: NYU communication professor Mark Crispin Miller is being investigated (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/crime/nyu-professor-defends-anti-mask-comments-after-student-calls-for-his-firing/ar-BB19oltH>) merely for suggesting that his students think critically about masks by reading studies that conclude masks are not an effective means of curbing the spread of respiratory viruses as well as those that reach the opposite conclusion.

The paper appealed to scientists and others to not wear their mask mania, the trajectory of the CDC barely



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ci, Joe Biden, the repealing any effect on 10e3_w) from % after 100

days. The longer the time the more variables are a concern; a simply and extremely weak correlation between two data points stretches credulity, especially when used to push a radical masking of the population.

In addition, many aspects of our emergent mask culture are implausible, such as the idea that you don't catch or spread Covid while seated and eating and can thereby be unmasked but standing and walking are too risky and therefore require masks. As to wearing them outdoors or even alone on a hike in the woods, does one even need to comment?

Given that masking of healthy populations for long periods of time is a new policy, it is astounding that the media and scientific journals decided within a matter of months that the efficacy of the practice could not be questioned or studied, nor its adverse effects discussed.

Anyone who thinks that "science" is settled after a year of implementation of a mechanism that ostensibly reduces disease spread does not understand the meaning of the word. Science is a process, by which new information and evidence are incorporated as they are discovered. Anthony Fauci and Andrew Cuomo are exploiting the term "science" to convey to the public that certain beliefs cannot be questioned, and they are being assisted by big tech platforms like YouTube, which obviously seek to control the parameters of the discussion.

No matter how many times these people repeat the word "science," they are promoting precisely the opposite of science: dogma. By contrast, Dr. Baruch Vainshelboim is pushing us to think more broadly and fundamentally, in a way that connects with pre-2020 intuition, and for this he deserves immense credit, as does *Medical Hypothesis* for having published this paper. Both make a courageous attempt to analyze the costs of adopting universal masking, which is to say advancing real science.

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Jeffrey A. Tucker is the founder of the [Brownstone Institute \(https://brownstone.org\)](https://brownstone.org) and an independent editorial consultant who served as Editorial Director for the American Institute for Economic Research. He is the author of many thousands of articles in the scholarly and popular press and eight books in 5 languages, most recently [Liberty or Lockdown \(https://www.amazon.com/Liberty-Lockdown-Jeffrey-Tucker/dp/1630692123/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=\)](https://www.amazon.com/Liberty-Lockdown-Jeffrey-Tucker/dp/1630692123/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=). He is also the editor of [The Best of Mises \(https://www.amazon.com/Best-Ludwig-von-Mises/dp/1630691828/ref=as_sl_pc_tf_til?tag=aier0b-20&linkCode=w00&linkId=82d476ffca72b0e261de2a4c96347dbc&creativeASIN=1630691828\)](https://www.amazon.com/Best-Ludwig-von-Mises/dp/1630691828/ref=as_sl_pc_tf_til?tag=aier0b-20&linkCode=w00&linkId=82d476ffca72b0e261de2a4c96347dbc&creativeASIN=1630691828). He speaks widely on topics of economics, technology, social philosophy, and culture.

Jeffrey is available for speaking and interviews via his [email \(mailto:jeffrey.a.tucker@gmail.com\)](mailto:jeffrey.a.tucker@gmail.com). [Tw \(https://twitter.com/jeffreayatucker\)](https://twitter.com/jeffreayatucker) | [FB \(https://www.facebook.com/jeffreayatucker.official\)](https://www.facebook.com/jeffreayatucker.official) | [LinkedIn \(https://www.linkedin.com/in/jeffreayatucker/\)](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jeffreayatucker/)

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Jenin Younes is a graduate of Cornell University and New York University School of Law.

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