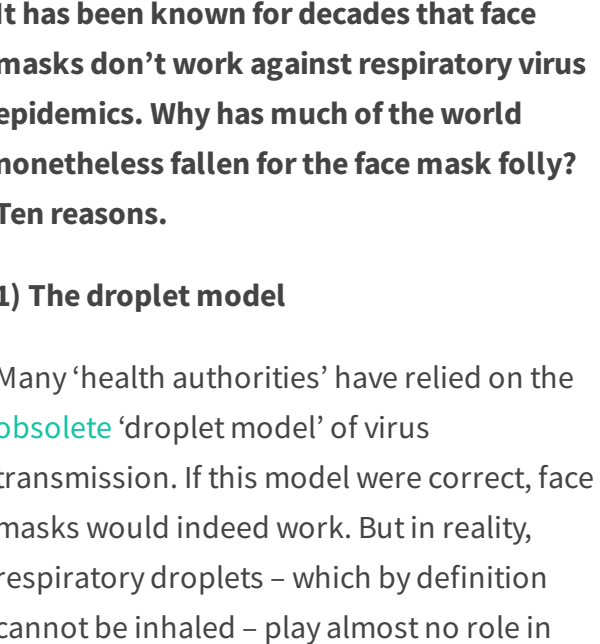


# The Face Mask Folly in Retrospect



“It’s just a mask”: Global impact of the face mask folly (K. Birb)

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**It has been known for decades that face masks don’t work against respiratory virus epidemics. Why has much of the world nonetheless fallen for the face mask folly? Ten reasons.**

### 1) The droplet model

Many ‘health authorities’ have relied on the **obsolete** ‘droplet model’ of virus transmission. If this model were correct, face masks would indeed work. But in reality, respiratory droplets – which by definition cannot be inhaled – play almost no role in virus transmission. Instead, respiratory viruses are transmitted **via much smaller aerosols**, as well as, possibly, some **object surfaces**. Face masks **don’t work** against either of these transmission routes.

### 2) The Asian paradox

During the first year of the pandemic, several East Asian countries had a very low coronavirus infection rate, and many ‘health experts’ falsely assumed that this was due to face masks. In reality, it was due to **very rapid border controls** in some countries neighboring China as well as a combination of **metabolic and immunologic factors** reducing transmission rates. Nevertheless, many East Asian countries eventually **got overwhelmed** by the coronavirus, too (see charts below).

### 3) The Czech mirage

In the spring of 2020, the Czech Republic was one of the first European countries that introduced face masks. Because the Czech infection rate initially stayed low, many ‘health experts’ **falsely concluded** that this was due to the masks. In reality, most of Eastern Europe simply missed the first wave of the epidemic. A few months later, the Czech Republic had the highest infection rate **in the world**, but by then, much of the world had already introduced face mask mandates.

### 4) Fake science

For decades, studies have shown that face masks **don’t work** against respiratory virus epidemics. But with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and increasing political pressure (see below), suddenly studies appeared claiming the opposite. In reality, these studies were **a mixture of** confounded observational data, unrealistic modelling and lab results, and outright fraud. The most influential fraudulent study certainly was the **WHO-commissioned meta-study** published in The Lancet.

### 5) Asymptomatic transmission

Another factor contributing to the implementation of mask mandates was the notion of ‘asymptomatic transmission’. The idea was that everybody should be wearing a mask because even people without symptoms might spread the virus. The importance of asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission is still **a matter of debate** – up to half of all transmission might occur prior to symptom onset –, but either way, face masks simply **don’t work** against aerosol transmission.

### 6) Political pressure

Several political factors contributed to the implementation of mask mandates. First, some politicians simply wanted to “do something” against the pandemic; second, some politicians thought face masks might have a “psychological effect” and might “remind” citizens to stay cautious (if anything, it had the opposite effect: creating a ‘false sense of security’); third, some politicians used mask mandates to enforce compliance and pressure the population into accepting mass vaccination.

In addition, there was a vicious circle involving science and politics: politicians claimed to “follow the science”, but scientists followed politics. For instance, the WHO famously admitted that their updated mask guidelines were in response to “**political lobbying**”, not new evidence. The most influential lobby group was “**masks4all**”, founded by a “Young Leader” of the World Economic Forum (WEF).

### 7) The media

Perhaps unsurprisingly, most of the ‘mass media’ **amplified** the fraudulent science and the political pressure driving mask mandates. Only some independent media outlets and some truly independent experts questioned the validity of the underlying evidence. However, their voices got suppressed as **dubious** “fact checking” organizations eagerly enforced official guidelines and throttled or **censored** many articles and videos critical of face masks.

### 8) “Surgeons wear masks”

Surgeons wear masks, so they must be effective, right? This was another notion contributing to the face mask misunderstanding. In reality, surgeons wear masks not against viruses, but against much larger bacteria, but more importantly, studies have long shown that even surgeons’ masks **make no difference** in terms of bacterial wound infections.

### 9) Misleading memes

To convince low-IQ social media users of the effectiveness of face masks, several unscientific memes were created. The most notorious one probably was the “**peeing into your pants**” meme, shared by many ‘health experts’ (**really**). Many of these memes exploited the fact that most people simply don’t realize how small and ubiquitous viral aerosols really are.

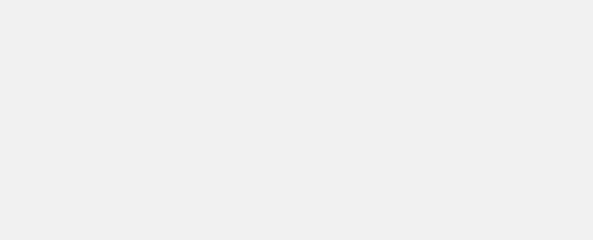
### 10) Doubling down

After mask mandates had been implemented globally and hundreds of billions of dollars had been spent on masks, it soon became obvious – once more – that masks simply don’t work against respiratory virus epidemics (see charts below). But at that point, neither politicians, nor ‘health experts’, nor duped citizens who had to wear them for months wanted to admit this anymore.

Instead, some ‘health authorities’ doubled down and enforced outdoor masking (even on beaches), double-masking, or N95/FFP2 masking, to no avail. The one novel scientific insight produced during the coronavirus pandemic was that even N95/FFP2 mask mandates have made **no difference at all**.

### Sweden: The exception that proved the rule

Only very few countries in the world have resisted the face mask folly. The most famous example certainly is Sweden (see charts below), which has also resisted the lockdown experiment. Naturally, Swedish coronavirus mortality **has remained below** the European average. But the many **vicious attacks** against Sweden by much of the international media showed just how difficult it has been to escape the global madness and follow the real science during this bizarre pandemic.



A child wearing a mask at school ([more](#))

### How face masks and lockdowns failed

The following charts show that infections have been driven primarily by seasonal and endemic factors, whereas mask mandates and lockdowns have had no discernible impact (**charts: IanMSC**).

“The more masks fail, the more we need them.” (IanMSC)



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