

Corona Countermeasures Kill the Economy

This is going to be an unpopular opinion. I know because others have [dared to say it](#), and responses were devastating (top comment: “Is this idiot for real?”).

So how many people do now have Covid-19? I assume the number is much higher than reported. In Switzerland, the government decided not to test young and healthy people anymore, even if they show the typical symptoms. There are simply too many. The doctors propose to just stay at home and quarantine. So in reality, we likely have ten times more cases, maybe hundred times more. These numbers are so high that we can hardly contain the virus anymore. There will be a wave where most people will get the virus, no matter what countermeasures are proposed now.

It is the core concept of health care professionals to save lives. Having more patients than doctors and medical machines will ultimately kill patients. And doctors will need to decide who can live and who cannot. This decision will not be easy, so naturally doctors suggest more and more drastic measures, closing stores and ultimately a full curfew. The goal is to keep the number of infected people low enough to have enough doctors and machines to treat them. While it is clear that doctors will fight for each single life and propose the most drastic measures to save each single life, politicians should not only listen to doctors alone, but see a bigger picture...

...because drastic measures will have devastating economic consequences. Small businesses will close, large businesses will eventually go bankrupt as well. There will be unprecedented unemployment numbers. The stock market will tank, and with it everybody's financial security for retirement. The effects of the corona countermeasures will be felt years later, maybe even decades.

Politicians need to decide which way they want to go. The current plan seems to suggest that we head for drastic countermeasures. China showed the way, and it worked. However, the Western mentality is different, as a number of people will simply not follow the rules. I fear that Europe cannot copy the successful Chinese strategy.

Plan B is to only implement some mild forms of countermeasures. Washing hands, social distancing, and the like. However, people with health risks and the elderly should stick to Plan A: Lock yourselves in and wait for this to be over. The young and healthy will eventually get the virus. Some will get really sick, however, the hospital capacity should hopefully be enough for just these outliers.

The general opinion (and the high moral ground) is that one shall not compare death with businesses going bust. However, as pointed out above, businesses going bust leads to more poverty. We are told that even a single dollar higher minimum wage will [reduce suicide rates by 3.5 to 6%](#). In light of this, I suspect that the economic crisis provoked by the countermeasures will kill much more people than the virus itself.

So, please Western governments: Consider both sides of the coin, and do not just listen to doctors who want to save every single life now, without considering all the lives down the road. A generation of young people who will be seeking employment in the coming years will thank you.

(I wrote this piece in early March, before the Italian lockdown.)