

Rethinking COVID-19 school restrictions: Few cases, almost no fatalities and no documented incidents of child-to-adult transmission

As lockdown restrictions ease, a critical question looms: When do we reopen schools? Parents and others weighing covid-19's risk to children and the adults they may infect, directly or indirectly, should consider emerging evidence that suggests children are not significant transmitters of covid-19. These data, coupled with the enormous adverse impacts of continuing closures, argue for reopening schools by fall.

Of about 360,000 covid-19 deaths worldwide, only about two dozen children are known to have died. For all the recent reports of serious complications among young people, these are statistically rare and, if detected early, most afflicted youths recover within weeks.

While most countries have shuttered schools, others such as Taiwan have achieved effective responses without closures. In Denmark and Norway, where schools began reopening in mid-April, covid-19 cases and deaths have decreased. Normally, gregarious youngsters are efficient spreaders of respiratory pathogens. But this appears not to be the case with covid-19.

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Additionally, a study published in JAMA found that youths are less prone to infection because they produce smaller quantities of a protein, ACE2, which both SARS and the novel coronavirus use to enter cells.

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