

# How Lockdowns Made Us Sicker

BY  JEFFREY A. TUCKER DECEMBER 13, 2022 POLICY, PUBLIC HEALTH 6 MINUTE READ

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**E**arly during lockdowns in 2020, when the whole of the media marched in lockstep with the most appalling reach of public policy in our lifetimes, two doctors from Bakersfield, California went out on a limb and objected.

Their names: Dan Erikson and Artin Massihi from Accelerated Urgent Care. They held a press conference in which they claimed that lockdowns would only delay but not finally control the virus. Moreover, they predicted, at the end of this, we would also be sicker than ever because of our lack of exposure to endemic pathogens.

You could say they were brave but why should it require bravery simply to share conventional wisdom that is part of every medical background? Indeed, the idea that reducing exposure to pathogens creates more vulnerability to disease is a point every generation in the last hundred years has learned in school.

How well I can recall the outrage! They were treated like seditious cranks and new media blasted their comments as somehow radically heterodox, even though they said nothing I had not learned in 9th-grade biology class. It was utterly bizarre how quickly lockdowns became an orthodoxy, enforced, as we are now learning, by media and tech platforms working closely with government agencies to warp public perceptions of science.

Among those warpings was an incredible blackout concerning the basics of natural immunity. My goodness, why did this happen? It's not conspiracy to draw an obvious reason: they wanted to sell a vaccine. And they wanted to push the idea that Covid was universally deadly for everyone so that they could justify their "whole-of-society" approach to lockdowns.

Here we are three years later and the headlines are all over the place.

- [It Seems Like Everyone Is Getting Sick This Winter](#) ~ CNN
- [Everyone Is Sick Right Now](#) ~ Yahoo
- [Why Does It Seem Like Everyone's Sick Right Now?](#) ~ MSNBC
- [Why Is Everyone Sick?](#) ~ Wired

And so on.

Isn't it time to give these doctors some credit and perhaps regret their

vicious treatment at the hands of the press?



Meanwhile, it's time we get clear on some basics. There is no one better to lay it out other than the greatest living theoretical epidemiologist, Sunetra Gupta. I think one way to understand her contribution is to see her as the Voltaire or the Adam Smith of infectious disease. The very essence of liberal political economy and liberal theory generally from the Age of Enlightenment to the present is the observation that society manages itself. It does not need a top-down plan and the attempt to centrally plan the economy or culture always produces unintended consequences.

So too for the issue of infectious disease. Dr. Gupta's observation is that we evolved with pathogens in a delicate dance in which we share

the same ecosphere, both suffering and benefiting from our entanglement with them. Disturbing that balance can wreck the immune system and leave us more vulnerable and sicker than ever before.

Writing in the *Telegraph*, she says “I am used to viewing infectious disease from an ecological perspective. Therefore, it did not come as much of a surprise to me that some non-Covid seasonal respiratory diseases almost immediately started to take a knock on the head during lockdown. Many took this to be an indication that lockdowns were working to stop the spread of disease, forgetting that the impact of lockdowns on already established or ‘endemic’ diseases is completely different to the impact on a new disease in its ‘epidemic’ phase.”

She explains that society-wide pathogenic avoidance creates an “immunity debt,” a gap in the level of protection that you have developed from previous exposure. There is a “threshold of immunity in the population at which rates of new infections start to decline — known as the herd immunity threshold. If we are below this threshold, we are in immunity debt; if we are above it, we are in credit — at least for a while.”

With normal diseases, we experience immunity debt in winter and so the herd immunity threshold rises. That’s when we experience more

infection. As Fr. Naugle points out, this reality is reflected in our liturgical calendar during the winter months when the message is to look out for danger, stay healthy, be with friends and family, and intensify your concern for issues of life and death.

However, this period of conventional sicknesses gives rise to an immunity surplus as we move into spring and we can go about our lives with more confidence and a carefree attitude, and hence the symbolism of Easter as the beginning of new life. And yet the months of sun and exercise and party time gradually contribute to building up another immunity debt in the population which will be paid again in the winter months.

Notice that this pattern repeats itself in every year and every generation, all without the help of government public health agencies. However, writes Gupta, “disturbing this order can have a profound impact on an individual’s ability to resist disease. More than anything, it is clear that we are experiencing an entirely predictable perturbation in our finely balanced ecological relationship with the organisms which are capable of causing serious disease.”

Lockdowns changed nothing about these seasonal and natural processes except to make our immunity debt deeper and scarier than ever. To be sure, lockdowns in the end did not stop the pathogen that causes Covid. Instead, they only forced one group to be exposed

earlier and more often than other groups, and this allocation of exposure took place entirely based on a politically scripted model.

As we saw, the working classes experienced exposure first and the ruling classes experienced exposure later. The policies entrenched a grim and medieval-style political hierarchy of infection. Rather than encouraging the vulnerable populations to shelter and everyone else to gain immunities through living normal life, lockdown policies pushed the working classes in front of the pathogen as a protection scheme for ruling classes.

And yet now, the results are in. Those who delayed infection for as long as possible, or otherwise tried to game the careful ecological balance with newly invented shots, not only eventually got Covid but made themselves even more vulnerable to diseases that are already endemic in the population.

What Gupta has explained with such erudition was actually the common understanding of previous generations. And nothing about the dangerous innovation of lockdown ideology has changed these natural processes. They only ended up making us sicker than ever. So there is some irony in reading stories of alarm in the high-end media. The right response to such alarm is simply to say: what else did you expect?

The Bakersfield doctors were right all along. So was my mother, her mother, and her mother before her. Together they had far more wisdom about infectious disease than Anthony Fauci and all his cohorts.

## Author



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Jeffrey A. Tucker, Founder and President of the Brownstone Institute, is an economist and author. He has written 10 books, including *Liberty or Lockdown*, and thousands of articles in the scholarly and popular press. He writes a daily column on economics at [The Epoch Times](#), and speaks widely on topics of economics, technology, social philosophy, and culture.

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