

OPINION

Accomplished medical doctor lays out hazards of COVID-19 face masks

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Editor's note: The following is an excerpt from "COVID-19 and Public Health Totalitarianism" by Peter R. Breggin, M.D. The full report can be read at [this link](#).

November 12, 2020 (LifeSiteNews) — The wearing of face masks has become a political litmus test used to challenge the President and to cow the people. The

internet is filled with photos of strong advocates of face masks dropping them to their chin to speak clearly and to relieve discomfort. Meanwhile, beyond all reason, we see intimidated people driving alone in the cars wearing masks and walking alone in parks with their faces covered. Although face masks may protect other people who are near enough to be coughed or sneezed on, or to catch a moist exhalation of air, in most situations face masks are probably more harmful than helpful.

At the very start of the push for wearing face masks, there was a scientific pushback that was largely ignored. On April 20, 2020, a Rapid Response was published in the *BMJ* by Antonio Lazzarino, a physician and epidemiologist, University College London, UCL Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care, and two others. Their summary follows:

The two potential side effects that have already been acknowledged are:

(1) Wearing a face mask may give a false sense of security and make people adopt a reduction in compliance with other infection control measures, including social distancing and hands washing.

(2) Inappropriate use of face mask: people must not touch their masks, must change their single-use masks frequently or wash them regularly, dispose them correctly and adopt other management measures, otherwise their risks and those of others may increase.

Other potential side effects that we must consider are:

(3) The quality and the volume of speech between two people wearing masks is considerably compromised and they may unconsciously come closer. While one may be trained to counteract side effect, this side effect may be more difficult to tackle.

(4) Wearing a face mask makes the exhaled air go into the eyes. This generates an uncomfortable feeling and an impulse to touch your eyes. If your hands are contaminated, you are infecting yourself.

(5) Face masks make breathing more difficult. For people with COPD, face masks are in fact intolerable to wear as they worsen their breathlessness. Moreover, a fraction of carbon dioxide previously exhaled is inhaled at each respiratory cycle. Those two phenomena increase breathing frequency and deepness, and hence they increase the amount of inhaled and exhaled air.

This may worsen the burden of covid-19 if infected people wearing masks spread more contaminated air. This may also worsen the clinical condition of infected people if the enhanced breathing pushes the viral load down into their lungs. [These breathing problems can also lead to lightheadedness, anxiety, and panic. PRB]

(5B) The effects described at point 5 are amplified if face masks are heavily contaminated (see point 2)

(6) While impeding person-to-person transmission is key to limiting the outbreak, so far little importance has been given to the events taking place after a transmission has happened, when innate immunity plays a crucial role. The main purpose of the innate immune response is to immediately prevent the spread and movement of foreign pathogens throughout the body. The innate immunity's efficacy is highly dependent on the viral load. If face masks determine a humid habitat where the SARS-CoV-2 can remain active due to the water vapour continuously provided by breathing and captured by the mask fabric, they determine an increase in viral load and therefore they can cause a defeat of the innate immunity and an increase in infections. This phenomenon may also interact with and enhance previous points.

In conclusion, ... It is necessary to quantify the complex interactions that may well be operating between positive and negative effects of wearing surgical masks at population level. It is not time to act without evidence. (citations omitted)

Wearing face masks has not be left to individual discretion. **People have not been educated to face mask hazards and many mistakenly believe that wearing them will protect themselves as well as others from COVID-19. They fear that the failure to use them will be taken as irrational defiance of authority or lack of concern for others. Some people view the wearing of masks as a sign of their virtue; but others feel they it is a sign of conformity to over- zealous government control.**

— Article continues below Petition —

Wearing face masks cuts people off from each other's other facial expressions and cues. It reduces verbal communications. Today, when people go outdoors or into buildings wearing a mask, they often make no attempt to make a friendly gesture and indeed they commonly avert eyes. **More than anything, masks create discomfort and alienation between people, which is a hallmark of the**

totalitarian society.

Decades ago, *In Crowds and Power*, Nobel Prize Winner in Literature, Elias Canetti, wrote some astonishing passages about the negative effects of wearing masks in general:

People's attitude to this play of the features varies. In some civilizations the freedom of the face is largely restricted; it is thought improper to show pain and pleasure openly; a man shuts them away inside himself and his face remains calm. The real reason for this attitude is the desire for personal autonomy: no intrusion on oneself is permitted, nor does one intrude on anyone else. A man is supposed to have the strength to stand alone and also the strength to remain himself. The two things go hand in hand, for it is the influence of one man upon another which stimulates the unending succession of transformations. They are expressed in gestures and the movements of the face and, where these are suppressed, all transformation becomes difficult and, in the end, impossible.

A little experience of the inflexibility of such unnatural "stoics" soon leads one to understand the general significance of the mask : it is a conclusion; into it flows all the ferment of the as yet unclear and uncompleted metamorphoses which the natural human face so miraculously expresses, and there it ends. Once the mask is in position there can be no more beginnings, no groping towards something new. The mask is clear-cut; it expresses something which is quite definite, and neither more nor less than this. It is fixed; the thing it expresses cannot change. P. 374...

A mask expresses much, but hides even more. Above all it separates. P. 374

In our culture in ordinary times, the wearing of a mask or kerchief in public presents several threats, most notably, the person is sick and infectious, or the person is a criminal about to threaten us. In a time of great turmoil, with riots occurring nightly in cities around the country, and acts of vandalism in the name of political retribution or righteousness, the perpetrators happily wear masks, giving them anonymity during their perpetrations.

Do masks have any use outside of an infection disease treatment setting or when in close proximity to vulnerable and elderly people? Probably

not much and they do have hazards.

Government enforced public health policies concerning the wearing of masks may do much more harm than letting health facilities set their own standards and letting the people under most circumstances rely upon voluntary social distancing when necessary.
