

# Is The Guardian Planning an Attack on the Great Barrington Scientists?

By [Freddie Sayers](#), [Dr. Sunetra Gupta](#), [Dr. Jay Bhattacharya](#), and [Dr Martin Kulldorff](#)

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*Last night The Guardian sent the following email to **Professor Martin Kulldorff** of Harvard, one of the three initial signatories of the '[Great Barrington Declaration](#)' calling for a different approach to the Covid-19 pandemic.*

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Hello Dr Kulldorff,

I'm a journalist at the Guardian newspaper and I'm getting in touch because we are intending to publish an article about your appearance on [the Richie Allen Show](#) on 6 October.

The article will state that Dr Martin Kulldorff, a co-author of the Great Barrington Declaration, appeared on an internet radio show which has previously hosted [multiple antisemites and Holocaust deniers](#), as well as other conspiracy theorists.

The article will also look at Facebook data around the Barrington Declaration, and mention that the declaration has been shared approvingly by a number of lockdown-sceptical politicians, anti vaccination Facebook pages, and conspiracy theorists.

We would like to give you the opportunity to comment on any of the above for inclusion in our article.

If you would like to comment, please could you respond by **5pm GMT tomorrow (9 October)**

Thanks very much,

The article is yet to be published, but it looks very much like a move to delegitimise the ideas of these eminent scientists by smearing them by association. As Professor Kulldorff told *The Guardian*, he had never heard of the 'Richie Allen show' before he was invited on,

and as a public health expert, he thinks it's his duty to talk to all audiences in any case, whatever their beliefs.

I hadn't heard of the show either (the website looks like lots of conspiracy theories), but is the fact that Kulldorff appeared on it really the big story? Surely the right thing for a newspaper to do is to engage in good faith with the arguments being presented, rather than to impugn integrity using Facebook shares as some sort of hard evidence.

This sort of thing is happening more and more often. **Professor John Ioannidis** at Stanford was subject to an extraordinary smear campaign after his 'Santa Clara County' study into seroprevalence. *Buzzfeed* even went so far as to [imply financial wrongdoing](#) on the basis of a \$5,000 contribution by someone in the airline industry. The idea that a world-renowned academic would throw away his career for a \$5,000 donation is absurd, and Stanford's own investigation concluded that there was no conflict of interest whatsoever. But the rumour remains — the mud has been thrown and his reputation has been successfully tarnished.

I don't buy into any of the conspiracy theories around the pandemic. Not 5G, not Bill Gates, not 'Plandemic' — I think we got into this mess with lots of frightened people trying to do the right thing with bad information, and lots of weak political leaders without clear values trying to protect their reputations. It's more banal but, to me, just as alarming as any conspiracy.

Surely it would be better for powerful organisations like *The Guardian* to accept that these scientists are sincere and accomplished and are simply taking a different view as to how best to defend the greater good. The smear approach is a weak way to attempt to win any argument.

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### **Covid Experts: There Is Another Way**

Three eminent epidemiologists met in Massachusetts to plan a better response to the pandemic

by **Dr Sunetra Gupta, Dr Jay Bhattacharya, Dr Martin Kulldorff**

As infectious disease epidemiologists and public health scientists we have grave concerns about the damaging physical, and mental health impacts of the prevailing COVID-19 policies and recommend an approach we call Focused Protection.

Coming from both the left and right, and around the world, we have devoted our careers to protecting people. Current lockdown policies are producing devastating effects on short and long-term public health. The results (to name a few) include lower childhood vaccination rates, worsening cardiovascular disease outcomes, fewer cancer screenings and deteriorating mental health – leading to greater excess mortality in years to come, with the working class and younger members of society carrying the heaviest burden. Keeping students out of school is a grave injustice.

Keeping these measures in place until a vaccine is available will cause irreparable damage, with the underprivileged disproportionately harmed.

Fortunately, our understanding of the virus is growing. We know that vulnerability to death from COVID-19 is more than a thousand-fold higher in the old and infirm than the young. Indeed, for children, COVID-19 is less dangerous than many other harms, including influenza.

As immunity builds in the population, the risk of infection to all – including the vulnerable – falls. We know that all populations will eventually reach herd immunity – i.e. the point at which the rate of new infections is stable – and that this can be assisted by (but is not dependent upon) a vaccine. Our goal should therefore be to minimize mortality and social harm until we reach herd immunity.

The most compassionate approach that balances the risks and benefits of reaching herd immunity, is to allow those who are at minimal risk of death to live their lives normally to build up immunity to the virus through natural infection, while better protecting those who are at highest risk. We call this Focused Protection.

Adopting measures to protect the vulnerable should be the central aim of public health responses to COVID-19. By way of example, nursing homes should use staff with acquired immunity and perform frequent PCR testing of other staff and all visitors. Staff rotation should be minimized. Retired people living at home should have groceries and other essentials delivered to their home. When possible, they should meet family members outside rather than inside. A comprehensive and detailed list of measures, including approaches to multi-generational households, can be implemented, and is well within the scope and capability of public health professionals.

Those who are not vulnerable should immediately be allowed to resume life as normal. Simple hygiene measures, such as hand washing and staying home when sick should be practiced by everyone to reduce the herd immunity threshold. Schools and universities should be open for in-person teaching. Extracurricular activities, such as sports, should be resumed. Young low-risk adults should work normally, rather than from home. Restaurants and other businesses should open. Arts, music, sport and other cultural activities should resume. People who are more at risk may participate if they wish, while society as a whole enjoys the protection conferred upon the vulnerable by those who have built up herd immunity.

### ***Great Barrington, Massachusetts, 4th October 2020***

To sign the declaration, follow this link:

[www.GBdeclaration.org](http://www.GBdeclaration.org)

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