

Sweden Is the Model

By [Mike Whitney](#)

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At present, there is no vaccine for the coronavirus. That means that one of the two paths to immunity is blocked. The other path is “herd immunity,” in which a critical mass of infection occurs in lower-risk populations that ultimately thwarts transmission.

Herd immunity is the only path that is currently available. Let that sink in for a minute. The only way our species can effectively resist the infection is through the development of specific antibodies or sensitized white blood cells. In other words, the only way we can lick this thing is by the majority of the population getting the infection and thereby developing immunity to future outbreaks.

That being the case, one would assume that the government’s policy would try to achieve herd immunity in the least painful way possible. (Young, low-risk people should go back to work if they so choose.) But that is not the government’s policy, in fact, the government’s policy is the exact opposite. US policy encourages people to remain at home and self quarantine until the government decides to lift the lockdown and allow some people to return to work. This policy assumes that the infection will have vanished by then, which of course, is extremely unlikely. The more probable outcome is that- when people return to work- there will be another surge in cases and another spike in deaths. We will have shifted the curve to a future date without having flattened it. We will have inflicted catastrophic damage on the economy and gained nothing. This is an idiotic policy that goes nowhere.

After 6 weeks of this nonsense, many people are getting fed-up and demanding that the lockdowns be ended. In response to the public outcry, many governors are planning to restart their economies and lift the restrictions. What this means, is that, after wasting a month and half on a failed strategy, many states are ready to follow in Sweden’s footsteps with one critical difference, they’re not going to have a team of crack epidemiologists carefully monitoring their social interactions to see if a wave of new Covid cases is going to overwhelm the health care system. That means that things could get out of hand fast, and I expect they will. As we said in last week’s column, the lockdowns must be lifted gradually, that is crucial.

“You have to step down the ladder one rung at a time”, says Senior Swedish epidemiologist and former Chief Scientist of the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control, **Johan Giesecke**.

In other words, slowly ease up on the restrictions and gradually allow people to get back to work. That is the best way forward.

There is also the question of whether herd immunity will be sufficient to fight off reinfection. This question was posed to Giesecke in a recent interview in which he was asked:

“Why are you gambling that herd immunity will protect your people from re-infection?”

Giesecke answered,

“There has not been a single proven case of anyone getting a second infection from the virus....so far there have been no reinfections....If you have it once you don’t get it again....There will be herd immunity, that’s clear, and it will last over the period of this outbreak.”

The interviewer then asked Giesecke why he was so certain that surviving the infection would produce herd immunity?

“Because it’s a coronavirus,” Giesecke said, “and we know about 6 other coronaviruses, so why would this one be special?At present, 30% of the population of Stockholm is immune or has already had the infection. We do not have herd immunity today, but to go from 30% to 50% will only take weeks.”

Giesecke candidly admits that he cannot be absolutely certain that infection survivors are immune, but he strongly believes that they are. (Please, excuse my choppy transcription of [the taped interview](#).)

Giesecke again:

“When you (in the US and elsewhere) ease the lockdowns you will have more deaths...We will not have as many deaths because we will have herd immunity by the time the other countries start to lift their lockdown which means the virus won’t spread much more in Sweden, whereas you will have a higher number of cases and deaths.”

If Giesecke is right, then Sweden is on the path to “normal” while the US is still chasing its tail, still following a policy that is clearly counterproductive, and still listening to self-appointed pontiffs like Bill Gates who obviously want to drag this thing out forever so he can implement his vaccination-surveillance panopticon. This needs to change. The safety and well-being of the American people should take precedence over the Hodge-podge of competing interests and conflicting agendas that have shaped the current policy. Now take a look at excerpt from an article at the National Review:

“Spring is in the air, and it is increasingly found in the confident step of the people of Sweden. With a death rate significantly lower than that of France, Spain, the U.K., Belgium, Italy, and other European Union countries, Swedes can enjoy the spring without panic or fears of reigniting a new epidemic as they go about their day in a largely normal fashion.

Dr. Mike Ryan, the executive director of the World Health Organization’s Emergencies Program, says: “I think if we are to reach a new normal, I think in many ways Sweden represents a future model — if we wish to get back to a society in which we don’t have lockdowns.”

The Swedish ambassador to the U.S., Karin Ulrika Olofsdotter, says: “We could reach herd immunity in the capital” of Stockholm as early as sometime in May. That would dramatically limit spread of the virus.

...Dr. Anders Tegnell, the chief epidemiologist of Sweden... heroically bucked the conventional wisdom of every other nation and carefully examined the insubstantial evidence that social-isolation controls would help reduce COVID-19 deaths over the full course of the virus.

As Tegnell told NPR in early April: “I’m not sure that there is a scientific consensus on, really, about anything when it comes to this new coronavirus, basically because we don’t have much evidence for any kind of measures we are taking.”.... **“To me it looks like a lot of the exit strategies that are being discussed look very much like what Sweden is already doing,” he told Canada’s Globe & Mail....**

Sweden has about 2,200 reported COVID-19 cases per million population. This is lower than the number in the U.S. (3,053 per million), the U.K., France, Spain, Italy, and also lower than in many other EU countries. It’s slightly above the number in Germany, which has been hailed for its approach to the virus....

Sweden has 265 reported COVID-19 deaths per million population. That is somewhat higher than in the U.S. (204 per million) but lower than the number in many other EU countries....on an age-adjusted basis, Sweden has done significantly better than the U.S. in terms of both cases per million and deaths per million — and with no lockdowns....

Unlike its Nordic neighbors and everywhere else...Sweden doesn’t have to worry about when and how to end social isolation. They don’t have to decide who to keep locked down and who to let out. They don’t have to get into civil-liberty arguments over involuntary restrictions or whether to fine people for not wearing masks and gloves....

Now many countries and U.S. states are beginning to follow Sweden’s lead. But California and other states continue to pile up isolation-induced health costs and blow gigantic holes in their budgets with lockdowns that, nationwide, have generated more than 30 million newly unemployed.” ([“Sweden Bucked Conventional Wisdom, and Other Countries Are Following”](#), National Review)

This is an excellent article that’s worth reading in full. And what the article shows, is that Sweden is the model. They put the right people in the right positions to do the research, read the data and make right decisions on critical issues of public health. Then they implemented the right policy which is going to make their social and economic transition much easier.

Sweden is on the path to recovery while the United States is still trying to get out of the hole it dug for itself.

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