

# How Lethal is Covid-19? Young and Healthy Majority Need to be Allowed to Live

This disease is profoundly different to the Spanish flu, which was an indiscriminate killer

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Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Science and Medicine](#)

***[In view of recent controversies](#) caused by [an article in The Irish Times on Saturday, September 12th](#), I think it is important to articulate my position on the present Covid crisis and its management, and to comment also on more recent developments.***

## How lethal is Covid-19?

Up to August 10th, the number of Europeans who died from a Covid-19 illness (182,639) was slightly above the number who died three years ago as a result of “flu” (152,000). The number of patients who died in Europe from the 1917/18 Spanish flu was approximately 2.64 million – this would be equivalent to approximately 7.4 million deaths of today’s European population.

It is not for want of good reason that deaths are now referred to as Covid-19-associated deaths. Of 5,700 patients admitted to New York hospitals, 88 per cent had more than one underlying condition (co-morbidity) and the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention reported that from January to May, 19.5 per cent of Covid-19 patients with co-morbidity died compared to 1.6 per cent with no other illness.

The Irish experience is very similar – up to mid-August 94 per cent of deaths were in patients with underlying medical conditions. A Stanford-led group analysed over 100,000 Covid-19-related deaths in Europe, including Ireland, and the US and concluded that “deaths for people under 65 without predisposing conditions were remarkably uncommon” .

Another important feature is the number of people who contract the virus and remain completely asymptomatic. In extremely well-defined scenarios such as the Diamond Princess cruise liner and the Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier almost 66 per cent of the positive tests were completely asymptomatic, while a report from China suggests 78 per cent of cases were asymptomatic.

[To read complete article, Irish Times, click here](#)

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