

The case of Brazil: How policymakers may reduce avoidable deaths due to COVID-19

April 20 2022, by David Bradley



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There is much disinformation surrounding the preventative measures that have been implemented across the globe in order to reduce the spread of the coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, and deaths from the disease it causes COVID-19. However, the research suggests that many of the measures, including social distancing, lockdown, face-covering mandates, and vaccination, all help reduce infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths regardless of the disinformation.

Writing in the *International Journal of Mathematics in Operational Research*, a team from Brazil and the UK looks at the case of Brazil and shows, using two levels of evidence, how [social distancing](#) through lockdown measures led to a significant reduction in COVID-19 in those states that adopted this approach to controlling the disease. Political disagreement between state and the federal government over the implementation of different measures and different levels of flexibility in those measures in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that there were significant differences between the approaches taken by the 27 Brazilian states.

Rafael de Freitas Souza, Luiz Paulo Fávero, and Hamilton Luiz Corrêa of the University of São Paulo, and Michel Ferreira Cardia Haddad of the University of Cambridge, explain that in a lethal pandemic, the decisions made by policymakers can mean the difference between life and death for many people.

"Within the context of political battles where science is constantly questioned by populism, such as the one experienced in Brazil, then the adherence to [social isolation](#)—even partially implemented—is considerably more effective compared to the lack of such measures," the

team writes. Their conclusion is supported by their analysis as well as evidence from a number of independent studies, they add.

Latin America was hit by the pandemic later than many other regions, but it was hit harder than some. Given that we are still in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic with its emerging variants and outbreaks, despite measures taken and the [development of vaccines](#) and treatments, it is important that policymakers are presented with evidence-based information rather than disinformation so that the right decisions can be made regarding how we approach the ongoing pandemic and how we address the problems that the next pandemic will bring.

More information: Rafael De Freitas Souza et al, Multilevel evidence on how policymakers may reduce avoidable deaths due to COVID-19: the case of Brazil, *International Journal of Mathematics in Operational Research* (2022). [DOI: 10.1504/IJMOR.2022.122218](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMOR.2022.122218)

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