

The weekly newsletter supporting SDG
April 22 2020 - World Earth Day



CORONA PERSPECTIVES

CHALLENGES – CHANCES – LEARNINGS

What do we (not) see ?

How to judge ?

What can we do this week ?

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in support of

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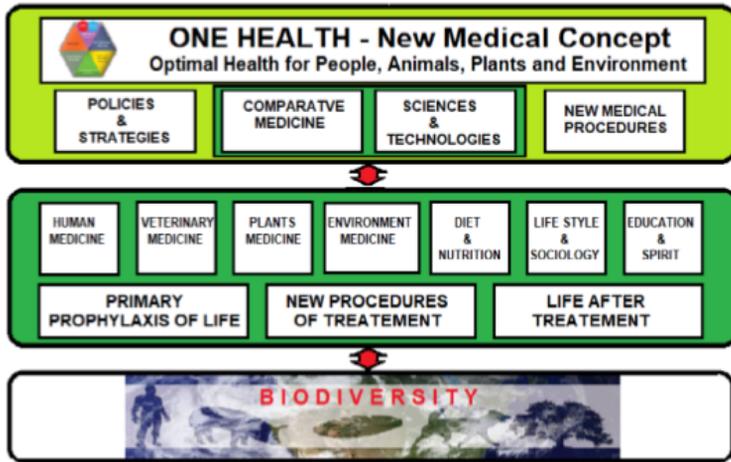


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What do we (not) see?



How are we supposed to protect ourselves, if we are so vulnerable? The USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that three-quarters of the new or emerging diseases that infect human beings have originated in wild or domesticated animals. Infectious diseases are only one aspect of a larger, ongoing health emergency. Two-thirds of cancers have their origins in environmental toxins, accounting for millions of annual fatalities, and each year, 4.2 million people die from complications of respiratory illnesses caused by airborne toxins.

COVID-19 – it takes more than just social distancing

COVID-19 is not the first time mankind has faced quarantine. The term comes from the length of time ships were isolated offshore in 17th century Italy. Pass-Ports were invented because of this. Now we face two pandemics. One threatens our physical health. The other our mental health & well-being. People can adapt, depending on their age and living circumstances to requests such as social distancing. But while most countries manage to flatten the curve we have check what impact this has on our hospital and health delivery system. Certain staff have been cut from payrolls as they are unable to perform surgeries and treatments to earn their living. Politicians and TV journalists say that social distancing is not enough. How about using their visibility during prime time to also address what can each individual do to boost their immune system.

150 hospitals in USA firing staff

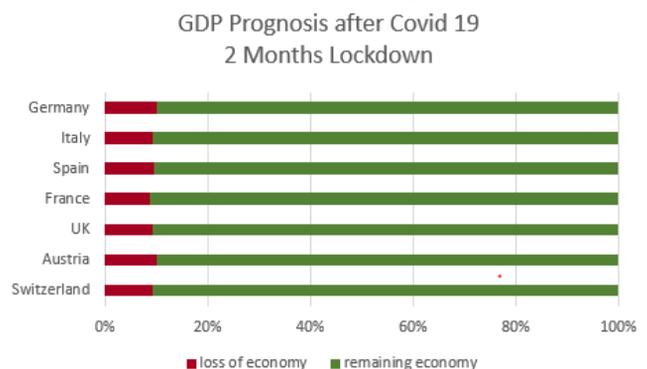
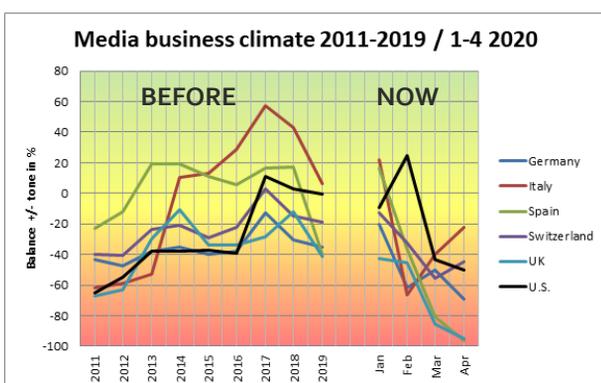


JOB LOSSES

Source: beckershospitalreview.com

Better data needed to judge on the economic challenges

Aside from the question of, "Is there a hospital that can help me survive?" the other most pressing challenge is, "Can I pay my bills and will my job continue to exist and be able to pay me?" In Covid 19 times of uncertainty, solid information is critical as false perspectives lead to wrong conclusions and actions. During the past 10 years it is fair to say that public service prime time TV news was rarely useful in helping its audience form realistic judgements about the economy. The graph illustrates that TV journalists preferred to highlight reports on unemployment, lost contracts, and stocks losing value while the markets celebrated all time records: for jobs, contracts, and stocks. Now during COVID-19, Swiss TV reports as if all corporates have stopped doing business, while the readers of the daily newspaper NZZ have found out that 75% of all companies continue to operate during the lockdown. None of the presented data are false, but without showing the other parts of the economic realities the reporting ends becoming not only useless but misleading.

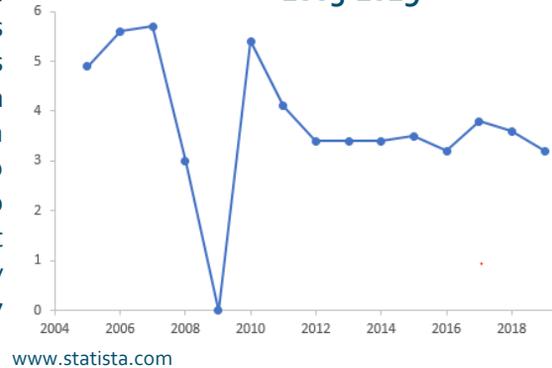


Source: Econ Pol Policy Brief 25/2020, April 2020, calculations by ifo-Institute, shutdown scenario 2

How to judge

Previous challenges – such as bird flu, swine flu, and Ebola on one hand and 9/11, the 2008 Lehman collapse, and the financial crisis in the EU on the other – showed that most of the numbers presented didn't entirely reflect reality. 9 out of 10 prognoses offered by "experts" over-exaggerated the negative. The graph shows that not even the Lehman collapse in 2008 manage to push the global economy to minus. Therefore, it makes sense to invest more time and money to ensure apples are compared to apples at the subject level as well as when comparing the current situation to events from history. The overall frame for this already exists and is accepted by 193 heads of state in the form of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with their 169 clear targets.

Global Economic Growth
2005-2019



Judging from the past

Chinese people have already acted in a measurably different way after experiencing COVID-19. According to Nielsen China, individuals have changed their own consumption behavior. During the outbreak, consumer health aspirations for home quarantine increased. Nielsen found that 80% of consumers said they would focus on healthy eating after the outbreak. 75% of consumers said they would spend more on sports/exercise in the future. 60% said they would spend more on regular check-ups in the future, and 59% said they would spend more on insurance and wealth management. At the same time, intelligent health related products have become a new consumer outlet. The proportion of respondents who already own or plan to buy an air purifier, water purifier, or smart bracelet are 90%, 93% and 77% respectively. In addition, consumer demand for fitness is becoming more and more scientific and technological. During the epidemic, a fitness ring with a strong sense of science and technology has become the most valuable investment item, and the purchase price has risen from 600 yuan before the epidemic to 2000 yuan.

At the same time, new rules were enforced by the Beijing government ensuring that the reporting on numbers of COVID-19 tests, infections, recoveries, and deaths are related to the individual career prospects; false reporting leads to an immediate job loss. Already 110 officials have been removed.

The Swiss states as well as the central government are now to report to the supervising authorities why the legally binding amount of health equipment was not in stock.

Judging for the future

COVID-19 shows six overlapping crises and phases: the medical, the political, the economic, the infodemic, and the legal. Let us look here at the information and disinformation. All countries struggle with different counting methods as there is not one scientific answer. Incomplete statistics lead now to a political blame and shame game. After the first shock and medical crisis management, political leaders started making justifications for their own decisions and blamed their adversaries for being the origin of the disaster, for manipulating information, for spreading fake news, for using digital devices just to control the population, and for only looking for their own political benefit from the crisis. This ideological infodemic will take additional lives as it hinders decisive action, which is so urgently needed.

Responsibility means looking for solutions and caring for the future. A simple 2000-year-old example gives orientation. The friends of Jesus saw a blind man and asked Jesus, "Who is guilty for this blindness, himself or his parents?" Jesus refused to declare somebody guilty. Instead, he immediately made a paste with his saliva and put it on the eyes of the blind who was cured. Then, immediately, the lawyers (Pharisees) made a legal case against Jesus as he worked, like a medical doctor, on a sabbath (John 9:1-34). The ethical action to take is neither blaming nor litigating, but caring!

Christoph Stückelberger, Geneva

Agape Foundation and Globethics.net

What can we do this week? 3 Suggestions

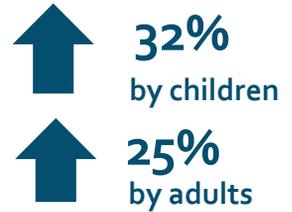
Improving exchange to reduce home violence

Violence against children is increasing dramatically since the lockdown started. There is a 30% - 50% increase in emergency calls to national hotlines and children-in-need services. Several concrete actions help decrease loneliness such as setting up regular video calls with the grandparents to talk, to read a book together, or to play games. At the same time, it helps the grandparents cope with their special situation in the lockdown. Schools can assist with their services when families are no longer able to ensure that at least twice a day a regular contact can be guaranteed. Sporting clubs, faith communities, and other organizations (such as scouting) are also offering ongoing activities to help youngsters have regular interactions.

Help Line calls in



March-April 2020 vs
March April 2019



Source.: www.147.ch

Reducing fear in hospitals

In hospitals, care homes, and in healthcare facilities doctors, nurses, and care workers can help reduce the stress and anxiety felt by patients being treated for COVID-19 by applying a photograph of themselves on their personal protective equipment.



Helping Senior Citizen Homes boost immunity

Reports are increasing that elderly people want to break out of assisted living homes to get fresh air and see their families. Seniors do not have much of their lives left to do this, and they are aware of this. It has long been proven that seniors quickly regain their zest for life as soon as they communicate with children. During times of strict social distancing requirements, new forms of interaction are necessary to ensure that both senior citizens and children who miss their grandparents (and who are often suffering enormously because nobody has time to read to them or play a game with them) have virtual contact. This would boost their immune systems if smart ways of interaction via technology would be accepted and supported.

Social distancing is, for human beings, the wrong way to strengthen health and generally has the opposite effect. Social behavior means strengthening oneself. It has long been proven that loneliness and immobility lead to illness and death. Strengthening of health is achieved through joy in life, exercise, healthy food, and fresh air.

As often as possible, at least once a day, senior citizens should enjoy the sunshine of spring and thus raise their vitamin D levels, which will strengthen their health. Walks with a family member or a caregiver are necessary. During the lockdown, more and more reports were made public that airlines such as Lufthansa were offering their employees that in the past had worked as nurses in hospitals the opportunity to go back to support those hospitals. This can be enlarged to senior citizen homes. Youth groups, from the YMCA, the Boy and Girl Scouts, and sport clubs can get more engaged by reaching out to senior citizen homes in their neighborhoods while waiting to get green light themselves to get back to school.

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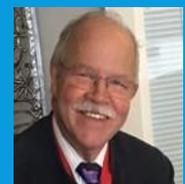
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