



# Sweden: the important control group for global pandemic measures

# The measures Sweden did and did not implement

- Sweden was sceptical of Imperial College's modelling and followed their own pre-existing evidence-based pandemic plan.
- Sweden did not lock down, close schools or require masks, while shops, schools and restaurants remained open. The government merely encouraged people to practice social distancing, avoid non-essential travel and work from home.
- On March 27, Sweden passed legislation that banned gatherings of more than 50 people and nursing home visits and earlier closing hours on bars and restaurants,
- Importantly, the government had been prohibited by law (by the Riksdag (the Swedish law-making body) from imposing curfews and restrictions on citizens' right to free movement.
- Sweden's Foreign Minister stated that the main difference between Sweden's approach and that of other countries was coercion. "...we rely very much on people taking responsibility themselves".
- Even the WHO has praised the Swedish sustainable model.

# How did the rest of the world view the Swedish approach?

- Virtually every country and organisation condemned the Swedish approach.
- Massive excess deaths were predicted.
- A paper in Nature called Sweden's Covid-19 strategy **'unscientific, unethical and unfeasible'**.

(Brusselaers N. et al. Evaluation of science advice during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sweden. Humanit Soc Sci Commun 9, 91 (2022))



The screenshot shows a news article from the Global Times. The article title is "Sweden's herd immunity strategy coldblooded, indifferent: netizens". The author is Leng Shumei, and it was published on 2020/4/25 at 22:48:40. The article features a photograph of Ambassador Gui Congyou (center) sitting on a sofa and answering questions from Swedish media. The text below the photo states: "Boasting of its democracy and as a defender of human rights, Sweden is being harshly criticized by Chinese netizens as coldblooded, indifferent to life, and gravely violated humanitarian principles with its [herd immunity strategy](#) in response to the coronavirus pandemic. While facing a worsening public health crisis, Sweden tried to humiliate China with lame tricks by severing ties with Chinese cities, which are an illusion, experts and Chinese netizens said, after several Swedish cities reportedly ended sister-city relations with Chinese cities."

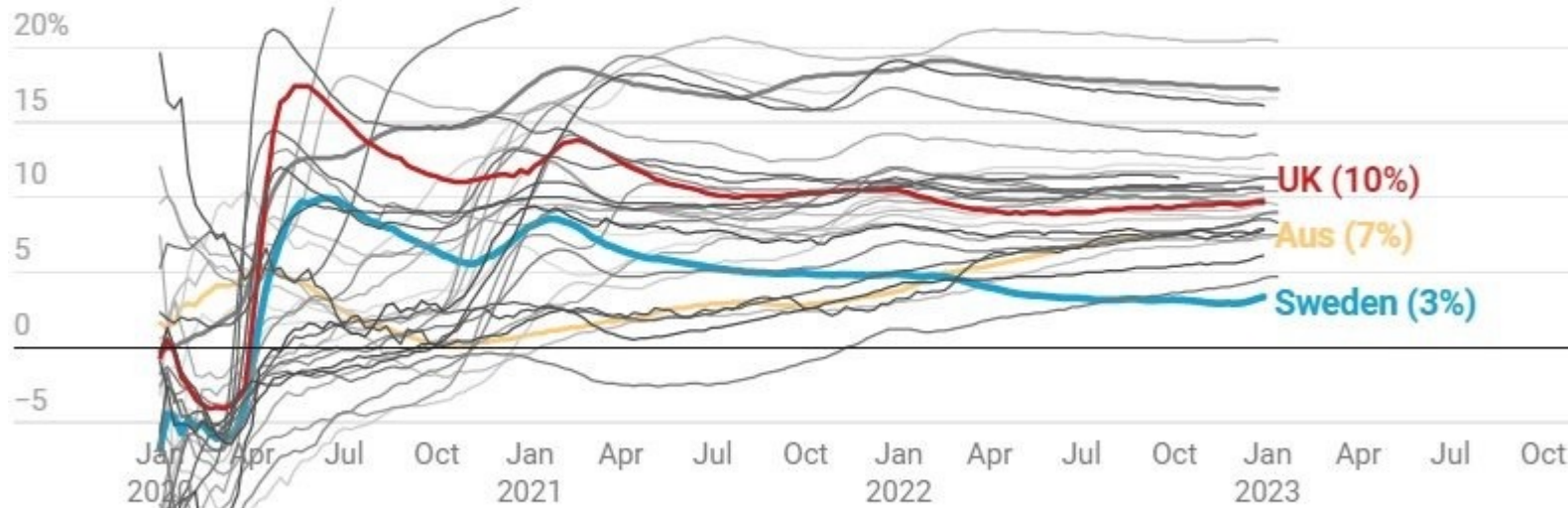
# And the Swedish outcome

- **The healthcare system was not at any point overwhelmed.** Although there were rather high care home deaths, this was in part because people tend to be in care homes for a shorter period of time, as they are cared for at home for longer. This makes the care home death rate disproportionately higher.
- **The UK economy shrank 9.9% in 2020, whereas the Swedish economy shrank 2.8%.** (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/56042270>; [https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/swedish-government-sees-faster-growth-094853096.html?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly9kdWNRZHVja2dvLmNvbS8&guce\\_referrer\\_sig=AQAAlcKRI08qSw8ccY\\_fLgy1YlgGnmTyrdrTw-Fhyptpw6bwFwYJsDRFnGptdSnnl30lnSlT5OPdvKrOUF5caNohKxcZ0KQK-ULMLnaLKzJUmx22TU0dUclxaHiSBuYwweROBqvEQINMZ7pOQEYeAxYRQMFRwTrE2mGGzibJbkgmqCu](https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/swedish-government-sees-faster-growth-094853096.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly9kdWNRZHVja2dvLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAlcKRI08qSw8ccY_fLgy1YlgGnmTyrdrTw-Fhyptpw6bwFwYJsDRFnGptdSnnl30lnSlT5OPdvKrOUF5caNohKxcZ0KQK-ULMLnaLKzJUmx22TU0dUclxaHiSBuYwweROBqvEQINMZ7pOQEYeAxYRQMFRwTrE2mGGzibJbkgmqCu))
- Sweden also **minimised the impact on children's schooling, mental health, domestic abuse and patients requiring treatment for other conditions.**
- A recent paper from 2 Swedish economists recommended: 'In future pandemics, **policymakers should rely on empirical evidence rather than panicking and adopting extreme measures. Even if policymakers appeared to act rapidly and decisively, the rushed implementation of strict lockdowns in 2020/21 probably did more harm than good.**' (Andersson FNG et al, The Covid-19 lesson from Sweden: Don't lock down; <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecaf.12611>)

# Excess deaths: Sweden vs other OECD countries

## Cumulative excess deaths in Sweden and OECD countries

Cumulative refers to the sum of the difference between pre-pandemic average and deaths occurring from Jan 2020 onwards

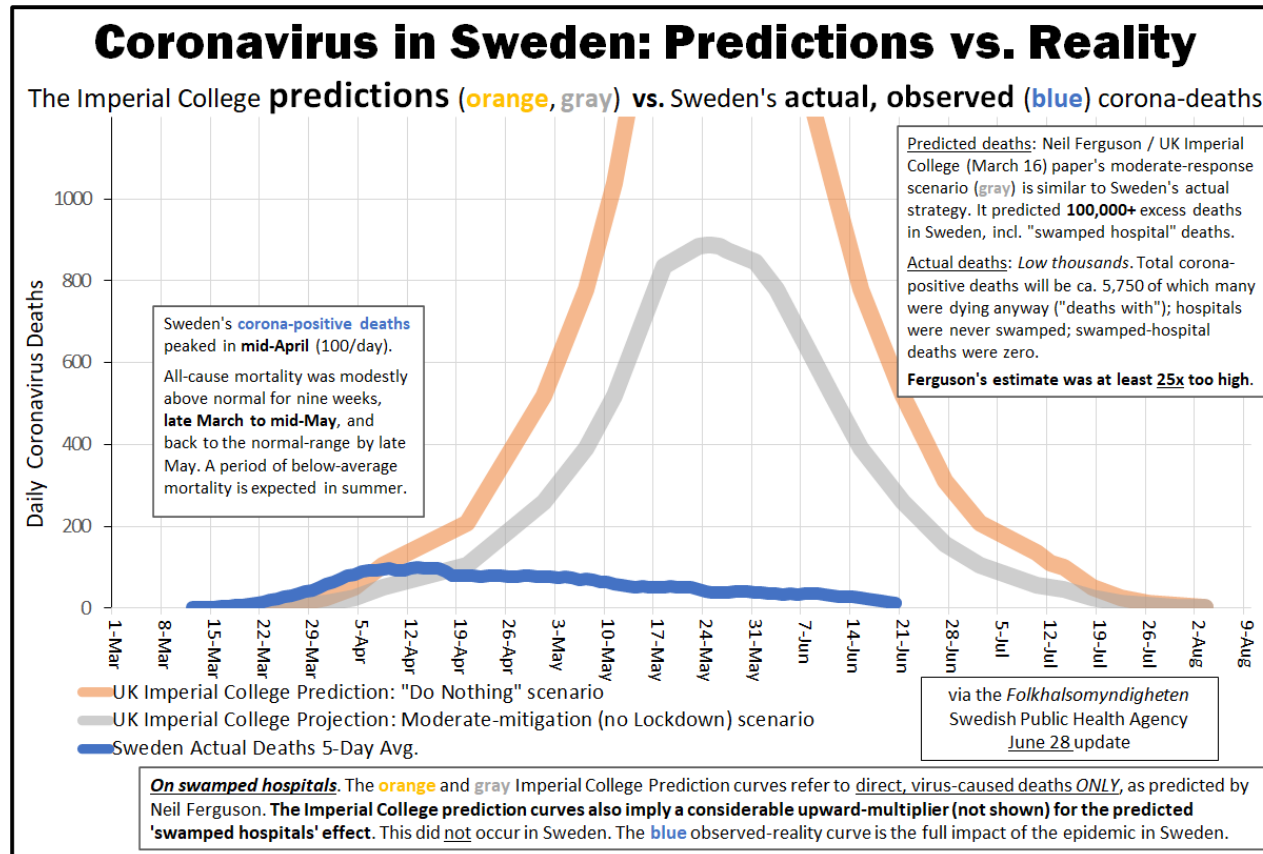


[Blog on methodology here](#)

Chart: The Spectator (RoNYq) • Source: OECD, Eurostat and Spectator calculations • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

<https://michaelpsenger.substack.com/p/devils-advocate-responding-to-lockdown>

# Another nail in the coffin for the Imperial College model



- **Orange:** Imperial College prediction of COVID deaths if no lockdown
- **Gray:** Imperial College prediction of COVID deaths if lockdown
- **Blue:** Sweden's actual COVID deaths with no lockdown

(<https://www.aier.org/article/imperial-college-model-applied-to-sweden-yields-preposterous-results/>)





# Some more Swedish COVID mortality statistics

- According to the Swedish Statistics Agency, after three years of the pandemic, **Sweden has the lowest rate of excess deaths in Europe.**  
(<https://nyheder.tv2.dk/udland/2023-03-17-sverige-maatte-forsvare-sin-coronastrategi-igen-og-igen-men-maaske-havde-de>)
- Sweden also has a lower death rate per-capita than the US.  
(<https://www.globalresearch.ca/chief-science-officer-pfizer-says-second-wave-faked-false-positive-covid-tests-pandemic-over/5724753>)
- The median age of Swedish covid deaths was around 84 years  
(<https://swprs.org/studies-on-covid-19-lethality/#age>).
- **Swedish Covid mortality without lockdown was comparable to a strong influenza season** and somewhat below the EU average  
(<https://swprs.org/judgment-day-sweden-vindicated/>).

# Did we pay attention to Sweden and question our own approach?

According to **Matt Hancock's Lockdown Files** published in the Telegraph: 'Hancock became enraged by what he called **the "f-----g Sweden argument"** and wanted it quashed.

- "Supply three or four bullet [points] of **why Sweden is wrong,**" he asked of his aides.



(<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/03/02/britain-failed-pro-lockdown-clique-incapable-admitting-errors/>)



# Boris might have had the right idea all along

- Professor Sunetra Gupta has said in her written evidence to the Covid Inquiry that **Boris Johnson told scientists he was in favour of a Swedish-style approach to the pandemic, rather than more lockdowns**, in Autumn 2020.
- She took part in a **Zoom “round table” with Boris Johnson, Rishi Sunak and several other scientists, including Professor Carl Heneghan and Dr Anders Tegnell, Sweden’s state epidemiologist**, in September 2020. Mr. Johnson had been keen to seek a range of views on government intervention.
- ‘Professor Gupta said that apart from one scientist, **everyone else in the meeting agreed about the benefits of the Swedish approach.**’

(<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/10/29/boris-johnson-covid-swedish-model-avoid-lockdowns/>)

# Sweden: summary

- Sweden was an important control group for the global pandemic measures: they did not lock down, close schools or require masks, although there were a few restrictions. Sweden depended upon citizens taking personal responsibility.
- Sweden was vilified by the rest of the world, with their approach described as ‘unscientific, unethical and unfeasible’.
- The outcome:
  - The healthcare system was not at any point overwhelmed.
  - The Swedish economy shrank by 2.8% in 2020 compared to the UK, which shrank by 9.9%.
  - Sweden minimised the impact on children’s schooling, mental health, domestic abuse and patients requiring treatment for other conditions.
  - Cumulative excess Swedish deaths were 3% compared to the UK’s 10% to Jan 2023 and had the lowest rate of excess deaths in Europe, with a median age of death of 84.