

Source Analysis on Anti-Mask Citations, July 2021

NM Human Services Department

<u>Article Name</u>	<u>Evidence-based</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Findings/Conclusions</u>	<u>Limitations</u>	<u>Relevant to Inform <i>no-mask Policy</i> <u>Decisions</u></u>
Click on the article title to navigate to each source page	- Peer-reviewed - Published	- ie. news	Further information provided on source page	Further explanation provided on source page	
Corona child studies "Co-Ki": first results of a Germany-wide register on mouth and nose covering (mask) in children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Found side effects of mask wearing among children; 68% of the respondents reported a child complaint or impairment due to mask wearing.	Researchers acknowledge that the survey was not easily accessible to everyone.	No
German Neurologist Warns Against Wearing Facemasks: 'Oxygen Deprivation Causes Permanent Neurological Damage'			Claimed that wearing a mask can lead to oxygen deprivation and thus to permanent neurological damage.	Based on personal opinion, no literature/data used to justify the argument.	No
Experimental Assessment of Carbon Dioxide Content in Inhaled Air With or Without Face Masks in Healthy Children: A Randomized Clinical Trial			Found that 68% of the participating children had some type of problem when wearing facemasks.	On July 16th, the article was retracted due to issues concerning the study's methodology and other concerns. Read notice retraction.	No
Is a Mask That Covers the Mouth and Nose Free from Undesirable Side Effects in Everyday Use and Free of Potential Hazards?			Reviewed 44 studies that found negative effects of masks; found a statistically significant correlation of negative side effects across these studies.	Scientific Literature Review using non-randomized selected studies	No
'Our Kids Have Thrived': Rural Peaster ISD Never Required Masks Or Distancing And Most Students Are On Track Academically		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Superintendent claimed their school district has had a successful school year with no COVID-19 procedures in place.	Singular perspective	No
Open Schools, Covid-19, and Child and Teacher Morbidity in Sweden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Found that COVID-19 remained rarely severe in children despite in-	Only considers COVID rates among schoolchildren, not	No

			person schooling.	consider household or community outbreaks results or transmission rates	
A cluster randomized clinical trial comparing fit-tested and non-fit-tested N95 respirators to medical masks to prevent respiratory virus infection in health care workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Found the use of masks and respirators as respiratory protection as effective.	Citation inconsistent with study results	No
A Randomized Clinical Trial of Three Options for N95 Respirators and Medical Masks in Health Workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Found N95 respirators most effective against clinical respiratory illness to medical masks and intermittent use of N95s.	Citation inconsistent with experimental design of study	No
A cluster randomised trial of cloth masks compared with medical masks in healthcare workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Found significantly higher infection rate in the cloth mask group compared to the medical and surgical mask groups.	Citation inconsistent with experimental design of study	No
Effectiveness of Adding a Mask Recommendation to Other Public Health Measures to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Danish Mask Wearers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		No statistical significance; observational evidence suggests that mask wearing mitigates COVID-19 transmission and thus supports the efficacy of face masks to reduce COVID-19 infections.	Not statistically significant, low adherence to mask use among participants	No
Dangerous pathogens found on children's face masks			Claims there are dangers associated with face masks on children due to detection of harmful pathogens.	Scientific methods not conducted, not peer reviewed, n=6.	No
VAERS Database			Works as a tool to identify individuals that have adverse events or illness after vaccinations.	No established causation, incomplete reports, entry errors. Read disclaimer.	No

Source 1

Citation: "Corona child studies "Co-Ki": first results of a Germany-wide register on mouth and nose covering (mask) in children," Schwarz Silke, et al., Pediatrics Monthly, February 2021, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33642617/>

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Brief summary of article:

The article by Schwarz et al. 2021, strives to provide information regarding the potential side effects of wearing a mask within children and adolescents. The origin of motive for the implementation of the survey can be attributed to the increased narratives of complaints from children and adolescents regarding masks. The targeted audience includes individuals of interest such as parents, educators, and physicians. The results from the article are based on 20,353 individuals who took part in the survey, participants included parents, teachers, and doctors. In terms of reliability, since this data is based on opinions and not trials/evidence, it is hard to say whether every effect shared within the survey is accurate. The data retrieved from the survey included various information, some including: demographic data, duration of mask wearing, previous illness, complaints from children, and type of mask child would wear. What the data from the survey demonstrated was that 68% of the respondents reported that a child complained about an impairment due to mask wearing. Some of the side effects children experienced when wearing masks included: headaches, irritability, less happiness, impaired learning and drowsiness. Limitations within the study included, survey not being easily accessible to everyone, data given within the survey about side effects relates to suspected cases.

Evidence-based research: Yes OR No

Pre-print: Yes OR No

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR No

Any additional comments:

Source 3

Citation: “German Neurologist Warns Against Wearing Facemasks: 'Oxygen Deprivation Causes Permanent Neurological Damage,’” Griesz-Brisson, Margareta, Sign of the Times, October 2020.
<https://www.sott.net/article/442455-German-Neurologist-WarnsAgainst-Wearing-Facemasks-Oxygen-Deprivation-Causes-Permanent-Neurological-Damage>.

Author(s)	Title/Affiliations
Dr. Margarite Griesz-Brisson, MD, PhD	Consultant Neurologist and Neuropsychologist with a PhD in Pharmacology

Brief summary of article:

In this article, Dr. Margarite Griesz-Brisson, provides an argument against wearing a mask as it leads to oxygen deprivation which can lead to permanent neurological damage. The target audience for this article would be anyone who will be wearing facemasks. The origin of the motive for this article has to do with the author's concept of oxygen deprivation that is being caused by wearing a mask and how it can especially be dangerous for children and adolescent's. Author also argues that there isn't specific scientific evidence stating how effective face masks are, but claims that there is evidence that mask's can be dangerous. Within the article, I do not see any reliable data, literature, or studies used to back up this information. A limitation of this article is that all the information provided is the author's personal opinion and the article fails to include significant evidence.

Evidence-based research: Yes OR **No**

Pre-print: Yes OR **No**

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR **No**

Any additional comments:

Source 4

Citation: “Experimental Assessment of Carbon Dioxide Content in Inhaled Air With or Without Face Masks in Healthy Children: A Randomized Clinical Trial.” JAMA Pediatr. Published online June 30, 2021. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.2659.

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Brief summary of article:

This article by Walach et al. 2021, targeted audience are educators and any one interested in the topic discussed. In this randomized trial, they attempted to measure the carbon dioxide content in inhaled air by comparing children with and without the face coverings. The origin of the motive for this article has to do with the large-scale survey that was conducted in Germany, in which 68% of the participating children had some type of problem when wearing facemasks. Article states that there is sufficient evidence that demonstrates the impact of wearing a mask and includes a footnote to an article that reviews this evidence. Article found that contrasts between the two types of masks was not significant. Some limitations of the study is the short term laboratory setting, believe that due to children being unoccupied they may have been apprehensive.

Evidence-based research: Yes OR **No**

Pre-print: Yes OR **No**

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR **No**

Any additional comments:

On July 16th, this article received a retracted notice due to some inconsistency in methodology described in this research letter.

Source 5

Citation: "Is a Mask That Covers the Mouth and Nose Free from Undesirable Side Effects in Everyday Use and Free of Potential Hazards?" Kisielinski et al., International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, April 2021, <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/8/4344/htm>.

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Brief summary of article:

This publication is an investigation into selected relevant scientific studies that have found adverse side effects to wearing masks. It was published in the Environmental Health section of the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. In this investigation, 44 studies that found negative effects of masks were collected and reviewed. Of these studies, 30 used N95 masks, 22 were published in 2020, and 22 were published before the COVID-19 pandemic. A statistically significant correlation was found between negative side effects of blood-oxygen depletion and fatigue in mask wearers with ($p=0.0454$). However, publications presenting harmless or only positive effects were not included and causation was not proven. Additionally, the strength of this correlation was not identified.

Evidence-based research: Yes OR No

Pre-print: Yes OR No

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR No

Any additional comments:

Source 6

Citation: “‘Our Kids Have Thrived’: Rural Peaster ISD Never Required Masks Or Distancing And Most Students Are On Track Academically,” DFW CBS Local, March 2021,
<https://dfw.cbslocal.com/2021/03/08/rural-peaster-isd-texas-masks-distancingstudents-academically/>.

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Jason Allen	Investigative reporter for CBS11 in DFW

Brief summary of article:

CBS News Article written March 8, 2020 by Jason Allen about a school district of about 1,400 students located in rural Weatherford, TX. The article quotes the Superintendent of Peaster Independent School District and claims they have had a successful school year with no COVID-19 procedures in place. Masks were not mandated, nor quarantine, nor social distancing measures; in-person school was held as usual. This article encourages districts to follow a traditional school model and opposes COVID-19 health policies and response. Limitations including source perspectives and bias; this article referenced the Superintendent thoughts, however, no parents, students, or staff viewpoints and experiences were included in consideration. Source citations were not included.

Evidence-based research: Yes OR **No**

Pre-print: **N/A**

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR **No**

Any additional comments:

Source 7

Citation: "Open Schools, Covid-19, and Child and Teacher Morbidity in Sweden," Ludvigsson J et al., New England Journal of Medicine, February 2021, <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM.c2026670>.

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Brief summary of article:

Published to the New England Journal of Medicine on February 18th, 2020. This publication presents COVID-19 morbidity data among children 1 to 16 years of age in Sweden. It was found that COVID-19 remained rarely severe in children despite in-person schooling. Children were only allowed to attend if they did not present any COVID-19 symptoms. At this time, Sweden encouraged social distancing, though wearing face masks was not. This evaluation lacked data on household transmission of COVID-19 from schoolchildren and the occurrence of COVID-19 outbreaks originating from school-settings. In an investigation of the efficiency of health policies working to prevent COVID-19 prevalence and death, it would be important to assess the direct and indirect effects of school children and COVID-19 rates. This research is limited as it reflects only to Sweden school-children during a particular point of time in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evidence-based research: Yes OR No

Pre-print: Yes OR No

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR No

Any additional comments:

Source 8

Citation: "A Cluster Randomized Clinical Trial Comparing Fit-Tested and Non-Fit-Tested N95 Respirators to Medical Masks to Prevent Respiratory Virus Infection in Health Care Workers,".MacIntyre et al., *Influenza Other Respir Viruses* 5, no. 3 (May 2011): 170- 9, 2011, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-2659.2011.00198.x>.

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Brief summary of article:

Published to Wiley Open Access in January, 2011. This study was performed to determine the efficacy of medical masks compared to fit-tested and non-fit-tested N95 respirators using an unmasked control group. The use of masks and N95 respirators (fitted and non-fitted) were found to significantly protect against infection in comparison to the no mask control across types of infections. The N95 respirators were found to be significantly more protective than medical masks against clinical respiratory illness. Overall, the rates of infection for the medical mask group were double that in the N95 group. Respiratory protection with the use of masks and respirators is shown to be effective and is often used as the major protective infection control measure.

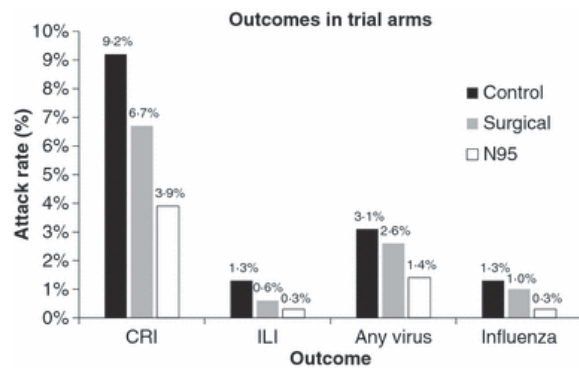
Evidence-based research: Yes OR No

Pre-print: Yes OR No

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR No

Any additional comments:

On page 5 of “Cease-and-Desist” by New Mexico Stands Up!, it was said this study found that cloth masks resulted in higher rates of infection than the unmasked control group. However, this information was inconsistent with the results found in this publication. To the contrary, masks used in this study were found to significantly reduce rates of infection compared to the unmasked control group, see Figure 2 below.



Source 9

Citation: "A Randomized Clinical Trial of Three Options for N95 Respirators and Medical Masks in Health Workers." MacIntyre et al., *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 187, no. 9 (May 1 2013): 960-6.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1164/rccm.201207-1164OC>.

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Brief summary of article:

The article by Macintyre et. al 2013, includes data collected from a cluster of randomized clinical trials of 1,669 healthcare workers (HCW's) located in Beijing, China. The researchers desired to evaluate three policy alternatives for HCWs using medical masks and N95 respirators. Each participant was randomly provided either a medical mask, N95 respirators, or target use of N95 respirators for when they were

exposed to risky procedures or barrier nursing. Within HCWs that were symptomatic they found clinical respiratory illness (CRI) and laboratory-confirmed respiratory pathogens. Medical masks had the highest rate of N95, with 98 out of 572 participants being impacted. Based on the results of their randomized clinical trial, they concluded that N95 respirators are most effective against CRI in comparison to medical masks and intermittent use of N95s. A vast majority of the policies they found recommended the use of just medical masks or target N95 respirators. Lab samples of symptomatic individuals were sent over to Beijing Center for Disease Control Laboratories which included double rayon-tipped swabs that collected from the subjects tonsillar area and posterior pharyngeal wall. A limitation that was faced in the study is that they noticed that it's possible that the absence of a discernible difference between confirmed viral infections is due to the fact that there isn't one, or that the trial was underpowered for this result.

Evidence-based research: **Yes** OR No

Pre-print: Yes OR **No**

Peer-reviewed: **Yes** OR No

Any additional comments:

On page 5 of “Cease-and-Desist” by New Mexico Stands Up!, it was said this study found that cloth masks resulted in higher rates of infection than the unmasked control group. This statement and understanding of this study is inconsistent with this study’s experimental design and results.

TABLE 2. NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTING PRIMARY OUTCOMES, BY RANDOMIZATION ARM AND INTENTION-TO-TREAT ANALYSIS

Variable	Medical Mask Arm N (%)	Targeted N95 Arm		N95 Arm	
		N (%)	P Value (ICC)*	N (%)	P Value (ICC)†
CRI	98/572 (17.1)	61/516 (11.8)	0.280 (0.1166)	42/581 (7.2)	0.0238 (0.1194)
ILI	4/572 (0.7)	2/516 (0.4)	0.4882 (<0.0001)	6/581 (1.0)	0.5416 (<0.001)
Virus	19/572 (3.3)	17/516 (3.3)	0.985 (0.0206)	13/581 (2.2)	0.4394 (0.0311)
Bacteria + CRI	84/572 (14.7)	52/516 (10.1)	0.27 (0.091)	36/581 (6.2)	0.019 (0.086)
Bacteria (any symptoms)‡	120/572 (21.0)	75/516 (14.5)	0.2448 (0.1279)	52/581 (9.0)	0.0163 (0.1338)
Virus or bacteria + CRI	91/572 (15.9)	56/516 (10.8)	0.260 (0.100)	39/581 (6.7)	0.022 (0.102)
Virus or bacteria (any symptoms)	123/572 (21.5)	77/516 (14.9)	0.2484 (0.1339)	52/581 (9.0)	0.016 (0.1442)
Influenza A or B + CRI	1/572 (0.2)	2/516 (0.4)	0.5898 (0.145)	3/581 (0.5)	0.3241 (<0.001)

Definition of abbreviations: CRI = clinical respiratory illness; ICC = intracluster correlation coefficient; ILI = influenza-like illness.

Bold indicates significant P values ($P < 0.05$).

* Cluster adjusted P value from chi-square test comparing targeted N95 with medical mask arm and the ICC.

† Cluster adjusted P value from chi-square test comparing N95 with medical mask arm and the ICC.

‡ Threshold for testing was one symptom.

Source 10

Citation: "A Cluster Randomised Trial of Cloth Masks Compared with Medical Masks in Healthcare Workers." MacIntyre et al., BMJ Open 5, no. 4 (Apr 22 2015): e006577. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2014-006577>.

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Brief summary of article:

Published by BMJ in April 2015, this randomized study evaluated the performance of cloth masks to medical masks using a control of standard surgical masks in hospitals in Hanoi, Vietnam. The results found significantly higher infection rate in the cloth mask group compared to the medical and surgical mask groups. The original conclusions drawn from this study cautioned the use of cloth masks. The authors of this publication note the fabric and hygienic practices of the cloth mask group used could have negatively impacted the performance results. Additional limitations around the stated conclusion include that the conducted report did not foresee the mask scarcity and events brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. An updated author's note in response to the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the importance of health workers using respiratory protection and states "the physical barrier provided by a cloth mask may afford some protection, but likely much less than a surgical mask or a respirator."

Evidence-based research: Yes OR No

Pre-print: Yes OR No

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR No

Any additional comments:

On page 5 of “Cease-and-Desist” by New Mexico Stands Up!, it was said this study found that cloth masks resulted in higher rates of infection than the unmasked control group. However, this information is inconsistent with the experimental design of this study. The control group used in this study followed standard procedures using surgical masks.

Source 11

Citation: "Effectiveness of Adding a Mask Recommendation to Other Public Health Measures to Prevent Sars-Cov-2 Infection in Danish Mask Wearers : A Randomized Controlled Trial." Bundgaard, H., et al. Ann Intern Med 174, no. 3 (Mar 2021): 335-43. <https://dx.doi.org/10.7326/m20-6817>.

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Brief summary of article:

This study aimed to evaluate the risk of COVID-19 infection between a masked and unmasked group in a community setting. It was conducted in April and May of 2020 in Denmark with 4,862 participants and was published by Annals of Internal Medicine in March 2021. This study was a randomized trial among a population where mask-wearing was uncommon and not a recommended public health measure. Results found that the masked group had rates of COVID-19 infection. However this difference was not determined to be statistically significant. Low levels of mask procedure and adherence could have increased error. During this trial a weekly survey questionnaire found that only 46% of participants in the mask group wore the mask as recommended. This study concluded that observational evidence suggests that mask wearing mitigates COVID-19 transmission and thus supports the efficacy of face masks to reduce COVID-19 infections.

Evidence-based research: Yes OR No

Pre-print: Yes OR No

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR No

Any additional comments:

The findings of this study were inconclusive and statistically insignificant, however, observational evidence suggested that masks were effective to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

Source 13

Citation: "Dangerous pathogens found on children's face masks," Rational Ground, June 2021.

<https://rationalground.com/dangerouspathogens-found-on-childrens-face-masks/>.

Author(s)	Affiliations
Jennifer Cabrera	Editor of The Alachua Chronicle, Contributor to Radical Ground

Brief summary of article:

Article claims there are dangers associated with face masks on children due to detection of harmful pathogens. Parents living in Florida sent over 6 facemasks to a laboratory so that they could be tested on to see if there were any kind of contaminants within the mask worn by the children. The lab report demonstrated that five of the masks provided were contaminated with parasites, bacteria, and fungi. The only virus that was detected from the masks was *alcelaphine herpesvirus 1*. Article also includes the 11 harmful pathogens that were detected within the mask provided. The article mentioned that 50% of the masks had one or more strains of pneumonia-causing bacteria, 1/3 had one or more strains of meningitis-causing bacteria, 1/3 had harmful antibiotic-resistant bacterial pathogens. Within the mask sent to the lab, they also included a mask that was unworn and no pathogens were found in this mask.

Evidence-based research: Yes OR **No**

Pre-print: **Yes** OR No

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR **No**

Any additional comments:

Sources 16 - 20

Citation: National Vaccine Information Center, [VAERS Database](#).

Author(s)	Affiliations
N/A	N/A

Brief summary of article:

VAERS Database was created as a tool to quickly identify individuals that have adverse events or illness after vaccinations. There is no cause-and-effect relationship established with VAERS reports. Reports are submitted voluntarily by anyone, including healthcare providers, patients, or family members, and are subject to biases. According to the disclaimer, reports often contain “information that is incomplete, inaccurate, coincidental, or unverifiable” and “VAERS reports alone cannot be used to determine if a vaccine caused or contributed to an adverse event or illness.”

Evidence-based research: Yes OR **No**

Pre-print: **Yes** OR No

Peer-reviewed: Yes OR **No**

Any additional comments: