



Facemasks around the World

Counties with low death rates

In mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Taiwan, the broad assumption is that anyone could be a carrier of the virus, even healthy people. So, in the spirit of solidarity, you need to protect others from yourself.

Some places take this idea very seriously: in some parts of China, you could be arrested or punished for not wearing a mask. In Singapore, which used to discourage citizens from wearing masks, it's now compulsory to wear one outside or risk a fine of S\$300 (£170, \$210).

In East Asia, many people are used to wearing masks when they are sick or when it's hay fever season, because it's considered impolite to be sneezing or coughing openly.

The 2003 Sars virus outbreak, which affected several countries in the region, also drove home the importance of wearing masks, particularly in Hong Kong, where many died as a result of the virus. So, one key difference between these societies and Western ones, is that they have experienced contagion before - and the memories are still fresh and painful.

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Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis

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Summary

Background Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) causes COVID-19 and is spread person-to-person through close contact. We aimed to investigate the effects of physical distance, face masks, and eye protection on virus transmission in health-care and non-health-care (eg, community) settings.

Methods We did a systematic review and meta-analysis to investigate the optimum distance for avoiding person-to-person virus transmission and to assess the use of face masks and eye protection to prevent transmission of viruses. We obtained data for SARS-CoV-2 and the beta coronaviruses that cause severe acute respiratory syndrome, and Middle East respiratory syndrome from 21 standard WHO-specific and COVID-19-specific sources. We searched these data sources from database inception to May 3, 2020, with no restriction by language, for comparative studies and for contextual factors of acceptability, feasibility, resource use, and equity. We screened records, extracted data, and assessed risk of bias in duplicate. We did frequentist and Bayesian meta-analyses and random-effects meta-regressions. We rated the certainty of evidence according to Cochrane methods and the GRADE approach. This study is registered with PROSPERO, CRD42020177047.



1894 - 'Le Petit Journal', a Parisian daily, staged what will become the world's first automotive race, on this day. The race, which required participants to cover a 79-mile stretch between the cities of Paris and Rouen, was won by Albert Lemaître, who was driving a 3hp petrol 'Peugeot'.

1943 - American forces led by General George S. Patton captured Palermo, Sicily.

1965 - Sir Alec Douglas-Home surprised the members of his party by announcing his retirement. He served as the British Prime Minister during the period 1963-64, after which he served as the leader of opposition.

2000 - Astronomers at the University of Arizona announced that they had found a 17th moon orbiting Jupiter.

2009 - The longest total solar eclipse of the 21st century, lasting up to 6 minutes and 38.8 seconds, occurred over parts of Asia and the Pacific Ocean.



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Thank you to all branch volunteers, friends and supporters for your continuing work.

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