

Researchers on pandemic restrictions: Increase compliance instead of investing in numerous restrictions

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Responses from 9,500 inhabitants in 11 countries in a study financed by the EU have given the researchers an insight into how governments should act to stop the spread of the virus.

"Implementing a combination of many restrictions has the opposite effect. Increase [compliance](#) with existing restrictions instead," says Sofia Wikman, researcher at University of Gävle.

In an online questionnaire, researchers asked citizens about 44 different restrictive public health measures aimed to limit the spread of the virus to see how efficient citizens found them. What restrictions are seen as infringements of individual liberties? What views and demographic factors impact compliance? What is the best way for governments to improve citizens' compliance?

There were 9,543 responses to the survey and respondents came from 11 countries: United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Bulgaria,

Czechia, Finland, India, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Sweden.

Best measures according to citizens

The new study provides researchers with unique responses concerning what measures the citizens find to be the most effective, and which ones they see as undermining their human rights.

Responses reveal that politicians should start with the least restrictive and most effective public health measures first in case of pandemic emergencies.

"Measures require balancing between the negative financial, psychological, and social effects and protection of human rights," Sofia Wikman says.

Countries with public lack of confidence in the government should invest in efforts that persuade men

The results reveal that there are significant differences between countries concerning perceived effectiveness, restrictiveness and compliance.

- In countries where there is a public lack of confidence in the [government](#), governments should increase their efforts to persuade their citizens, especially the men, that the measures are effective.
- Financial compensation should be provided to citizens who have lost their job or income due to the measures implemented to improve measure compliance.
- Use solely evidence-based information in public campaigns.
- Refrain from implementing measures perceived as more restrictive for citizens' [human rights](#) than effective and that lack

objective evidence on their effectiveness in preventing the spread of the virus.

More information: Irina Georgieva et al. Perceived Effectiveness, Restrictiveness, and Compliance with Containment Measures against the Covid-19 Pandemic: An International Comparative Study in 11 Countries, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.3390/ijerph18073806](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18073806)

Provided by University of Gävle

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