



[New Study Finds that Shutdown Orders Prevented Nearly 5 Million Additional Coronavirus Cases in the U.S.](#)

New research from the University of California-Berkeley has shown that shutdown orders to close nonessential businesses and keep people at home helped the U.S. avoid at least five million cases of the novel coronavirus. The research examined over 1,700 public policy interventions from governments in the U.S., South Korea, Italy, Iran, France, and China to analyze how effective these policies were in combatting the spread of the virus. In total, researchers discovered that these countries were able to avoid 62 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 combined by implementing lockdown orders. Additionally, because many cases of the virus are not formally diagnosed, the researchers hypothesize that lockdown orders could have prevented up to 530 million cases worldwide, with 60 million in the United States alone.

The research team at UC-Berkeley found that without the lockdown orders in place, cases of COVID-19 would likely have grown at an average of 43% per day across the six countries. In the United States, New York and California were used as case studies due to the higher rate of infections in the two states. California reported less cases of COVID-19 than New York, but it became the first state to officially lock down when Governor Gavin Newsom issued a shelter-in-place order on March 19th. Contrasting this, New York delayed initiating lockdown protocols until the virus was already rampant in the state, with Governor Andrew Cuomo only issuing a stay-at-home order when confirmed cases were rising by 3,000 daily. Based on the research conducted by UC-Berkeley, the shutdown orders in New York and California likely saved countless lives, but more lives could have been saved had the lockdown orders been issued earlier.

The study found that among the six major countries analyzed, China's lockdown was most effective, saving an estimated 285 million people from being infected with the virus. The study's lead author, Solomon Hsiang, said that by issuing lockdown orders, countries "changed the course of history," and that no "human endeavor has ever saved so many lives in such a short period of time." In addition to the estimated 285 million people saved in China, researchers hypothesized that without lockdowns, additional infections would have totaled 38 million in South Korea, 49 million in Italy, 54 million in Iran, 45 million in France, and 60 million in the United States, with only a fraction of each being diagnosed.

The study was published in the midst of elected officials in the United States and across the world weighing the decision whether or not to reopen their economies. President Trump questioned governors who weren't reopening their states quickly enough late last week, and praised states who were allowing businesses to start opening again. The president also called the decision to issue a nationwide shutdown order "the hardest decision" of his life. In the case of Florida, which the president singled out for praise, cases of COVID-19 have begun climbing again as the state reopened. Last Thursday, Florida reported an increase of over 1,400 confirmed cases, which is the highest daily total since the state began reporting data.