

HEALTH

Sceptical stalwart Dr John Lee has penned a [scorching piece](#) in the *Mail* criticising the Government for its ineffective, authoritarian response to the virus, and in particular for its latest vandalism to the capital; WRITES Toby Young in Lockdown Sceptics

The clampdown that is just bureaucratic insanity: Dr JOHN LEE argues that putting London into Tier 3 lockdown could cripple the capital

By [DR JOHN LEE FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

PUBLISHED: 22:46, 14 December 2020 | UPDATED: 22:48, 14 December 2020

After 2,000 years, the famous words of Hippocrates are still the best rule of thumb for any doctor: 'First, do no harm.'

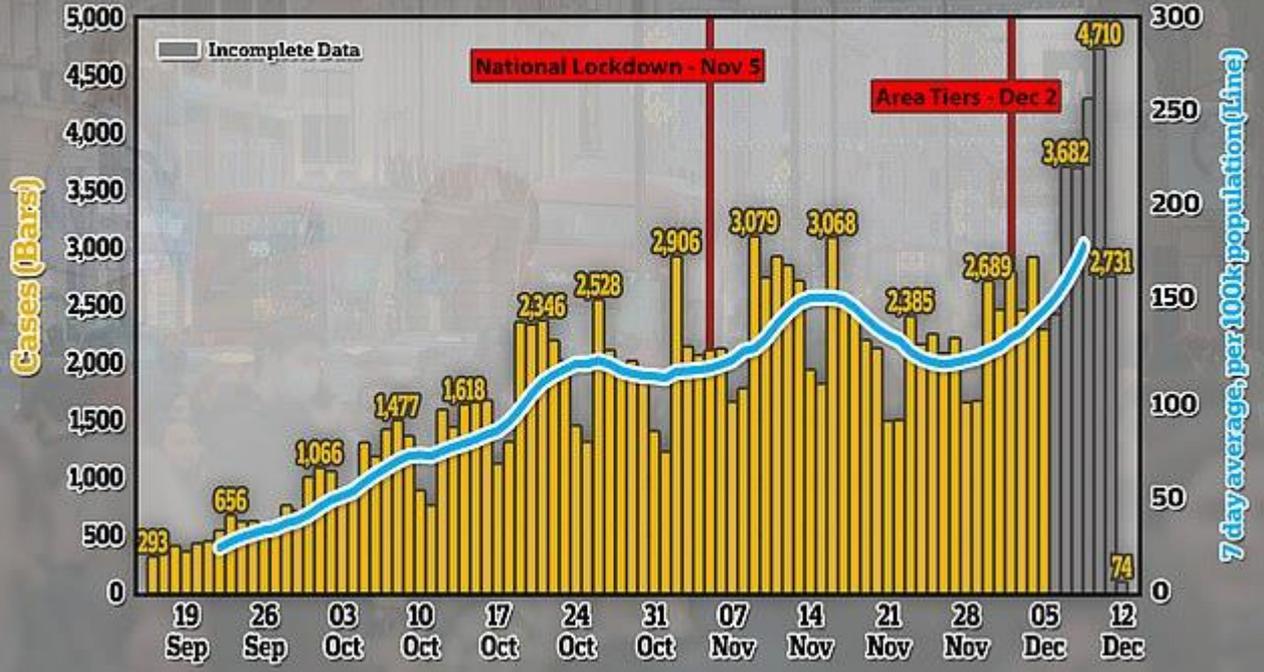
By plunging [London](#) into a Tier Three [lockdown](#), the Government is going to do terrible harm to the city, the entire national economy, and to millions of lives. No one can predict the number of people who will lose jobs, suffer poor mental health or who will have life-saving operations postponed until too late.

All we can say with any certainty is that all these things will happen, and not to a few isolated people. The harms caused by these new restrictions, like those caused by the previous over-reactions, will be immense.

Yet the Government seems oblivious to all this, gripped by a new puritanism that places no value on quality of life. All that appears to matter is the headline figure on a weekly death chart. It is bureaucratic insanity.

You don't have to be an economist to know that we cannot fuel Britain's recovery by butchering businesses and slashing national income. And you don't have to be a conspiracy theorist to feel that the Government is withholding much of the information we need to draw our own conclusions about better ways to handle the crisis.

CORONAVIRUS CASES IN LONDON



By plunging London into a Tier Three lockdown, the Government is going to do terrible harm to the city, the entire national economy, and to millions of lives

How else to explain the fact that the blanket Tier Three restrictions across the capital take no account of local variations? Enfield, for example, has about eight times as many recorded infections as Kingston upon Thames.

Could there have been eight times as many test kits available in Enfield? We don't know because the relevant facts are suppressed. Yet even when facts are published – such as those on the Government's own website – you could be forgiven for thinking that Number 10 has made a conscious decision to ignore them.

RELATED ARTICLE



Is Christmas in jeopardy? Ministers discuss tightening...



London,

parts of Essex and Hertfordshire go into Tier 3 at a...

SHARE THIS ARTICLE

Share

For example, when Matt Hancock announced the latest restrictions yesterday, there was no mention of the fact that, according to the latest data on the Government's

online Covid tracker, the weekly average number of Covid deaths in the capital is just over a tenth of what it was at its peak in April.

Nor did he highlight that weekly average Covid admissions to London's hospitals are a quarter of what were in the spring. Crucially, that disparity is equally large for the number of severely ill Covid patients using mechanical ventilation beds.

Instead of addressing this reality, each day the Government insists on only telling us how many people have died after testing positive for Covid-19, implying that they were killed by the virus.



•
No one can predict the number of people who will lose jobs, suffer poor mental health or who will have life-saving operations postponed until too late

The truth is different: we don't know what any of these people died from, or where, or how old they were. There is no logical reason for this official mystery and secrecy. It is unmatched in national life since World War Two.

In wartime, there was a purpose to the emergency powers. German spies could be listening anywhere.

Today, however, the obsession with secrecy is not intended to hide the facts from enemy agents but from us, the general public.

What the Government cannot disguise is that the initial hysteria over this pandemic was irrational. This disease is not like Spanish flu, or the plague. It does not sweep away young and old indiscriminately. In fact, many younger people – now more likely to catch Covid – will have it without even being aware. They will be infected but not affected.

That is why the average age of people dying with a Covid infection is 82 years and four months – 14 months more than the average life expectancy in Britain.

That goes a long way to explaining why in November the total number of deaths in London was very little different to the average over the past five years.

And so it should be obvious that the correct response to this virus is targeted support: to help the vulnerable shield, not to wreck the lives of everyone, whatever their age or health status.

Yet instead we endure a dictatorial insistence that we must all stand a metre or two metres apart, when Covid is a respiratory virus that spreads on the wind. Just look at the leaves blowing around – that's what viral particles do when we walk past each other.

And cloth or woven paper masks are no barrier to this tiny virus either, as shown by the world's only controlled study, from Denmark, which found that they only made a small, 'non-statistically-significant' difference. Our breath escapes (as it must, or we would suffocate) and the virus escapes with it.

Still, if masks and social distancing have little positive effect, at least they don't directly destroy thousands of lives. But that's what a Tier Three lockdown will do in London, just as it is already doing in other regions.

The Government's advisers must know the damage this is doing. They just dare not admit that they're doubling down on a policy that is medically and scientifically bankrupt.

Dr John Lee is a former Professor of Pathology and NHS Consultant Pathologist

Share or comment on this article:

DR JOHN LEE: The clampdown that is just bureaucratic insanity