Social distancing reduced COVID transmission by 84%

Social distancing rules reduced the contagion of COVID-19, reveals new research from the University of Cologne. Such rules were introduced into several countries during the first wave of COVID-19 in Spring 2020.

New research by Professor Emanuel Hansen and his co-authors examined the effect of social distancing on mobility behaviour and the contagion rate of COVID-19 in Germany.

To identify these effects, the researchers exploited staggered timings of COVID-19 outbreaks in extended event-study models.

The authors found that the policies were successful in reducing spatial mobility of the German citizens by about 30%.

Moreover, the policies avoided approximately 84% of the potential COVID-19 cases and 66% of fatalities in Germany, in comparison to if there was no social distancing.

The policies affected all subgroups of the population, but the effects were somewhat smaller for individuals above 60 and in rural areas.

"Our study shows that the early measures to contain COVID-19 were successful in avoiding an overload of the German healthcare system", Professor Hansen says. "Back then, without tools such as vaccination or rapid testing, there was no viable alternative to social distancing – despite the economic and social costs of closing schools and businesses," says Professor Hansen.

This study was published in the interdisciplinary Open-Access Journal PLoS ONE under the title "How effective are social distancing policies? Evidence on the fight against COVID-19".

/ ENDS

For more information, or to speak to Professor Emanuel Hansen, contact Ariella Durban at BlueSky Education on ariella@bluesky-PR.com or call +44 (0)1582 790 706.

responsesource