

More stringent public health measures associated with lower COVID-19 cases, deaths

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As state and local policymakers and politicians made the decision to enact stay-at-home orders last March in response to the coronavirus pandemic, a recent study found that more stringent public health measures put in place directly correlated with lower virus case numbers during the first two months of the pandemic.

The study, "More Stringent Measures Against Covid-19 Are Associated With Lower Cases and Deaths in Florida and Miami-Dade," was recently published in the *American Journal of Emergency Medicine*.

Utilizing The New York Times' GitHub repository of cases and deaths and the COVID-19 Government Response Stringency Index developed by Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government for the period between March 11, 2020 and March 26, 2021, the researchers found that mitigation efforts to reduce the spread of infection, hospitalizations, and [death](#)—including the closure of schools and

businesses, the adoption of social distancing measures, the use of facial coverings, and stay-at-home orders—were effective in keeping the overall COVID-19 case count and deaths lower than they would not have been had these efforts not been implemented.

"As we analyzed the data, it was striking to us how the adoption of more stringent policy measures aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19 infection largely coincided with fewer cases and deaths," said Alex R. Piquero, chair and professor in the Department of Sociology and Arts & Sciences Distinguished Scholar at the University of Miami and corresponding author on the study.

Once the stringencies were loosened, however, researchers noted an initial surge in transmission in the period between the Memorial Day and Independence Day holidays. As statewide stringencies reached their lowest enforcement during October 2020, a second surge in [coronavirus](#) cases was seen immediately after.

Any changes in the stringency index were predictive of changes in the incidence of coronavirus cases 10 to 17 days later, the researchers noted.

More information: Alex R. Piquero et al, More stringent measures against COVID-19 are associated with lower cases and deaths in Florida and Miami-Dade, *The American Journal of Emergency Medicine* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ajem.2021.04.066](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajem.2021.04.066)

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