

## The Allure of the Mask

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Early on in the pandemic, I promoted mask-wearing as something we could do to protect ourselves, loved ones, and our communities.

But as the pandemic progressed, we learned some things.

Over time, I became more skeptical of much good coming from mask-wearing.

Now that the panic portion of the pandemic is mostly over — and what a long panic it was! — we should be able to more calmly review.

Two months ago, Vinay Prasad, an actual epidemiologist, looked carefully at the CDC's study allegedly showing a high medical efficacy in universal mask-wearing during a major

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contagion. The study, he argued, was plagued with “very poor quality data, insufficient to support community masking, particularly for years on end. Cloth masks had especially bad data. Data to support masking kids was absolutely absent.” And the CDC's own reporting of what its study actually found was unreliable and . . . well, dishonest.

Take the case of Dr. Anthony Fauci. “Pre-pandemic, community masking was discouraged because the pre-existing evidence was negative,” explained Prasad. “This is why Fauci was



critical of it in early March 2020 on *60 minutes*.”

But many of us were perhaps unduly *pro*-mask because Fauci appeared to be protecting the supply of masks used by medical professionals, thus, lying for a strategic reason. It was hard not to learn a . . . dubious . . . lesson: Fauci lied to protect professional mask use, so masks for the masses likely worked well.

Then he changed tune. And went off the deep end, ignoring his previous statements and advocating double- and triple-masking!

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Prasad does not go where Matthias Desmet and others have: showing how mask mandates became a means to induce panic and the politicization of medicine.

Voluntary masking without mandates — as has been commonly the case in Japan, for example — provides important signals about infection rates, and allows people to negotiate their own physical distancing. Universal mask mandates spoil the informative aspect and instead serve tyrants and mass hysteria.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.