

Association of American Physicians and Surgeons: Mask Mandates Ineffective Against Respiratory Viruses, Harmful, and Infringe on Informed Consent Rights

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The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS) has released a statement challenging the effectiveness and ethicality of mask mandates for respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. The AAPS argues that not only are these mandates ineffective in stopping the spread of respiratory viruses, but they also pose potential health risks and infringe upon individuals' rights to informed medical consent.

AAPS is a non-partisan professional association of physicians in all types of practices and specialties across the country, created in 1943.

“The AAPS statement of Patients' Freedoms provides that patients have the right to be informed about the risks and benefits of any medical intervention, and have the right to refuse medical treatment,” according to the press release.

“The use of masks and other face coverings, as a public health measure or otherwise, are a type of medical intervention to which the above informed consent rights apply.”

“Government recommendations and mandates regarding face coverings have been contradictory, provided to the public as authoritative without evidence, are in conflict with the available data, and neglect to mention any potential harm from use of coverings or masks,” the association added.

In challenging the effectiveness of masks in preventing the spread of respiratory viruses like COVID-19, the AAPS cited a Cochrane systemic review. The review found no clear evidence suggesting that medical or surgical masks were effective in reducing respiratory viral infections among healthcare workers when compared to N95/P2 respirators.

The AAPS statement also delved into the potential harm that can result from prolonged mask usage. Drawing on over 60 studies and reports, it listed several areas of concern:

- Prolonged use of mask is not a neutral event and in fact can cause harm. “Prolonged use of N95 and surgical masks by healthcare professionals during COVID-19 has caused adverse effects such as headaches, rash, acne, skin breakdown, and impaired cognition in the majority of those surveyed.”
- Findings indicate that wearing the N95 mask for 14 hours significantly affected the physiological, biochemical, and perception parameters in a negative fashion.
- The possibility that masks hinder the acquisition of speech and language in children exists. “Overall, the research to date demonstrates that the visible articulations that babies normally see when others are talking play a key role in their acquisition of communication skills. Research also shows that babies who lip-read more have better language skills when they’re older. If so, this suggests that masks probably hinder babies’ acquisition of speech and language.”
- Experimental data has shown “carbon dioxide content in inhaled air rises on average to 13,000 to 13,750 ppm no matter whether children wear a surgical or an FFP2 mask. This is far beyond the level of 2,000 ppm considered the limit of acceptability and beyond the 1,000 ppm that are normal for air in closed rooms. This estimate is rather on the low side, as we only measured this after a short time without physical exertion.”
- Society requires facial recognition as a most basic component of interaction and communication. Studies in individuals with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) have shown that “Poor face perception in AMD is an important domain contributing to impaired social interactions and quality of life”. Voluntary masking with no gain contributes to societal alienation.

The Association concludes by stating that individuals should be empowered to make their own health decisions, including the choice to wear a mask or not, based on the available evidence and their own risk assessment.

“As masking mandates are contrary to the fundamental medical principle of informed consent, all masking mandates currently in place must be rescinded, and no future mandates should be imposed,” the association concludes.

“Furthermore, since masking mandates for viral illnesses provide no clear benefits, while creating potential for harm, individuals should be empowered to choose to not observe such mandates that are either currently in existence or that may be imposed in the future,” it added.