Twitter Thread by Yaneer Bar-Yam

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In Europe, schools are closing as studies show schoolchildren can play a significant role in spreading infections

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As U.S. authorities debate whether to keep schools open, a consensus is emerging in Europe that children are a considerable factor in the spread of Covid-19—and more countries are shutting schools for the first time since the spring.

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Closures have been announced recently in the U.K., Germany, Ireland, Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands on concerns about a more infectious variant of the virus first detected in the U.K. and rising case counts despite lockdowns.

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While the debate continues, recent studies and outbreaks show that schoolchildren, even younger ones, can play a significant role in spreading infections.

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"The recent shutdown of schools was especially dramatic in England. U.K. PM Boris Johnson initially planned to keep elementary schools there open after the Christmas break, but changed course amid soaring infections. After one day, schools were closed until further notice

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..an antibody survey conducted by researchers in Geneva in May and December, using thousands of random samples, found that children of age 6 to 18 were getting infected as often as young adults.

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"One reason for this: The Swiss city's schools have been open since the summer, while restrictions have been placed on adults, meaning schoolchildren played a bigger role in transmitting the virus during the autumn surge, Mr. Flahault said.

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"In Austria, a nationwide survey by universities and medical institutes found that children under 10 showed a similar rate of infection to those between 11 and 14, and that the children in general were getting infected as often as teachers

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"That is very different to what has been claimed for months, that younger children are less frequently infected"

"The study, funded by the government, regularly analyzes samples from up to 15,000 children between the age of 6 and 15, as well as teachers who show no symptoms.

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"Scientists also point to data from U.K.'s Office for National Statistics..weekly random survey.. Just before the Christmas break, when schools were still open, the positivity rate among children was higher than in most adult groups, especially in those older than 11.

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"German virologist Christian Drosten said in his weekly podcast that the study "pretty much answers the question of how children contribute to the pandemic."

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"At least 30 cases of the more contagious U.K. variant were discovered at an elementary school in the Dutch village of Bergschenhoek, near Rotterdam, in December. Tests.on some 750 children, teachers and their relatives found that roughly 10% were infected with the virus.

12.

"In Germany, researchers found that a majority of some 40 cases at a school in Hamburg in September were likely linked to a single person, which some scientists say highlights the risk of schools becoming Covid-19 clusters.

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"..opening schools while the U.K. variant spreads in Europe bears a big risk. "We should be careful now"

14/

This thread 1-15/ is all from the @WSJ article

15/

My comment /14 "We should be careful now" should win an award for understatement.

Everyone who wants to stop school openings or close schools that are opened should organize with others. We can introduce you to teams that are already organizing

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