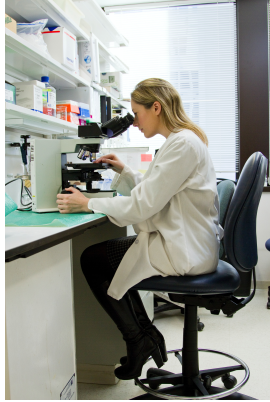


Governments and public health agencies don't make it easy to "trust the science".

October 29, 2021



On 23rd September, Alberta's Medical Officer of Health Dr. Deena Hinshaw admitted that some provincial case counts were based on estimates, rather than the result of testing.

Attempting to explain why parents did not receive notification of cases of Covid in their children's schools, Dr. Hinshaw cited privacy rights. (If parents find that a less-than-satisfactory response, we understand their frustration. We too, would want to know.)

But, in a hard-to-punctuate extended commentary, she added helpfully that if schools saw an increased number of children with 'respiratory illness' there was help available from Alberta Health Services (AHS).

Furthermore, she stated, "If individuals choose to not get tested for Covid but are home with an illness' they would be 'counted in the list as being part of that outbreak.' And so, identifying where there is an issue is 'less dependent on meeting a test.'"

Really? Her candour is refreshing, but hardly reassuring. The plain meaning is that any student who doesn't show up is regarded as a Covid case. Not a cold, not flu, and not something else entirely. How much will this skew the statistics offered daily by AHS? It illustrates how public health agencies undermine their own credibility. Numbers of Covid cases being used to determine if schools will be shut down, businesses shuttered, and people ordered to not have visitors to their home, should not be assumed, estimated or projected.

In October 2021, Dr. Hinshaw also reported a juvenile brain cancer victim from Ponoka, Alberta as a Covid death.

Nathanael Spitzer, 14, did indeed test positive for Covid a few days before his death. However, a reconsideration of his case following a complaint from his family confirmed that Covid was neither a primary nor a secondary contributor to his passing. In fact, the teenager has been fighting brain cancer for over 9 months. Dr. Hinshaw later acknowledged the mistake and apologized to the family.

Still, these two instances together point to an unrigorous and unscientific approach to data collection within the AHS. Accurate data is crucial to science: A government agency that has the power to order businesses they consider non-essential to close had best be trustworthy.

AHS also determines who is eligible for vaccination. An undiscovered misclassification such as Nathanael's could have been used to validate

a policy of vaccinating children – a demographic for which a vaccine does little good and has potential for harm.

Reporting in the media has moved from science and debate to apparent advocacy.

Take the popular phrase that Covid infections are now an 'epidemic of the unvaccinated.' This is usually followed by a phrase such as this, from the CBC: "It's often reported that unvaccinated Albertans make up just 32 per cent of the population but a whopping 74 per cent of the Covid-19 patients in hospital."

If 74% were unvaccinated, presumably 26% were vaccinated. How CBC reports its story is not up to AHS, of course. Still, an equally compelling headline might have had a different focus: One hospitalized Covid patient in four is fully vaccinated. What are the implications for mandatory vaccination if 25% of vaccinated people are getting sick enough to be in hospital?

And how is "vaccinated" now defined? According to AHS, "a person is considered fully immunized after 14 days have passed since they received the second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series." Have some of the 74% reported in hospital had one shot or even two, but classified as unvaccinated because the magic 14 day time frame hasn't passed?

From the first days since a pandemic was declared in March 2020, Canadians have been subjected to a relentless barrage of conflicting advice and frequently, orders that made very little sense. If Dr. Hinshaw is correct for example that 'one of the most significant locations of risk is the home,' then why limit access to gymnasiums and restaurants? Perhaps at the outset when all we needed to do was 'flatten the curve' – it would only take two weeks – it behooved us all to be gracious towards struggling government officials as they pieced together what the pandemic was really all about.

However, any real discussion today of cause, effect and response has now been pushed underground. Dissent is not welcomed and sometimes prosecuted. Medical professionals who challenge the narrative are penalized. (One Alberta doctor faces job loss for his articulation of a counter-narrative message. The Justice Centre represents a number of doctors being disciplined for speaking out.) Questions are not allowed. And if more information is required, the enquiring citizen is directed to a government department, part of the system that for 19 months has justified unjustifiable lockdowns and made no attempt to count the costs of doing so.

For many Canadians, it's become harder to trust the science of the so-called experts.

A better slogan would be to trust the scientific method. This would allow for discussion of the doctors presently being silenced against challenging the government narrative. Canadians are entitled to more than careless data collection, thoughtless dogma and government coercion.