

# The Medical Journal of Australia • MJA

# MEDIA RELEASE

## **AUSTRALIAN COVID-19 RESPONSE AVERTS 16 000 DEATHS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE Australian response to COVID-19 may have saved over 16 000 lives according to modelling that used the UK response as a template, say the authors of an article published today by the Medical Journal of Australia.

“Using all-cause mortality data in England and Wales over the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak in March and April, we directly estimated the number of excess deaths that may have occurred if the outbreak in Australia had been of a similar extent to that in England and Wales,” wrote Dr Fiona Stanaway, a clinical epidemiologist at the University of Sydney, and colleagues.

“This resulted in an estimated additional 16 313 deaths in Australia: 9295 men and 7018 women.

In contrast, by 24 May there had been 103 COVID-19 attributed deaths in Australia (and 1340 excess total deaths according to provisional mortality statistics).

“This enormous difference underlies the importance of Australia’s response using a combination of extensive testing and contact tracing, mandatory quarantine of people returning from overseas, and shutdowns to control community transmission.

“While acknowledging that these measures carry with them substantial social and economic harms, we wish to highlight the scale of the loss of life avoided.”

The article is open access and available now at:

<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2020/covid-19-how-many-australians-might-have-died-if-wed-had-outbreak-england-and-wales>

A more detailed explanation of methods and results is available at *InSight+*:

<https://insightplus.mja.com.au/2020/39/covid-19-australian-response-may-have-saved-15-000-lives/>

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