

# Should we sign The Great Barrington Declaration?

The GB Declaration was developed by leading epidemiologists from Oxford, Stanford and Harvard and signed by many of their colleagues around the world. It calls for younger people to be allowed to continue their lives as normal and for the old and vulnerable to be more effectively shielded while herd immunity is developed. They suggest this approach because they believe that lockdown will lead to far worse overall consequences.

Below you will find the declaration website and several video presentations that are supportive of the idea:

[www.gbdeclaration.org](http://www.gbdeclaration.org)

<https://unherd.com/2020/10/covid-experts-there-is-another-way/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xh9wso6bEAc>

But here are some criticisms:

<https://www.sciencemediacentre.org/expert-reaction-to-barrington-declaration-an-open-letter-arguing-against-lockdown-policies-and-for-focused-protection/>

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/great-barrington-declaration-herd-immunity-scientific-divide>

<https://www.mpg.de/15503604/statement-non-university-research-organizations-covid-19-epidemic>

Here are some of my own reflections on the topic.

Many of the criticisms misrepresent the actual message and some are mere appeals to emotion. People are going to die whatever we do and we have to minimise the overall harm as best we can in this unfortunate situation. By focusing resources on the vulnerable we may reduce deaths in those categories versus the current strategy. The BG declaration expects a win-win with lower overall harm for everybody.

The authors argue that lockdowns can slow down the inevitable, but ultimately the same number of people will get the virus. However, this is not really true if good vaccines are developed, which seems likely as we shine the light of science against this particular act of god.

By opening universities, schools etc. the government has already moved towards the GB strategy but without actually saying so, possibly for political reasons.

I would like to know more about the duration of immunity following infection and long lasting COVID side effects. However long COVID is probably less harmful than the long-term effects of lockdown.

I would like to have seen the quantitative models on which the conclusions are based. There seems to be a reluctance to present actual models to the many numerate members of the public. I suspect that all the models are unreliable, when it comes to making projections, and exponentials will be incredibly sensitive to the input variables.

About a million people in the UK die every year anyway. The median age of death with COVID is about the median life expectancy. For people under 40, flu is at least as dangerous and yet we are ruining many of their lives and futures.

Sorry, but the value of the remaining life of an 80 or 90 year old is less than that of a 20 year old, 10 year old or 50 year old. All parents and grandparents know this.

Many of the criticisms derive from our dependence on big government to look after us. If we had less socialist tendencies, locally empowered actions would enable more effective protection of the vulnerable. People are suffering because we have been dehumanised and disempowered by our dependence on the government to look after us.

For the religious amongst us the bible tells us to expect three score years and ten. Most COVID deaths are well above that age. For the religious elderly to prioritise their lives over the young must be morally wrong.

Anyone whose worst-case outcome is a place in heaven commits an act of infinite evil if they fail to, for example, immediately volunteer for (indeed start themselves and insist upon) direct challenge research on infections and vaccines. They have nothing to lose and everything to gain.