

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD COMMUNICATION IN TIMES OF COVID-19

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2019

GHS INDEX

GLOBAL HEALTH
SECURITY INDEX

Building Collective Action and Accountability

OVERALL SCORE

Rank	Country	Score
1	United States	83.5
2	United Kingdom	77.9
3	Netherlands	75.6
4	Australia	75.5
5	Canada	75.3
6	Thailand	73.2
7	Sweden	72.1
8	Denmark	70.4
9	South Korea	70.2
10	Finland	68.7
11	France	68.2
12	Slovenia	67.2
13	Switzerland	67.0
14	Germany	66.0
15	Spain	65.9
16	Norway	64.6
17	Latvia	62.9
18	Malaysia	62.2
19	Belgium	61.0
20	Portugal	60.3

3. RAPID RESPONSE TO AND MITIGATION OF THE SPREAD OF AN EPIDEMIC

Rank	Country	Score
1	United Kingdom	91.9
2	United States	79.7
3	Switzerland	79.3
4	Netherlands	79.1
5	Thailand	78.6
6	South Korea	71.5
7	Finland	69.2
8	Portugal	67.7
9	Brazil	67.1
10	Australia	65.9
11	Singapore	64.6
12	Slovenia	63.3
13	France	62.9
14	Sweden	62.8
15	Spain	61.9
16	Malaysia	61.3
17	Canada	60.7
18	Chile	60.2
19	Denmark	58.4
20	Norway	58.2



”You know, maybe we underinvested in research on human behavior...”

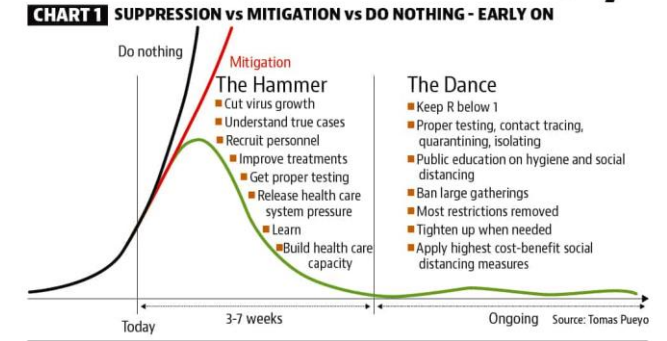
WHY RESEARCH ON HUMAN BEHAVIOR?

The recipe for success:

1. Behavioral change:
Distancing and vaccinations
2. Speed
3. Communication



Hammer-and-dance theory



WHAT IS GOOD COMMUNICATION?



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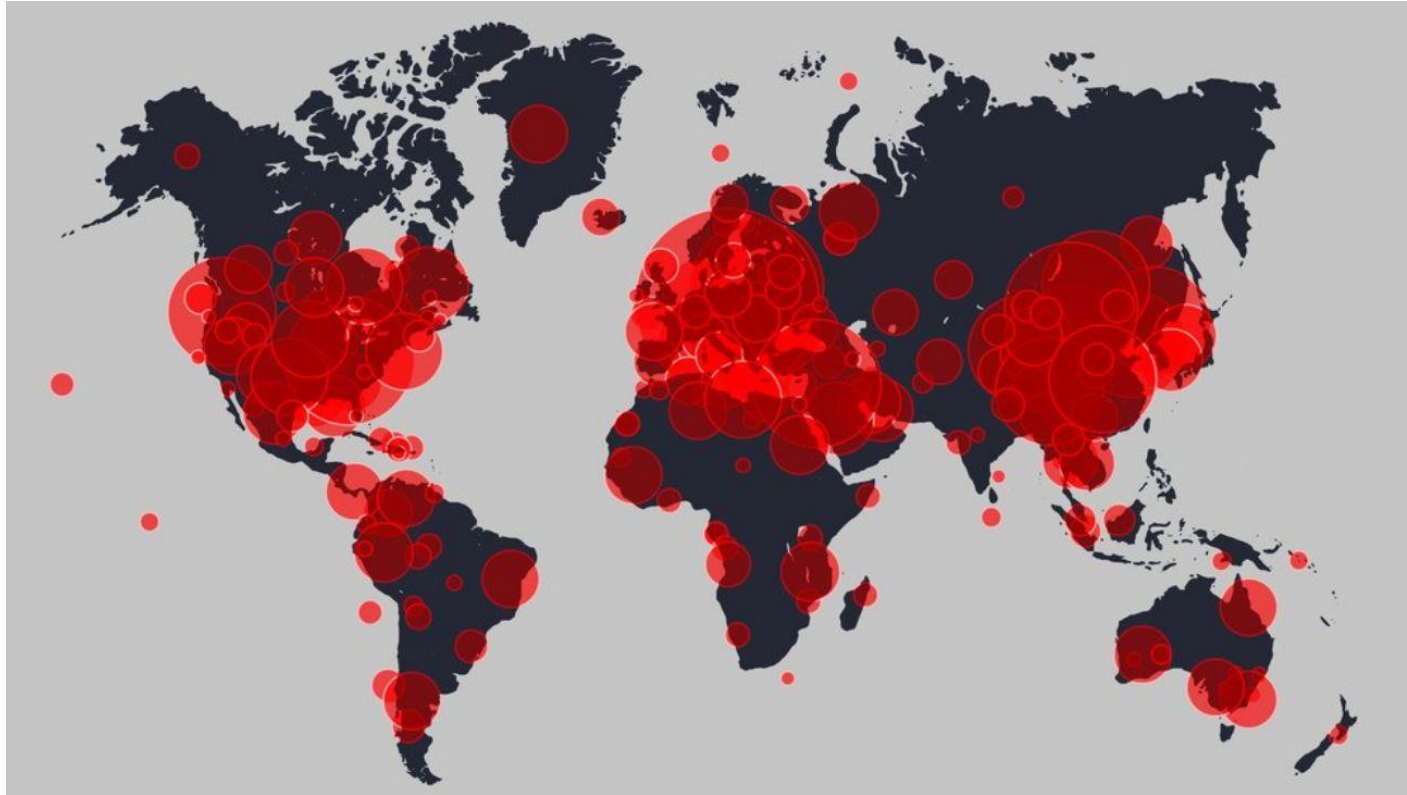
1. EMPOWER CITIZENS



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FRDESEHUGBITDKUS

WHO COMPLIED?



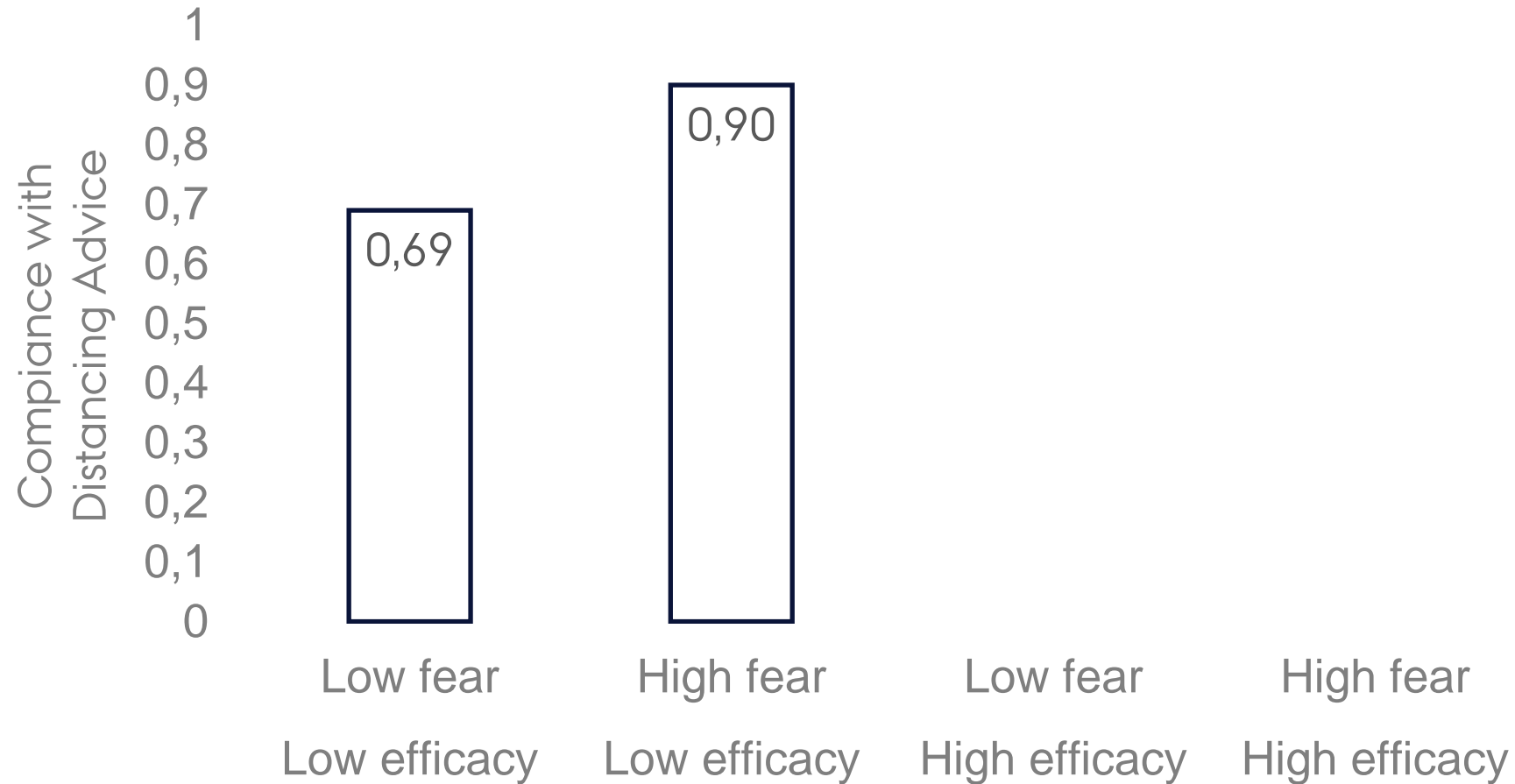
Article | [Free Access](#)

Compliance without fear: Individual-level protective behaviour during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic

Frederik Jørgensen [v](#), Alexander Bor [v](#), Michael Bang Petersen [✉](#) [v](#)



WHO COMPLIED?



2. BE TRANSPARENT



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DISCLOSE UNCERTAINTY

Gustafson & Rice: Citizens do not react negatively – and, often, positively - when communication acknowledges...

1. "Known unknowns"
2. "Unknown unknowns"
3. Probabilities

Helps sustain trust when negative events occur

DISCLOSE THE BAD STUFF

A rare clotting disorder may cloud the world's hopes for AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine

By [Kai Kupferschmidt](#), [Gretchen Vogel](#) | Mar. 27, 2021 , 10:20 AM

Several EU countries suspend AstraZeneca vaccine to investigate blood clot cases

European Medicines Agency say 'benefits outweigh its risks' and vaccine can continue to be used

THE ALTERNATIVE MAY BE WORSE



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AN EXPERIMENT ON TRANSPARENCY

Experiment on vaccine communication (more than 6.800 Danes and Americans)
Information about a new COVID-vaccine, COVACID, and its effectiveness and side-effects

	Transparent Negative Communication	Vague Reassuring Communication
Vaccine acceptance		
Trust in authorities		

RESEARCH ARTICLE | PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COGNITIVE SCIENCES | OPEN ACCESS 

Transparent communication about negative features of COVID-19 vaccines decreases acceptance but increases trust

[Michael Bang Petersen](#), [Alexander Bor](#), [Frederik Jørgensen](#), and [Marie Fly Lindholt](#) [Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

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THE COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE

Empower people with clear advice

&

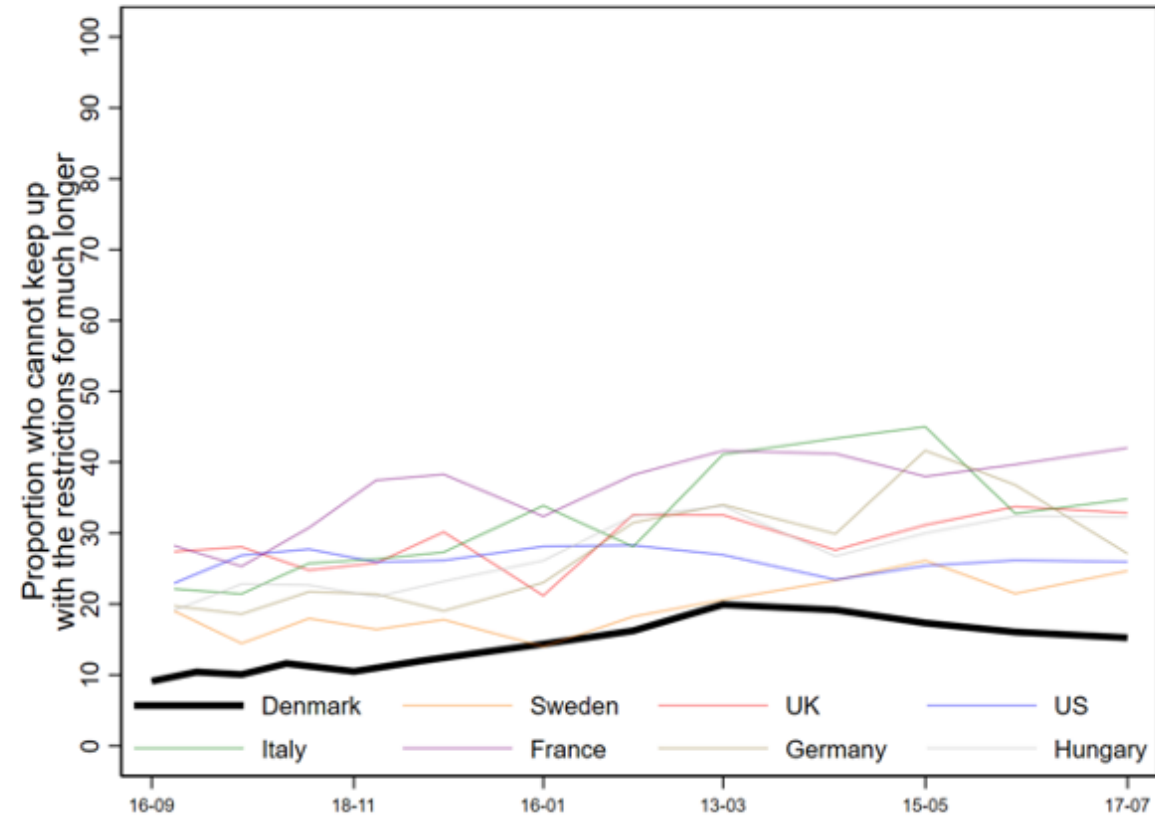
Uphold trust by disclosing
the uncertainty and the trade-offs

WHEN COMMUNICATION FAILS...

INFECTIONS GO UP

"PANDEMIC FATIGUE"

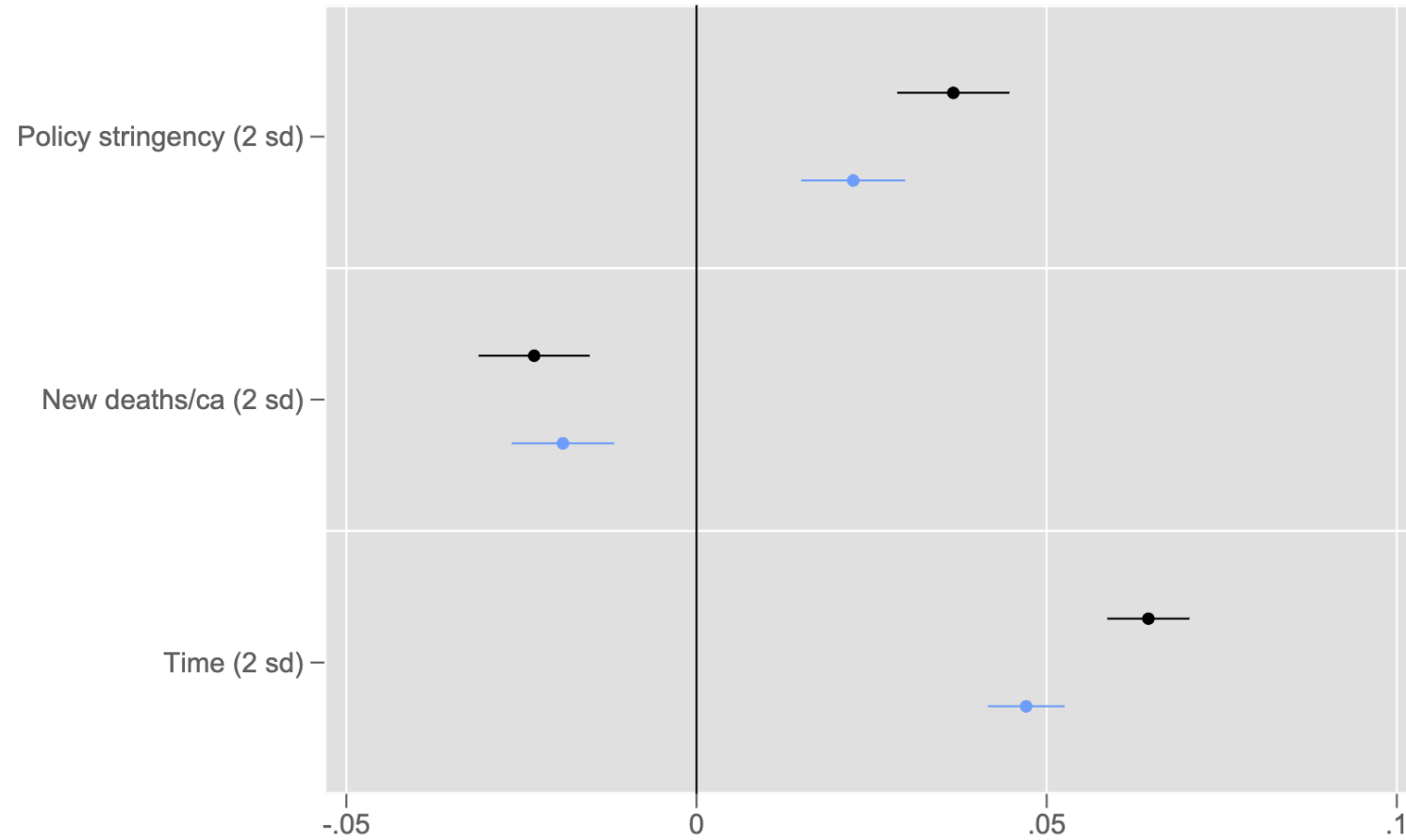
Development in pandemic fatigue by country



Note: $N = 49,414$. The figure illustrates the development in the proportion who answered "Completely agree" or "Somewhat agree" to the following question: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I do not think I can keep up with the restrictions against the coronavirus for much longer" by country.

Source:
Jørgensen et al., under review

"PANDEMIC FATIGUE"



● Baseline ● Additional controls

Source:
Jørgensen et al., under review

THE EFFECTS OF FATIGUE: POLARIZATION

1. Lowered trust in the government
2. Lowered trust in pandemic management
3. Increased belief in conspiracy theories
4. Increased support for public protests

ARE MANDATES A SUBSTITUTE FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION?



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THE SHORT ANSWER: "NO"

Legitimate force is designed to deter a minority of free-riders who rationally choose to exploit a cooperative majority (e.g., as exemplified by the criminal law)

Legitimate use of force is premised on successful communication – or polarization increases further

Source:
Andersen et al., 2021

COMMUNICATION IN A CRISIS

1. Research on human behavior and effective communication is essential in a crisis
2. Good crisis communication entails:
 1. Providing clear and empowering advice
 2. Disclosing uncertainty and trade-offs
3. When communication fails, crisis management suffers and polarization erupt
4. The use of force can never replace good communication

HOPE

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