

Wellbeing cost-benefit analysis: a new tool for government policy formation, applied to covid

"The presentation will discuss how wellbeing can be measured to support cost-benefit analyses by modern governments. Interpreting 'Satisfaction with life' as a vote by populations on what they think about the quality of the lives they lead, we can draw upon hundreds of thousands of papers from the last 80 years to inform us on the magnitude of wellbeing effects from different policies. Maximising wellbeing would lead to greater policy weight on mental health, full employment, and warm social relations, with less emphasis on the volume of material goods or physical health. The methodology is illustrated with estimates of the effects of covid policies in the UK, the Netherlands, and Belgium (particularly lockdowns) that have done tremendous harm to the mental health, physical health, economic prosperity, and social life of the population, many times greater than the potential benefits of those policies. This is compared to Sweden."