## CORRESPONDENCE



## Open Schools, Covid-19, and Child and Teacher Morbidity in Sweden

**TO THE EDITOR:** In mid-March 2020, many countries decided to close schools in an attempt to limit the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).<sup>1,2</sup> Sweden was one of the few countries that decided to keep preschools (generally caring for children 1 to 6 years of age) and schools (with children 7 to 16 years of age) open. Here, we present data from Sweden on Covid-19 among children 1 to 16 years of age and their teachers. In Sweden, Covid-19 was prevalent in the community during the spring of 2020.<sup>3</sup> Social distancing was encouraged in Sweden, but wearing face masks was not.<sup>3</sup>

Data on severe Covid-19, as defined by intensive care unit (ICU) admission, were prospectively recorded in the nationwide Swedish intensive care registry. We followed all children who were admitted to an ICU between March 1 and June 30, 2020 (school ended around June 10) with laboratory-verified or clinically verified Covid-19, including patients who were admitted for multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C, which is likely to be related to Covid-19)<sup>4</sup> according to the Swedish Pediatric Rheumatology Quality Register. (More information on the registry and a link to the World Health Organization scientific brief on MIS-C are provided in the Supplementary Appendix, available with the full text of this letter at NEJM.org.) The Stockholm Ethics Review Board approved the study. Informed consent was waived by the review board.

The number of deaths from any cause among the 1,951,905 children in Sweden (as of December 31, 2019) who were 1 to 16 years of age was 65 during the pre–Covid-19 period of November 2019 through February 2020 and 69 during 4 months of exposure to Covid-19 (March through June 2020) (see the Supplementary Appendix). From March through June 2020, a total of 15 children with Covid-19 (including those with MIS-C) were admitted to an ICU (0.77 per 100,000 children in this age group) (Table 1), 4 of whom were 1 to 6 years of age (0.54 per 100,000) and 11 of whom were 7 to 16 years of age (0.90 per 100,000). Four of the children had an underlying chronic coexisting condition (cancer in 2, chronic kidney disease in 1, and hematologic disease in 1). No child with Covid-19 died.

Data from the Public Health Agency of Sweden (published report<sup>5</sup> and personal communication) showed that fewer than 10 preschool

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$M_{1}$ $M_{2}$ <	Table 1	Charact	eristics of the C	Children with C	ovid-19, Inc	cluding Those	Table 1. Characteristics of the Children with Covid-19, Including Those with MIS-C, Admitted to Swedish ICUs in March-June 2020.*	.h–June 2020.*	
PCR      Antibodies        1yrf      F      Negative      Positive      5      10      Systolic BP, 75 to 143 mm Hg; 5aO2, 96%;      Immasivelection        3yr      F      Positive      ND      38      Systolic BP, 75 to 143 mm Hg; 5aO2, 96%;      Immasivelection        3yr      F      Positive      ND      38      Systolic BP, 55 mm Hg; 5aO2, 96%;      Immasivelection        3yr      F      Positive      ND      >1      Systolic BP, 55 mm Hg; 5aO2, 96%;      Immasivelection        3yr      F      Positive      ND      >1      Systolic BP, 55 mm Hg; 5aO2, 96%;      Immasivelection        3yr      F      Positive      ND      >1      Systolic BP, 55 mm Hg; 5aO2, 96%; Istactate, Immasivelection      Immasivelection        3yr      F      Positive      Positive      1      Systolic BP, 151 mm Hg; 5aO2, 99%; Istactate, Immasivelection      Interation        3yr      F      Positive      Positive      1      Systolic BP, 151 mm Hg; 5aO2, 99%; Istactate, Immasivelection      Interation        3yr      F      Positive      Positive      Positive      Positive P, 121 mo      Positi	Age	Sex	SARS-CoV-2	Test Result	Days in ICU†	No. of Admissions	BP and Laboratory Measures at Admission☆	Organ Support	Complications
Jyrf      F      Negative      Positive      S      Systolic BP, 70 nmm Hg; SaO,, 99%, BE, 40.6        3yr      F      Positive      ND      38      3      Systolic BP, 75 nJ 43 mm Hg; SaO,, 99%, BE, -0.1        4yr      F      Positive      ND      38      3      Systolic BP, 87 mm Hg; SaO,, 99%, BE, -0.7        4yr      F      Positive      Positive      3      1      Systolic BP, 83 mm Hg; SaO,, 90%, lactate, 1 antion        3yr      M      Negative      ND      <1      Systolic BP, 83 mm Hg; SaO,, 90%, lactate, 1 antion        3yr      M      Negative      ND      <1      Systolic BP, 93 mm Hg; SaO,, 90%, lactate, 1 mmos/inter        3yr      M      Negative      Positive      Positive      1      Systolic BP, 135 mm Hg; SaO,, 90%, lactate, 1 mmos/inter        3yr      M      Negative      N      Systolic BP, 135 mm Hg; SaO,, 90%, lactate, 1 mmos/inter        3yr      M      Negative      N      N      N      N        3yr      M      N      N      N      N      N      N        3yr      M      N      N			PCR	Antibodies					
$3yr$ FPositiveND383Systolic BP, 75 to 143 mm Hg: SaO_J. 96%;Invasive lation $4yr$ FPositivePositive61Systolic BP, 87 mm Hg: SaO_J. 99%Invasive $4yr$ MNegativePositive31Systolic BP, 83 mm Hg: SaO_J. 99%Invasive $5yr$ MNegativePositive31Systolic BP, 13 mm //iterInvasive $7yr$ MNegativeND<1	1 yr§	ш	Negative	Positive	2	I	Systolic BP, 70 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 99%; BE, +0.6 mmol/liter; lactate, 1.6 mmol/liter	I	MIS-C, septic shock, renal failure
4yrFPositivePositive61Systolic BP, 87 mm Hg: SaO2, 99%: BE, -0.75yrFPositivePositive31Systolic BP, 83 mm Hg: SaO2, 97%: BE, -0.77yrMNegativeND<1	3 yr	ш	Positive	QN	38	ŝ	Systolic BP, 75 to 143 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 96%; lactate, 1.2 mmol/liter	Invasive mechanical venti- lation	Clostridium difficile infection
5ytFPositivePositive $3$ 1Systolic BP, 83 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 93%; BE, -0.7 mmol/liter $7yt$ MNegativeND<1	4 yr	ш	Positive	Positive	9	1	Systolic BP, 87 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 99%	l	MIS-C, renal failure, coagulation disorder
7yrfl      M      Negative      ND      <1      1      Systolic BP, 85 mm Hg, SaO <sub>2</sub> , 97%; Bf0.7 mmol/liter        7yr      F      Positive      35      2      Systolic BP, 15 mmol/liter      Invasive- lation        10yrfs      F      Negative      Positive      35      2      Systolic BP, 95 mm Hg, SaO <sub>2</sub> , 90%; lactate, lation      Invasive- lation        10yrfs      F      Negative      Positive      1      1      Systolic BP, 100 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 90%; lactate, lation      Invasive- lation        12yr      M      Positive      ND      <1	5 yr	ш	Positive	Positive	3	1	Systolic BP, 83 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 98%; BE, –0.7 mmol/liter	I	MIS-C
7yr    F    Positive    35    2    Systolic BP, 115 mm Hg; SaO2, 90%; lactate, linvasive lation      10 yf    F    Negative    Positive    1    1    Systolic BP, 95 mm Hg; SaO2, 99%; lactate, linvasive lation      10 yf    F    Negative    Positive    ND    <1	7 yr¶	Σ	Negative	QN	$^{<1}$	1	Systolic BP, 85 mm Hg, SaO <sub>2</sub> , 97%; BE, –0.7 mmol/liter	I	Iron deficiency, coma, fever
ID Vrf      F      Negative      Positive      1      1      Systolic BP, 95 mm Hg; SaO2, 99%; lactate, 1.1 mmol/liter        12 yr      M      Positive      ND      <1	7 yr	ш	Positive	Positive	35	2	Systolic BP, 115 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 90%; lactate, 0.8; BE, +5 mmol/liter	Invasive mechanical venti- lation, renal replacement therapy	I
12 yrMPositiveND<11Systolic BP, 100 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; BE, -612 yrMPositiveND21——13 yrMPositiveND112Systolic BP, 123 to 137 mm Hg; SaO2, 92%; liter13 yrM13 yrFPositiveND112Systolic BP, 123 to 137 mm Hg; SaO2, 92%; liter14 yr13 yrFPositiveND112Systolic BP, 80 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, lactate, 0.9 mmol/liter; BE, -9 mmol/literIation14 yrMNegativePositive41Systolic BP, 57 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, lactate, 27 mmol/literIation14 yrMPositivePositive41Systolic BP, 57 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, lactate, 27 mmol/literIation16 yrMPositiveND42Systolic BP, 57 mm Hg; SaO2, 93%; lactate, lactate, 27 mmol/liter; BE, -1.5 mmol/literIation16 yrMPositive91———16 yrMNegative91———* Four children had underlying conditions: 2 had cancer, 1 had chronic kidney disease, and 1 had hematologic disease and had to——	10 yr§	ш	Negative	Positive	Г	1	Systolic BP, 95 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 99%; lactate, 1.1 mmol/liter; BE, -1.5 mmol/liter	I	MIS-C, cardiomyopathy
12 yrMPositiveND21——13 yrMPositiveND112Systolic BP, 123 to 137 mm Hg: SaO <sub>2</sub> , 92%; lactate, 0.9 mmol/liter; BE, +3.2 mmol/ liter13 yrFPositiveND112Systolic BP, 123 to 137 mm Hg: SaO <sub>2</sub> , 93%; lactate, liter13 yrFPositivePositive72Systolic BP, 80 mm Hg: SaO <sub>2</sub> , 98%; lactate, literInvasive latton/ liter14 yrMNegativePositive41Systolic BP, 90 to 100 mm Hg: SaO <sub>2</sub> , 98%; lactate, 3.4 mmol/liter; BE, -1.5 mmol/literIatton14 yrMPositiveND42Systolic BP, 90 to 100 mm Hg: SaO <sub>2</sub> , 83%; lactate, 1actate, 2.7 mmol/liter; BE, 44 mmol/liter16 yrMPositive91——16 yrMNegative91——16 yrMNegative91——16 yrMNegativePositive51—* Four children had underlying conditions: 2 had cancer, 1 had chronic kidney disease, and 1 had hematologic disease and had to	12 yr	Σ	Positive	QN	<1	1	Systolic BP, 100 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 98%; BE, –6 mmol/liter	I	I
13 yrMPositiveND112Systolic BP, 123 to 137 mm Hg; SaO2, 92%; lactate, 0.9 mmol/liter; BE, +3.2 mmol/ liter13 yrFPositivePositive72Systolic BP, 80 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, a.7 mmol/liter; BE, -9 mmol/literInvasive- lation14 yrMNegativePositive41Systolic BP, 57 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, a.7 mmol/liter; BE, -9 mmol/literIation14 yrMNegativePositive41Systolic BP, 90 to 100 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, attaton16 yrMPositivePositive9116 yrMNegative91* Four children had underlying conditions: 2 had cancer, 1 had chronic kidney disease, and 1 had hematologic disease and had to	12 yr	Σ	Positive	ΟN	2	1	I	Ι	Viral pneumonia
13 yr    F    Positive    7    2    Systolic BP, 80 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, lation      14 yr    M    Negative    Positive    4    1    Systolic BP, 57 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, lation      14 yr    M    Negative    Positive    4    1    Systolic BP, 90 to 100 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, lation      14 yr    M    Positive    ND    4    2    Systolic BP, 90 to 100 mm Hg; SaO2, 98%; lactate, lation      16 yr    M    Positive    9    1    -1.5 mmol/liter    lation      16 yr    M    Positive    9    1    -1.5 mmol/liter    lation      16 yr    M    Negative    Positive    9    1    -1.5    1	13 yr	Σ	Positive	ND	11	2	Systolic BP, 123 to 137 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 92%; lactate, 0.9 mmol/liter; BE, +3.2 mmol/ liter	I	I
14 yr M  Negative  Positive  4  1  Systolic BP, 57 mm Hg; SaO_3, 98%; lactate, 3.4 mmol/liter    14 yr  M  Positive  ND  4  2  Systolic BP, 90 to 100 mm Hg; SaO_3, 83%; Invasive lactate, 2.7 mmol/liter; BE, 44 mmol/liter    16 yr  M  Positive  9  1     16 yr  M  Negative  9  1	13 yr	ш	Positive	Positive	٢	2	Systolic BP, 80 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 98%; lactate, 3.7 mmol/liter; BE, –9 mmol/liter	Invasive mechanical venti- lation	MIS-C, heart failure
14 yr  M  Positive  ND  4  2  Systolic BP, 90 to 100 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 83%; Invasive lactate, 2.7 mmol/liter, BE, +4 mmol/liter    16 yr  M  Positive  9  1     16 yr  M  Negative  9  1	14 yr§	Σ	Negative	Positive	4	1	Systolic BP, 57 mm Hg: SaO <sub>2</sub> , 98%; lactate, 3.4 mmol/liter; BE, -1.5 mmol/liter	I	MIS-C, myocarditis, sepsis
16 yr    M    Positive    Positive    9    1    —      16 yr    M    Negative    Positive    5    1    —    —      * Four children had underlying conditions: 2 had cancer, 1 had chronic kidney disease, and 1 had hematologic disease and had it    1    1    1	14 yr	Σ	Positive	ND	4	2	Systolic BP, 90 to 100 mm Hg; SaO <sub>2</sub> , 83%; lactate, 2.7 mmol/liter; BE, +4 mmol/liter	Invasive mechanical venti- lation	I
16 yr1  M  Negative  5  1    * Four children had underlying conditions: 2 had cancer, 1 had chronic kidney disease, and 1 had hematologic disease and had it	16 yr	Σ	Positive	Positive	6	1	I	I	I
* Four children had underlying conditions: 2 had cancer, 1 had chronic kidney disease, and 1 had hematologic disease and had i	16 yr¶	Σ	Negative	Positive	5	1	I	Ι	MIS-C, myocarditis with heart failure
ditional conditions: 1 had alcohol intoxication, and 1 had sustained a traumatic injury; coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) was diagnosed in these 2 children only when they underwent screening for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in the intensive care unit (ICU) (they fid not have Covid-19 symptoms). BE denotes base excess, BP blood	* Four ch ditional screenii	ildren ha conditio	ad underlying c ins: 1 had alcol vere acute resp	conditions: 2 hé hol intoxicatior biratory syndror	ad cancer, l 1, and l hac me coronav	l had chronic k d sustained a t virus 2 (SARS-C	idney disease, and 1 had hematologic disease raumatic injury; coronavirus disease 2019 (Co 20V-2) in the intrasive care unit (ICU) (they di	and had undergone stem-cell vid-19) was diagnosed in these d not have Covid-19 symptoms	transplantation. Two children had ad 2 children only when they underwen s). BE denotes base excess, BP blood

For patients with multiple admissions, the most aberrant value is reported. The patient was identified through the presence of MIS-C according to the Swedish Pediatric Rheumatology Quality Register. Covid-19 was not diagnosed during ICU care, but the re-

sults of subsequent antibody testing were positive. Covid-19 was diagnosed clinically (i.e., SARS-CoV-2 was not detected during the ICU admission).

For patients with multiple admissions, the total duration is reported.

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teachers and 20 schoolteachers in Sweden received intensive care for Covid-19 up until June 30, 2020 (20 per 103,596 schoolteachers, which is equal to 19 per 100,000). As compared with other occupations (excluding health care workers), this corresponded to sex- and age-adjusted relative risks of 1.10 (95% confidence interval [CI], 0.49 to 2.49) among preschool teachers and 0.43 (95% CI, 0.28 to 0.68) among schoolteachers (see the Supplementary Appendix).

The present study had some limitations. We lacked data on household transmission of Covid-19 from schoolchildren, and the 95% confidence intervals for our results are wide.

Despite Sweden's having kept schools and preschools open, we found a low incidence of severe Covid-19 among schoolchildren and children of preschool age during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Among the 1.95 million children who were 1 to 16 years of age, 15 children had Covid-19, MIS-C, or both conditions and were admitted to an ICU, which is equal to 1 child in 130,000.

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Disclosure forms provided by the authors are available with the full text of this letter at NEJM.org.

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## Duration of Culturable SARS-CoV-2 in Hospitalized Patients with Covid-19

**TO THE EDITOR:** The duration of transmissibility of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) and the associated level of contagion have been uncertain. We cultured severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in serial respiratory samples obtained from hospitalized patients with Covid-19 to assess the duration of shedding of viable virus.

The data reported here represent all the patients with Covid-19, as confirmed by positive real-time reverse transcriptase–polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing, who were hospitalized at Chung-Ang University Hospital in Seoul, South Korea, between February and June 2020. The Allplex 2019-nCoV Assay (Seegene) for nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal samples was used for real-time RT-PCR testing.<sup>1</sup> Patients were isolated until two consecutive negative or inconclusive results on real-time RT-PCR were documented, at least 24 hours apart.<sup>2,3</sup> We endeavored to obtain samples at approximately 2-day intervals, but this was not always possible. Viral RNA was quantitated with the use of the cycle-threshold value for the N gene of SARS-CoV-2.<sup>4</sup> Viral cultures were conducted by means of a plaque assay until at least two consecutive cultures showed no growth.

We compared the time from the onset of illness to viral clearance in culture with the time to clearance in real-time RT-PCR tests.<sup>5</sup> Detailed methods and sensitivities of the culture and realtime RT-PCR assay and the definition and estimation of the time to viral clearance are described in the Supplementary Appendix, available with the full text of this letter at NEJM.org.

A total of 21 patients with Covid-19 were enrolled. Their clinical characteristics are shown in Table S1 in the Supplementary Appendix. The

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