Review of: "Real-World Efficacy of N95, Surgical, and Cloth Masks in Mitigating SARS-CoV-2 Respiratory Infections: A Comprehensive Comparative Study"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The manuscript is well-written and on an important topic.

In the abstract and conclusions of the manuscript, it is stated “it is important to note that even cloth masks provided a significant level of protection compared to no mask usage.” I am not sure how you can conclude this when you did not have a group that wore no mask. According to your design, you compared people wearing an N95 to people wearing surgical or cloth masks. You did not have a group who wore no mask.

When was the study conducted? This is important because variants of COVID have different levels of transmissibility and infection.

Did you supply the masks to the participants? If so, please provide details on the manufacturer of the masks, and especially describe the cloth masks that were given out, because (as you mention) they vary widely in quality.

It is stated ethical guidelines were followed. Please indicate whether participants signed a consent form.

Your formula for cumulative number of infections is Cumulative number of infections = (Number of infections divided by number of subjects) x 1000. You then state the number of subjects is equal to 1000. If you reduce this formula, it is essentially Cumulative number of infections = Number of infections (because you divide by 1000 and then multiply by 1000). Is this what you intended with your formula?

Did you collect demographic data on your participants? It would be interesting to see your participants’ age, height, weight, and sex, with a comparison between your different groups.

In your results graphs, how can you have a fraction of an infection? Shouldn’t the number plotted according to the y-axis always be a whole number? Again, perhaps I am misunderstanding your formula.

I suggest deleting Figures 1-3 because these are redundant with Figure 4. I recommend bolding the colored lines on the graph in Figure 4, so they can be more easily seen.