

Review of: "A Multi-factor Model of COVID-19 Epidemic in California"

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Potential competing interests: Employee of Amgen Inc.

The paper presents an ecological analysis of the associations between various area characteristics and the cumulative incidence of COVID-19. The study has various overarching limitations.

1. The severity, contagion, perceived public risk, state and national level policies etc. have varied drastically over time. Combining the entire time period for analysis is not very informative.
2. The relevance of ecological studies on the spread of COVID-19 has greatly diminished. The perceived risk of COVID-19 pandemic has reduced considerably. Public health focus has moved away from COVID-19.
3. Various other studies have explored similar research questions at the national level with a more robust analysis and using a theoretical framework. The present study does not sufficiently add to the general body of knowledge.
4. There are design and analytical issues with the presented approach such as using raw numbers instead of rates for reporting, limited choice of explanatory variables, inappropriate choice of regression models.
5. The current presentation of the study is an exploratory report at best and not a manuscript.