

The “Legal Epidemiology” of Pandemic Control

“The centrality of law as a public health intervention has been undeniable during the Covid-19 pandemic. In just the first half of 2020, more than 1000 laws and orders were issued by federal, state, and local authorities in the United States in an effort to reduce disease transmission,” discuss Scott Burris, J.D., Evan D. Anderson, J.D., Ph.D., and Alexander C. Wagenaar, M.S.W., Ph.D. in *The New England Journal of Medicine’s Perspective*.

“Legal interventions include stay-at-home orders, mask mandates, and travel restrictions, as well as more particular rules for business operations, alcohol sales, curfews, and health care. Given their heavy use, importance, and obvious socioeconomic side effects, and the social and behavioral complexities of their implementation, one might have expected the National Institutes of Health (NIH), other research funders, and the research community to jump to the work of determining the right mix, intensity, and enforcement approaches of legal restrictions to control transmission with the least and most equitably distributed harms.”

Read the article.