

## **CAN WE RESIST DISEASE MONGERING CAMPAIGNS?**

**YES, WE CAN.<sup>1</sup>**

### **SPANISH COUNTER-CAMPAIGN AGAINST HEALTH AUTHORITIES (WHO, AND NATIONALS) DISEASE MONGERING SWINE FLU, 2009-10 AS AN EXAMPLE.**

Juan Gervas, GP, PhD, Equipo CESCA (Madrid, Spain). Honorary professor Public Health, Autonomous University (Madrid) and Visiting professor International Health, National School of Public Health (Madrid).

Spain has successfully resisted the global swine flu disease mongering exercise done by WHO and national governments. An indicator: for 47 millions inhabitants only 3 millions swine flu vaccines were used (the government planned to buy 37 millions and bought finally 13 millions, so 10 millions vaccines are the expression of the popular reaction against the disease mongering campaign). Mortality was lower than with seasonal flu, of only 271, in line with mortality in the European Union (400 millions inhabitants, 2876 cases).

Spain was the first country in the world where physicians have joined a "common sense, self-control and science" policy concerning swine flu. The movement started 2009 August 10 with the distribution of a short summary of the evidence from the Austral winter, a review done by myself with data from 2009 May, June and July (from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Uruguay and New Zealand). The evidence was clear: swine flu kills much less than seasonal flu.

The Spanish Medical Association (representing all Spanish physicians, which amount to around 200,000) joined the position later on and by the end of 2009 August, 40 Spanish blogs (well known blogs belonging to healthcare professionals, which promote Evidence Based Medicine) had joined forces to promote a "common sense" position regarding swine flu through a coordinated action that started on 2009 September 2. This means that all of these blogs published the same post simultaneously, and many more (around 200) have joined the cause later on.

Other important scientific organizations supported the movement of "common sense" as well, such as the Spanish Society of Public Health and Health Administration, the Spanish Association of Family Physicians and the Spanish Association of Paediatricians.

---

<sup>1</sup> This text is licensed under [Creative Commons by-nc-sa 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/), so you can remix, tweak, and build upon it non-commercially, as long as you credit the author and license your new creations under the identical terms ([complete license text](#)).

The initiative have great impact in the Spanish media (TV, newspapers, magazines, radio) and in social Internet networks and Internet groups.

It was important to raise awareness of the common sense position and reach out to society, in order to counter the campaign of panic, hype and disease mongering that WHO, national politicians, media and even corporate interests convey .

Swine flu was a milder disease than seasonal flu and we knew it with empirical data from 2009 July. This means that the enforcement of strict protocols (with its paraphernalia of astronaut-like suits and isolation areas, use of antivirals, mass swine flu vaccination) and of measures such as closing down schools and universities and mandatory sickness absent for pregnant women were absurd and reveals lack of common sense, lack of self-control and lack of scientific foundations. The diversion of financial resources towards a minor problem is potentially damaging, because it drains the energy of the health system, and neglects all other important health problems that will continue to afflict society.

The “common sense” movement have no a definitive position about the effectiveness of swine flu vaccine (which was strongly opposed by myself, because lack of scientific evidence).

At the end of the swine flu, in 2010 August, neither WHO nor national authorities did an analytical exercise of errors in the management of the epidemic. With its attitude they reassure us that the errors were not errors but a world disease mongering campaign.

As usual, we lack randomized clinical trials which will help in deciding about the effectiveness of flu vaccines.

We can profit the Spanish example to learn about how to resist disease mongering campaign. The attached power-point presentation summarize the key points.

**To know more, please visit [www.equipocesca.org](http://www.equipocesca.org)**

Gérvas J. Disease mongering by WHO. BMJ. 2009 [letter]  
[http://www.bmj.com/cgi/eletters/339/aug10\\_1/b3172](http://www.bmj.com/cgi/eletters/339/aug10_1/b3172)

Gérvas J. In the face of swine flu, common sense and science. Healthy Skepticism News. <http://www.healthyskepticism.org/news/2009/Oct09.php>

Villanueva T, Gérvas J. Spain and swine flu. CMJA. 2009 [letter]  
<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/181/6-7/E102#184176>

Gérvás J, Wright J. Future of flu vaccines: Please, may we have a RTC now? BMJ;2009;339:b4651. <http://www.bmj.com/content/339/bmj.b4651.extract?sid=58c64d1e-5687-4475-b88d-166cb38fe802>