

Censorship at Social Science Research Network (SSRN) You Be the Juidge

Updated: 4/22/24

In April of 2024, I completed a working paper called “The Risk Management of Covid: Lessons from Financial Economics and Financial Risk Management.” The abstract is provided below and the paper can be downloaded here on my main web site, where you got this document.

The United States had one of the worst outcomes in the management of COVID-19 risk, with a death rate in the 94th percentile of all countries. Setting aside the obvious politicized nature of COVID-19 public health recommendations and mandates, we argue that best practices in financial risk management provide parallels that could have served as valuable guidance. We demonstrate here that considerable signals were missed that would have required very little effort and would have been consistent with sound risk management. We also identify examples of misleading information such as that COVID-19 was particularly hard on the elderly. The data actually show that it had a much greater marginal impact on those not elderly. We show here that financial economists and risk managers have a strong knowledge base of how to process vast quantities of data to distinguish signals from noise and have much to teach the public health establishment.

On April 5 2024 I submitted this paper to the Social Science Research Network, commonly known as SSRN, which has refused to publish it. Now, let’s be clear. SSRN does not engage in the editorial process nor does it provide any peer reviewing. Its objective is to get research papers out on the internet and available for discourse and review by others. I am sure you all know that many poor papers and others that are too early for public release are commonly found on SSRN. Caveat emptor is applicable here.

I have never received a rejection, nor have I ever heard of a rejection of anyone else.

Until now.

At the end of the submission process, I received an Abstract ID of 4785830.

On April 8, I received an email stating the following:

The SSRN Processing Team has added the following comment to your submission, The Risk Management of COVID-19: Lessons from Financial Economics and Financial Risk Management (Abstract ID 4785830):

Before SSRN can complete the medical process, we require additional information. While we await your response, your paper will be temporarily removed from public view. CORRESPONDING AUTHOR, please reply to this email with a simple statement for the following: Funding Information, Competing Interest Declaration.

On Thursday, April 8, I submitted the following:

I'm not sure I understand what you're asking for but I will give it a try.

No funding was provided by any entity.

There are no conflicts of or competing interests.

On April 8, I received the following reply:

Dear Don,

Thank you for providing the requested information. We have passed the information over to SSRN's Medical Team for final review.

Kind regards,

*Ernestine Folts-Offutt
Customer Service Representative
ELSEVIER*

On Thursday, April 18, I received the following email:

The SSRN Processing Team has added the following comment to your submission, [The Risk Management of COVID-19: Lessons from Financial Economics and Financial Risk Management \(Abstract ID 4785830\)](#):

Thank you for your recent submission to SSRN. Given the need to be cautious about posting medical content, SSRN is selective on the papers we post. Unfortunately, your paper has not been accepted for posting on SSRN. For further information on Medical Papers and SSRN please visit:

https://service.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/35608/supporthub/ssrn/p/16539/

Unfortunately? Is it a random occurrence that I have perhaps been censored?

My paper is not a medical paper. It is a paper that analyzes statistical data. It does not give medical advice. Clicking on their link defines a medical or health care study. A review of SSRN's guidelines for medical and health care studies at the above link seems to suggest that they are treating this paper like a clinical study that has not met the guidelines of clinical studies.

Perhaps if my study were funded by Big Pharma, which we all know biases the results even when conflicts of interest are disclosed, they might have published it.

It is not a medical study. It is a review of the risk management practices that demonstrates the parallels with those in finance. It is for sure critical of the public health folks.

Is this censorship? Let me know? Being a strong supporter of open and honest debate, all opinions are welcomed. We may not agree, but I am not afraid of your opinion. I do not respect the opinions of those who suppress the opinions of others.