

# PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND COVID-19

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## FOLLOWING COVID-19

### FOCUSING ON PREPAREDNESS

The COVID-19 crisis affords us a unique opportunity to study pandemic preparedness, including the dynamics and unfolding of preparedness plans and their implementation through the response stage.

Increasingly more states face rising internal tensions, complicating the handling of health crises and creating additional challenges.

Disparities in COVID-19 morbidity and mortality rates were observed in underserved social groups in Sweden, the USA, and the UK.

While not responsible for the underlying social and economical disparities across societies, COVID-19 has brought to bear all these difficulties and heightened their ramifications and associated vulnerabilities.

Robust preparedness measures and a strong policy infrastructure for comprehensive preparedness planning and response are crucial for handling complex events, minimising harm and reducing risk.



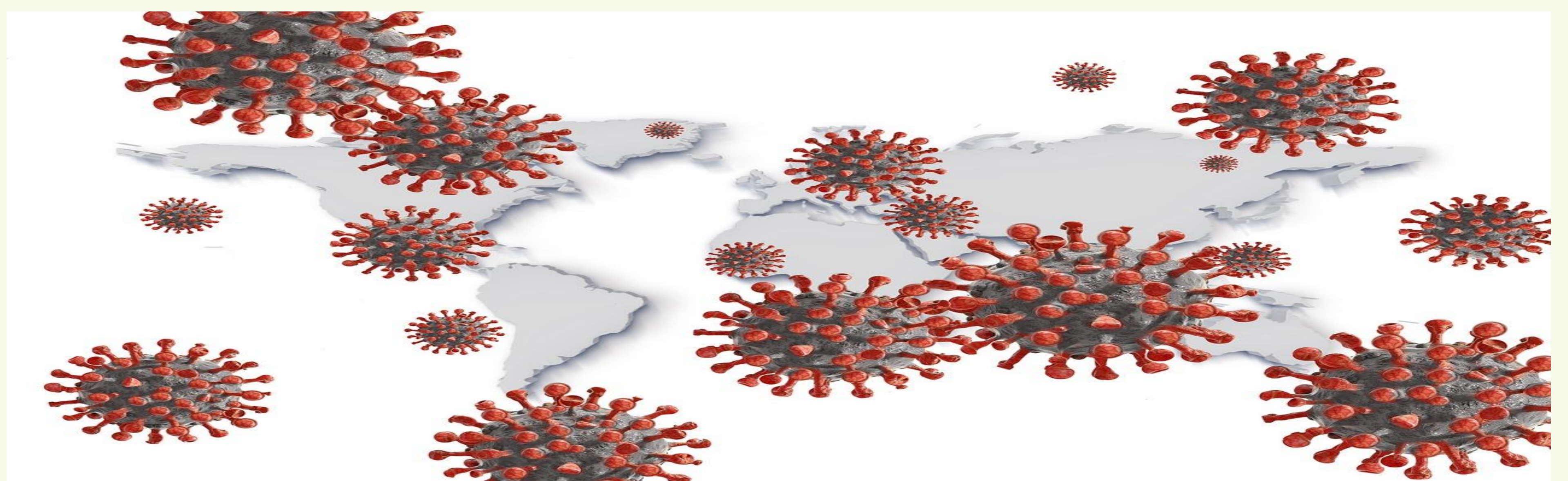
Age, race, and poverty meet Covid, Signe Wilkinson

## ISRAEL AS A TEST CASE

Israel is a good test-case for improving future pandemic preparedness for several reasons:

- Operates an advanced healthcare system
- The government collects high-quality data
- There are distinct social groups with marked differences

Quantitative data clearly shows different health outcomes among distinct social groups (Arab population, ultra-Orthodox Jewish population, non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish population).



## ISRAEL'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

Israel's response relied on pandemic preparedness plans composed by the Israeli Ministry of Health.

While the different social groups in Israel and their characteristics are well known, the plans did not address societal differences.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### Research Hypothesis:

Omissions from emergency pandemic planning contributed to sub-optimal functioning during the pandemic response.

### Research Questions:

Can we trace failures of pandemic response in Israel to omissions in the preparedness plans?

If found, why were these factors, revealed with the benefit of hindsight, missing from the pandemic preparedness plans?

### Significance

The study seeks to harness the power of a robust and comprehensive evidence-base to promote a more inclusive preparedness policy, thus contributing to the creation of a more resilient and well-prepared society.

## AIM AND METHODOLOGY

The proposed study aims to:

- Qualitatively assess the lack of attention to societal challenges in the preparedness plan
- Integrate findings with health outcome data in the different social groups
- Explore how societal differences might have been addressed

Quantitative data on sectoral differences provides an evidence-base for a series of interviews.

Following ethical approval, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with members of each committee involved in crafting Israel's pandemic preparedness in order to gain a deeper understanding of how preparedness plans are composed and gain insight into the related thought-process.