

Despite Paul Thacker's inexplicable insistence in making false claims about my role in clarifying the findings from the Cochrane review evaluating interventions to recommend masks — crucially, not whether masks work or not, as widely misunderstood — nothing has changed regardless of whether or not Cochrane review authors update their summary to prevent widespread misunderstandings of what their review concluded, which was simply that they were unable to arrive at a definite conclusion about the outcome of mask recommendations, an unsurprising result given the limited number of studies they chose to include, which greatly differed from the pre-pandemic reviews from the same authors on the same topic, which used a wider range of studies and concluded masks help prevent the spread of respiratory illness, and the fact that very few of the studies they chose to include in this latest round had cohorts that actually wore masks as recommended.

I merely helped clarified this basic misunderstanding after seeing it propagated widely, and multiple co-authors of that review as well as the editor-in-chief of Cochrane agreed with my attempts to correct this misinterpretation, and I quoted two of them in my article.

My effort to help correct the misrepresentation of the relatively limited findings of the review of the results of community interventions to recommend masks remains valid and correct, as attested by multiple co-authors of the review, since my clarification was based on the actual review and not whether or not the summary is eventually updated to make it harder to misinterpret it. I've nothing to do with that process which doesn't change the fact that my own clarifications remain correct, valid and supported by multiple co-authors of that very review.

If Paul Thacker has other studies he'd like to point to or disagree with various findings, he is welcome to do so without making false claims about either my own role in clarifying the findings of the Cochrane review or the actual findings of the review itself. If his complaint is that we should have more higher quality studies in the community, I'd be the first to point for that need, but that simply doesn't allow one to make up results and findings that don't exist.