Since January 2020 Elsevier has created a COVID-19 resource centre with free information in English and Mandarin on the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The COVID-19 resource centre is hosted on Elsevier Connect, the company's public news and information website.

Brazil's COVID-19 response

It was disappointing to read the Editorial[1] about Brazil's response to COVID-19, criticising the Brazilian president who "discourag[ed] the sensible measures of physical distancing and lockdown". Yes, he insisted that lockdown is ineffective and terrible for the economy.

Evidence suggests that he was right. A European study concluded that lockdown might not have saved lives.[2] A Brazilian study found that a 1·0% increase in unemployment rate was associated with a 0·5% increase in all-cause mortality.[3] The expected rate of unemployment (23%) would cause 120 000 deaths in Brazil, according to the authors' projections.[3] Therefore, the Brazilian Government implemented protective measures; distributed US$5·6 billion to the cities, states, and directly to the population through an emergency salvage salary; created intensive care unit beds; and delivered protective equipment and ventilators. Does this response show a "vacuum of political actions"?[1]

The the time of writing, Brazil is doing better than the UK in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Population-adjusted COVID-19 cases, deaths, and case-fatality rates are much higher in the UK than in Brazil. *The Lancet* should criticise their own country, before criticising ours.

We feel that bias has abounded during Richard Horton's editorship, including the MMR vaccine imbroglio[4] (putting children's lives at risk) and the incendiary Correspondence about the situation in Gaza.[5] *The Lancet* praised the Chinese response to the COVID-19 pandemic, even after China was accused of covering up the initial spread and human-to-human transmission of COVID-19. *The Lancet* was harsher with Brazil, suggesting that we should eject the president from his chair.

We have disregarded your misinforming Editorial,[1] which we feel is clearly biased against our right-wing government. Unfortunately, *The Lancet* has published nothing against the Brazilian left-wing government, which prioritised football stadiums over hospitals.

As Brazilian physicians, we give you a clear answer: the Editor of *The Lancet* must abandon political bias, retract the Editorial,[1] and focus on science, or else he "must be the next to go".[1]

We declare no competing interests. Signatories of this Correspondence are listed in the appendix.

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1 The Lancet. COVID-19 in Brazil: "So what?". *Lancet* 2020; **395:** 1461.
2 Meunier T. Full lockdown policies in western Europe countries have no evident impacts on the COVID-19 epidemic. *MedRxiv* 2020; published online May 1. https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.04.24.20078717 (preprint).
3 Hone T, Mirelman AJ, Rasella D, et al. Effect of economic recession and impact of health and social protection expenditures on adult mortality: a longitudinal analysis of 5565 Brazilian municipalities. *Lancet Glob Health* 2019; **7:** e1575–83.
4 Eggertson L. *Lancet* retracts 12-year-old article linking autism to MMR vaccines. *CMAJ 2010:* **182:** E199–200.
5 Manduca P, Chalmers I, Summerfield D, Gilbert M, Ang S. An open letter for the people in Gaza. *Lancet* 2014: **384:** 397–98.

See **Online** for appendix