

# BACKGROUND

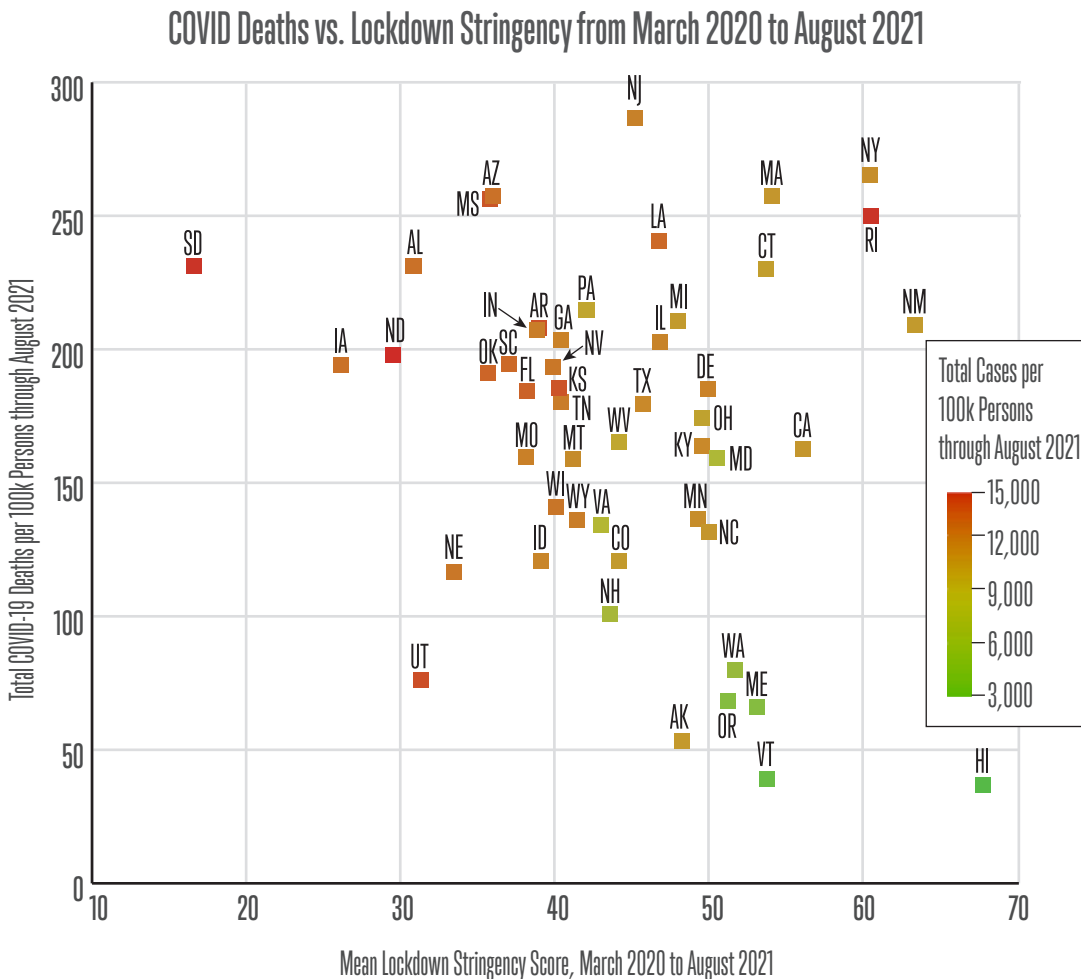
## State Policies and COVID-19 Mortality

The onset of the coronavirus pandemic prompted a wide variety of responses by U.S. state governments to protect public health, with some states imposing little to no economic restrictions to contain the spread of the virus and others implementing lockdown measures such as stay-at-home orders and business closures. Our research examines the secondary economic, health, and social effects of these policy reactions rather than evaluating how well they served their

primary purpose of reducing COVID-19 cases and fatalities. However, a brief discussion of the relationship between social distancing measures and COVID-19 mortality in each state provides useful context for the analysis to follow.

We found that economic restrictions have not been effective in limiting coronavirus deaths. There is no statistically significant relationship between degree of lockdown and COVID-19 death rates. Figure 1 displays each state's cumulative mortality rate from COVID-19, or the total number

**Figure 1: Variation in COVID-19 mortality rates versus variation in states' average level of lockdown stringency during the pandemic.**



There is no statistically significant relationship between degree of lockdown and COVID-19 death rates.

NOTE: For information on data sources and computation of metrics, see Appendix A.