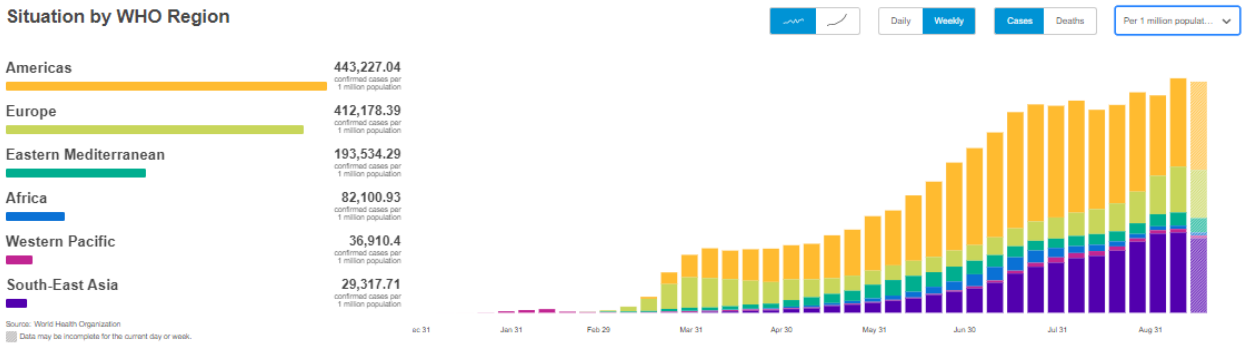
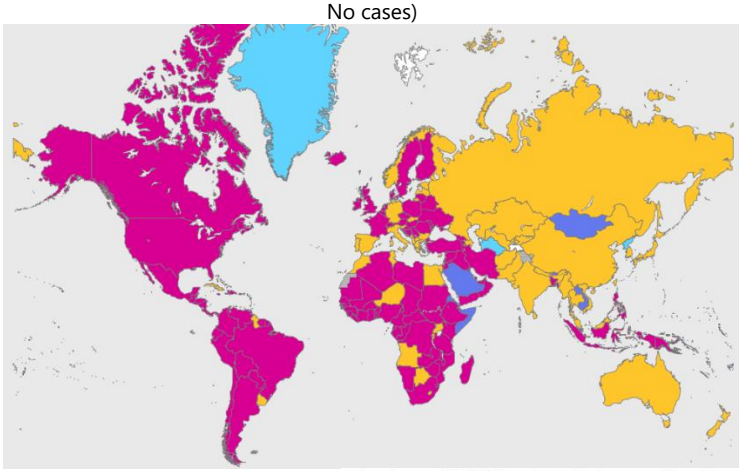
COVID-19 Update 20-26 September 2020

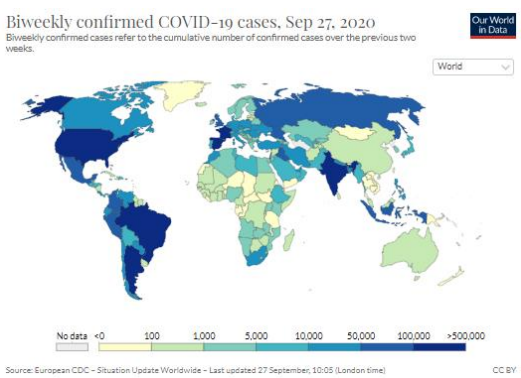
Over 32.7 million cases confirmed and reported, with **over 991 thousand deaths** reported to date (unofficially over 33.3 million cases and *over 1 million deaths*, over 7.6 million active cases and over 24.6 million recovered). India, The US, and Brazil are reporting the highest daily incidences in death, with India reporting over 1,000 deaths/ day in the past 24 hours. **India, the United States, Brazil, France, Argentina, reporting the highest daily increases**, all reporting above 10,000 newly confirmed cases in the past 24 hours.[1] **The highest number of new cases were reported last week since the epidemic began, representing a 6% increase** compared to the previous week. A 10% decrease in the number of deaths was observed from the previous week globally.

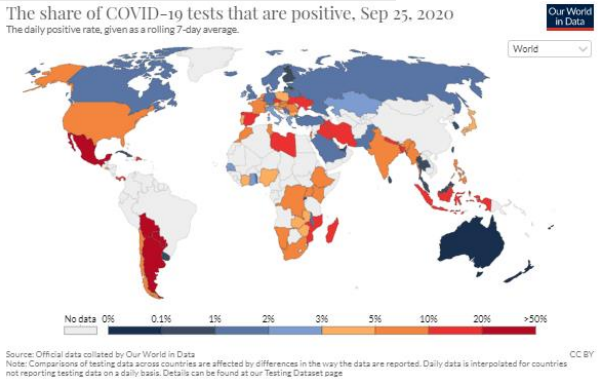
Weekly cases per 1 million population (WHO), IFRC Membership Operational updates available on the Go platform



Below Left Map by Transmission Classification (Pink=Community Transmission, Yellow= Clusters, Purple= Sporatic Cases, Blue= No cases)







[1] *Official numbers and WHO visualizations available here*

News / Political Context

- Countries with **highest reported new cases per 1 million daily increases** [2]:
    1. ***Israel: 1,366 per million population***
    2. Guam (US territory): 402
    3. Montenegro: 374
    4. Aruba: 309
    5. Bahrain: 287
    6. Argentina: 249
    7. Costa Rica: 242
    8. Gibraltar (UK territory): 238
    9. France: 221
    10. Moldova: 215
    11. Lebanon: 188
    12. Czechia: 185

**Only Czechia, France, Moldova and Argentina has the recommended 5 hospital beds per 1,000 population*

- Daily confirmed deaths increasing most rapidly in **French Polynesia**, **Myanmar**, **Jamaica, Jordan, Tunisia, Malta.**[3] Total Deaths per 1 million population highest in San Marino and Peru (reporting more than 950 per million population and rising).
- Cases doubling rapidly in **Bonaire Sint Eustatius and Saba** (6 days), **Myanmar** (8 days), **Jordan** (10 days), **Georgia** (12 days), **Curacao** (12 days), **Tunisia (12 days)**.[4]
- 4 Countries are reporting **test positivity greater than 30%: Argentina** (51.6%), **Mexico** (47.4%), **Oman** (38.9%)*, and **Bolivia** (32.5%), and all of these countries are seeing an increase in reported cases, meaning that they are not reaching sufficient testing capacity.
- Use of dogs in Helsinki and Dubai airports to sniff out COVID-19, and have been found to be over 90% accurate.[5]
- **Asia Pacific Region:**
    - Asia represents the second most affected region. WHO South-East Asia Region currently accounting for 35% and 25% of cases and deaths, respectively, newly reported globally in the past seven days
    - The countries reporting the **highest number of new cases continue to be India, Indonesia and Bangladesh**, while Myanmar and Nepal showed the highest increase in new cases in the past seven days.
    - China has started to lower restrictions into the country
    - Western Pacific Region continues to show the lowest cumulative cases, accounting for less than 2% of global cases and less than 1.5% of all deaths

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[2] Our World in Data Incidence

[3] https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus

[4] Reference to ECDC data using https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus

[5] Washington Post, Reuters

Figure 7: Number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported weekly by the WHO South-East Asia Region, as of 20 September 2020**

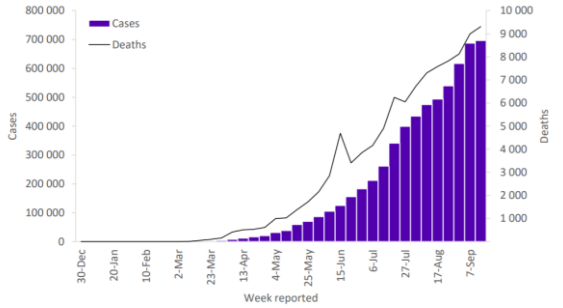
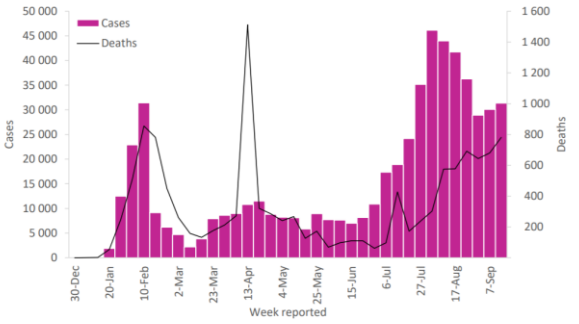


Figure 8: Number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported weekly by the WHO Western Pacific Region, data as of 20 September 2020**



- **European Region:**
  - Notification rate has been increasing for 63 days (14-day case notification rate is 94 per 100,000)
  - High levels, or sustained increases were notable in 20 countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK[6]
  - Europe has seen a 27% increase in deaths compared to the past 7 days[7]

14-day COVID-19 case notification rate per 100 000, weeks 37-38

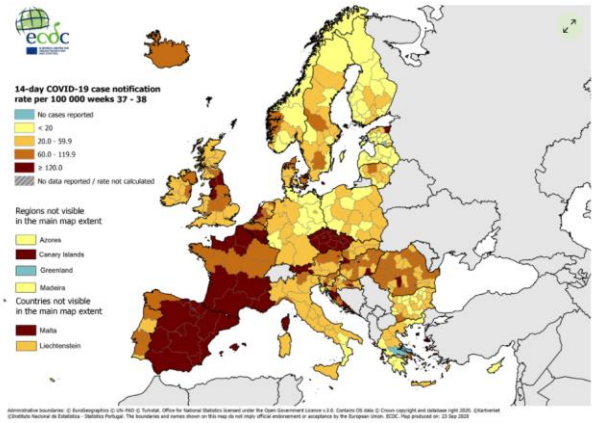
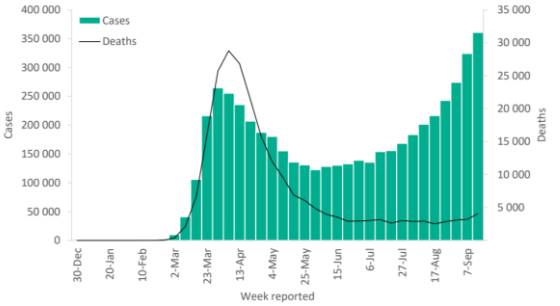


Figure 6: Number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported weekly by the WHO European Region, as of 20 September 2020**

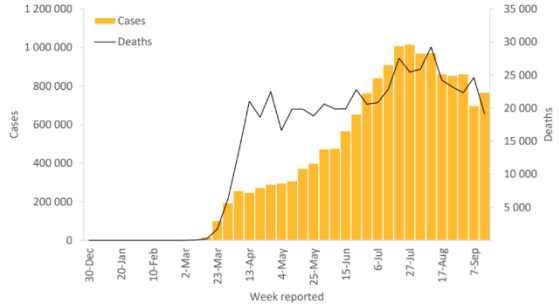


- **Americas Region**
  - Americas region represents over 38% of new cases for the previous week – and still the leading region in the most newly reported cases.
  - The region has experienced a 22% decrease in deaths over the past 7 days
  - Thirty-two out of the 48 affected countries and territories in the Region report **community transmission**, while only eight report sporadic transmission.
  - The countries reporting the **highest numbers of new cases** in the past week include the **United States of America, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia**.
  - **Test positivity rates in Argentina** have **exceeded 40%** in recent weeks

[6] ECDC

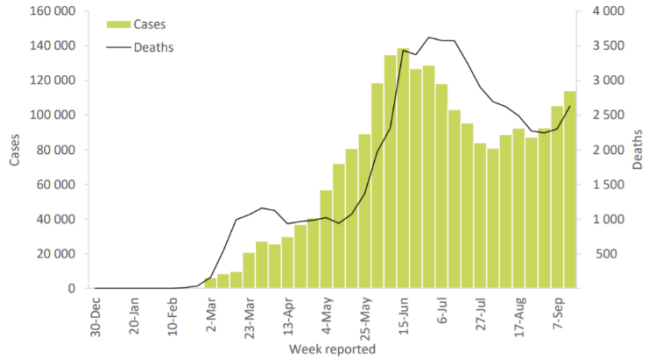
[7] WHO SitRep

Figure 4: Number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported weekly by the WHO Region of the Americas, as of 20 September 2020**



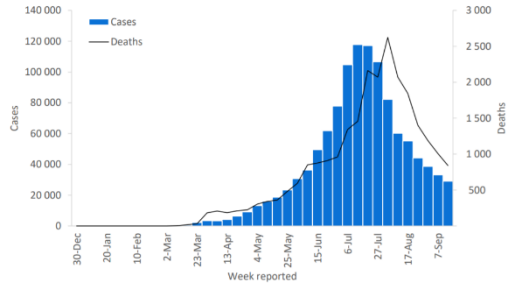
- **MENA Region**
  - The number of cases and deaths reported in the Eastern Mediterranean Region have consistently increased over the last three weeks and have increased by 8% and 14% respectively in the last seven days.
  - The **highest numbers of new cases** were reported by **Iraq, Iran and Morocco**.
  - Jordan, Oman and Tunisia reported the greatest relative increase in cases compared to the previous week.

Figure 5: Number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported weekly by the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, as of 20 September 2020**



- **Africa Region**
  - Was the only region to report declining new cases for the previous week
  - **South Africa continues to report the highest number of new cases and new deaths**, followed by Ethiopia, Algeria and Mozambique.
  - Notably, 35 of 49 affected countries/territories/areas in the Region continue to report ongoing **community transmission**

Figure 3: Number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported weekly by the WHO African Region, as of 20 September 2020**



Recent Research/ Evidence

- ***Pre-print study**** of seroprevalence of COVID-19 in 2 Brazil cities from February to August: Sao Paulo and Manaus. **Researchers noted a peak in June in Manaus with 51.8% of samples containing SARS-CoV-2 antibodies with declining immunity noted in July (40%) and August (30.1%).** The researchers argue this shows evidence for increased immunity in locations with high community transmission, and also poses challenges of waning immunity.

- Evidence for COVID-19 transmission:

  Current evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that spreads COVID-19) is most commonly transmitted through *respiratory droplets* (which can enter the mouth, nose and eyes), while the infected person is speaking, sneezing, coughing or singing in close proximity of another (typically 1-2 meters) for a prolonged period of time.[8] Additional ways the virus can be transmitted is through *fomites* (when respiratory droplets land on surfaces and are spread through physical contact), and aerosol transmission (a smaller respiratory droplet known as a 'droplet nuclei'). Evidence has shown aerosol-generating medical procedures can cause aerosol transmission in healthcare settings[9], and there is emerging evidence that aerosol transmission (likely combined with respiratory droplet transmission) may play a role in the transmission of the virus in closed and crowded spaces (such as a restaurants, fitness class or choir practice).

- A recent study highlights the importance of NPIs in control of COVID-19 by examining the relatively low number of cases on Phuket, Thailand. The study suggests that 80% of new COVID-19 cases occurred in individuals they had identified as "high-risk" contacts, highlighting the **significant role contact tracing can play in the response**.[10]
- In blinded testing, **STOPCovid.v2 (a CRISPR**–based diagnostic test) was compared with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) standard two-step test (i.e., RNA extraction followed by RT-qPCR) and found that within 15-45 minutes positive samples were able to be identified. **Testing showed that STOPCovid.v2 had a sensitivity of 93.1% and a specificity of 98.5%[11]**
- **COVID-19 is less severe in pregnancy than the 2 previous coronavirus** infections: SARS and MERS. However, SARS-CoV-2 test positivity in individuals in labor was associated with a **higher prevalence of preeclampsia** (not statistically significant) and **lower prevalence of induction of labo**r.[12]

Clinical Trails

- A **useful visual** explaining some of the strategies behind vaccine research and development are available here: Nature: The race for coronavirus vaccines: a graphical guide
- 64 high-income 'self-financing' countries are now part of **COVAX** facility to provide support for lower-income countries to purchase future SARS-CoV-2 vaccine (156 countries total are participating, representing 64% of the total population). US and China still are not participating. Allocations are expected to cover about 20% of the population in receiving countries.
- Vaccine may not necessarily be authorized for use in children, due in part to their exclusion from ongoing clinical trials. However, many argue that as younger children can suffer from severe COVID-19 and because increasing pressure will be essential for ensuring a save 2021 school year, suggesting Phase 2 trials should not be delayed among children.[13]
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[8] WHO: Transmission of SARS-CoV-2: implications for infection prevention precautions

[9] MedRxiv 20 July 2020: The Infectious Nature of Patient-Generated SARS-CoV-2 Aerosol

[10] EClinicalMedicine 21 Sep 2020. DOI:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2020.100543

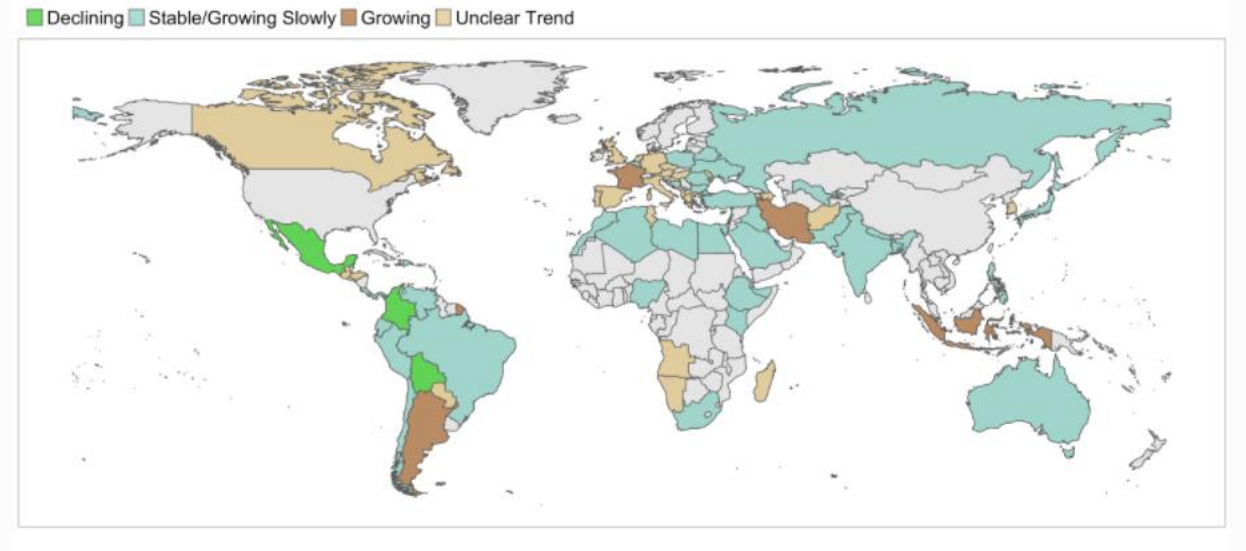
[11] NEJM 16 Sep 2020

[12] JAMA 23 Sep 2020. Association of SARS-CoV-2 Test Status and Pregnancy Outcomes

[13] Warp Speed for COVID-19 Vaccines: Why are Children Stuck in Neutral? 18 Sep 2020 Oxford Clinical Infectious Disease

Modeling & Forecasting

- **Projections for the reproductive number and deaths** (ICL weekly projections)
  As of September 21st estimates for the effective reproductive number:
  - **Europe**: Average of about 1, Highest: ***Hungary***: estimated at 2-2.5
  - **Asia**: Average of about 1, Highest: ***Philippines, Pakistan, Afghanistan***: 1-1.5
  - **Africa**: Average of about 1, Highest: ***Angola*** (around 1)
  - **MENA**: Highest: ***Tunisia*** (1.5-2)
  - **North & Central America**: Average of about 1, Highest: ***Canada***: estimated 1-1.5
  - **South America**: Average of about 1, Highest: ***Paraguay***: estimated at 1-1.5



- **IHME projections** for daily infections using current trends, easing of mandates and increased mask use

Humanitarian Impacts

- COVID-19 creating intensified **crisis on Venezuela border**[14] with 96,000 migrants in la Guajira alone in critical need and in food insecurity, with quarantine measures forcing many from living on the streets to living in informal encampments

Guidance Launched or Highlighted This week

Weekly update from WHO available here (*last updated Epi 20 Sep, Operational 25 Sep)*

- Video Series explaining specific issues related to COVID-19 released by WHO
- WHO: Emergency Global Supply Chain System (COVID-19) catalogue
- Global Preparedness Monitoring Board released new report "A World in Disorder"
- WHO Tracking COVID-19: Contact Tracing in the Digital Age
- US CDC Releases Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making
- WHO: Antigen-detection in the diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection using rapid immunoassays
- WHO: Guidance on the use of Corticosteroids for COVID-19
- WHO Partners Platform: Supply Portal and Country Preparedness training
- Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) training: Simulation exercise
- Multiple trainings available on https://openwho.org/

[14] The New Humanitarian 23 Sep 2020

Useful Sources

Some additional sources – such as specific journal articles are shared as a foot note and saved to the "Evidence" folder in Teams.

ALNAP launched COVID-19 response portal

Atlantic COVID-19 Tracker (US focus)

BMJ COVID-19 resources

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

End Coronavirus Visualizations

Center for Humanitarian Health: COVID-19 Maternal and Child Health, Nutrition Literature Reviews

Global Health 5050 Sex desegregated data

Health Map

Imperial College of London

ISARIC COVID-19 resources

Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and CSSE

Humanitarian platform for COVID-19

The Lancet

LSHTM COVID-19 mapping tool

New England Journal of Medicine

Next Strain (Phylogeny of SARS-CoV-2)

Our world in Data

PLOS COVID-19

ProMed

WHO

WHO Technical Guidance for COVID-19

MobLabs

MobLabs Domestic and international risk of importing a case

World Meters