

Italy's Biased COVID-19 "Estimates". Figures and Analysis of Italy's National Health Institute (ISS)

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According to the [latest data](#) of the Italian National Health Institute ISS, the average age of the positively-tested deceased in Italy is currently about 81 years. 10% of the deceased are over 90 years old. 90% of the deceased are over 70 years old.

80% of the deceased had suffered from two or more chronic diseases. 50% of the deceased had suffered from three or more chronic diseases. The chronic diseases include in particular cardiovascular problems, diabetes, respiratory problems and cancer.

Less than 1% of the deceased were healthy persons, i.e. persons without pre-existing chronic diseases. Only about 30% of the deceased are women.

The Italian Institute of Health moreover [distinguishes](#) between those who died *from* the coronavirus and those who died *with* the coronavirus. In many cases it is not yet clear whether the persons died from the virus or from their pre-existing chronic diseases or from a combination of both.

The two Italians deceased under 40 years of age (both 39 years old) were a cancer patient and a diabetes patient with additional complications. In these cases, too, the exact cause of death was not yet clear (i.e. if from the virus or from their pre-existing diseases).

The partial overloading of the hospitals is due to the general rush of patients and the increased number of patients requiring special or intensive care. In particular, the aim is to stabilize respiratory function and, in severe cases, to provide anti-viral therapies.

(Update: The Italian National Institute of Health published a [statistical report](#) on test-positive patients and deceased, confirming the above data.)

The doctor also points out the following aspects:

Northern Italy has one of the oldest populations and the [worst air quality](#) in Europe, which has already led to an [increased number](#) of respiratory diseases and deaths in the past and is likely an additional risk factor in the current epidemic.

South Korea, for instance, has experienced a much milder course than Italy and has already passed the peak of the epidemic. In South Korea, only about 70 deaths with a positive test result have been reported so far. As in Italy, those affected were mostly high-risk patients.

The few dozen test-positive Swiss deaths so far were also high-risk patients with chronic diseases, an average age of more than 80 years and a maximum age of 97 years, whose exact cause of death, i.e. from the virus or from their pre-existing diseases, is not yet known.

Furthermore, according to a first Chinese study, the internationally used virus test kits may give a false positive result in some cases. In these cases, the persons may *not* have contracted the new coronavirus, but presumably one of the many existing human coronaviruses that are part of the annual (and currently ongoing) common cold and flu epidemics. (1)

Thus the most important indicator for judging the danger of the disease is *not* the frequently reported number of positively-tested persons and deaths, but the number of persons actually and unexpectedly developing or dying *from pneumonia* (so-called excess mortality).

According to all current data, for the healthy general population of school and working age, a mild to moderate course of the Covid-19 disease can be expected. Senior citizens and persons with existing chronic diseases should be protected. The medical capacities should be optimally prepared.

Medical literature

(1) Zhuang et al., [Potential false-positive rate among the ,asymptomatic infected individuals' in close contacts of COVID-19 patients](#), Chinese Medical Association Publishing House, March 2020.

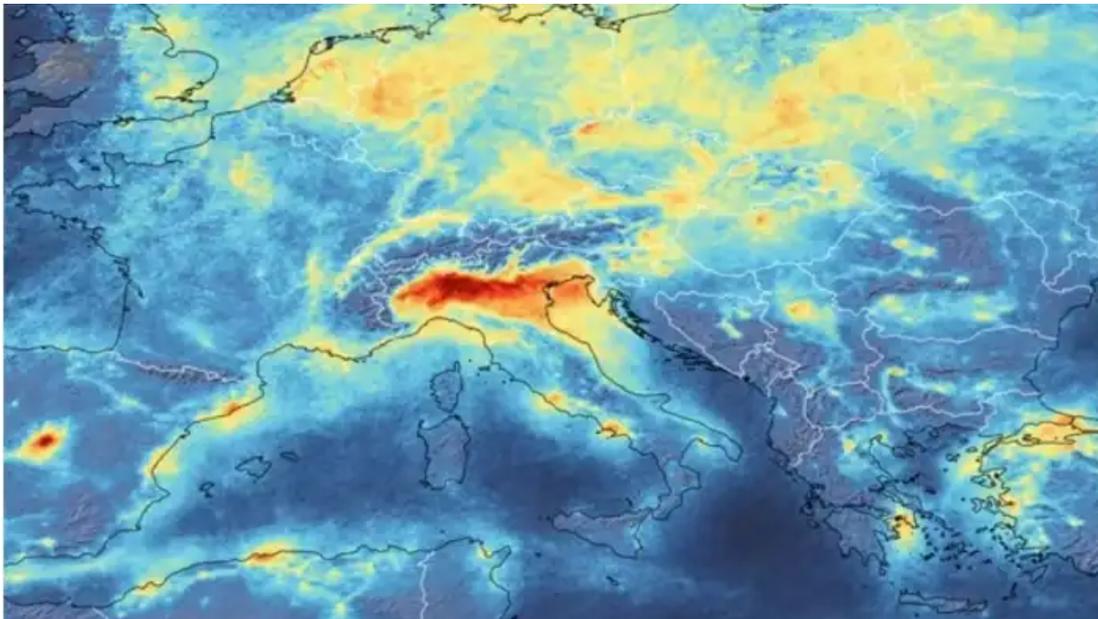
(2) Grasselli et al., [Critical Care Utilization for the COVID-19 Outbreak in Lombardy](#), JAMA, March 2020.

(3) WHO, [Report of the WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease 2019](#), February 2020.

Reference values

Important reference values include the number of annual flu deaths, which is up to 8,000 in Italy and up to 60,000 in the US; normal overall mortality, which in Italy is up to 2,000 deaths *per day*; and the average number of pneumonia cases per year, which in Italy is over 120,000.

Current all-cause mortality in Europe and in Italy is still normal or even below-average. Any excess mortality due to Covid-19 should become visible in the [European monitoring charts](#).



Winter smog (NO2) in Northern Italy in February 2020 (ESA)

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