COVID-19 media surveillance

19 May 2020; 9:30

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is dominating the news, with over 120 thousand articles per day on Monday (in 70 languages, as detected by MEDISYS).
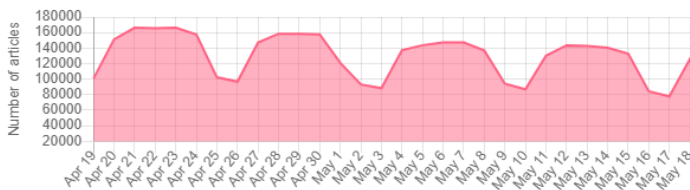

Figure 1 Media reports on coronavirus (source: EMM/MEDISYS)

Figure 2 Geolocations mentioned in coronavirus media reports showing large clusters of media reports on Italy, France, Spain, Germany, the UK, Russia, Egypt, India, China, South Korea and Japan (source: EMM/MEDISYS)

Headlines

- USA: President Trump threatens to permanently pull funding from WHO and 'reconsider' US membership; administration plans to extend border and travel restrictions; more than 90,000 deaths recorded
- UK: jobless claims rise by most on record; Ryanair CEO O'Leary calls UK quarantine plans 'idiotic and unimplementable'
- Spain: face masks will be compulsory in public spaces where social distancing cannot be respected; daily death tally decreased to 59
- Italy: shops, restaurants and churches across Italy opened on Monday as lockdown restrictions continued to ease
- France and Germany propose a 500 billion euro European recovery plan; France sees 70 cases linked to schools days after reopening
- Germany's confirmed cases rise by 513 to 175,210 with 72 further deaths
- Belgium entered phase 2 with opening of schools, cultural institutions and beauty salons while 279 new cases and 28 deaths were reported
- Luxembourg recorded only two new cases
- Russia is seeking reciprocal medical aid from the US after the country reported its lowest overnight rise in cases since May 1; situation in Dagestan region remains difficult
- India has recorded more than 100,000 cases while the lockdown is extended until 31 May
- Indonesia: 20 percent of cases occurred in last seven days
- Egypt records 535 new cases and 15 deaths; Egypt has the largest death toll in Africa
- Seychelles bans cruise ships through 2021 to prevent Covid-19 spread
- Brazil has 13,000 new cases, surpasses the UK and is the third country world-wide by infections; President Bolsonaro joined crowds of supporters during anti-lockdown protests in Brasilia
- Singapore has recorded further 451 new cases, mostly among migrant workers in dormitories
- South Korea: four nurses at one of the largest hospitals in South Korea have tested positive
- Japan: Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto likely to have curbs lifted on May 21; schools in many regions reopened Monday with staggered attendance in preparation for a full-scale restart of classes
- China puts city of Shulan close to Russian border under lockdown after surge in new cases
- Science: Moderna's vaccine candidate mRNA-1273 shows promise in phase 1 trial

Twitter

The following news were found among the most mentioned/retweeted items:
- "Trump says he takes hydroxychloroquine to prevent coronavirus infection even though it's an unproven treatment" (cnbc)
- "We're already in a Great Depression" (cnn)
- "France closes 70 schools in one week due to coronavirus cases" (20minutos)
- "Angela Merkel highlighted the value of the critical press in times of the coronavirus" (clarin)
- "'This feels great'. A preview from Georgia about how America might reemerge from the coronavirus: Eating, drinking, touching and throwing caution to the wind" (washingtonpost)
- "US lockdown protests may have spread virus widely, cellphone data suggests" (theguardian)
- "He thought the coronavirus was 'a fake crisis.' Then he contracted it and changed his mind." (nbcnews)
- "Uruguay, the only place in Latin America included among the countries that 'beat the coronavirus'" (clarin)
- "As coronavirus testing expands, a new problem arises: Not enough people to test" (washingtonpost)

The hashtags #who and #oms trended following Donald Trump's letter to the WHO (twitter) and the entailing discussions.

The most mentioned English sources were the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Guardian, Reuters and CNN.

El Diario, El Confidencial, Infobae, ABC and Libertad Digital, and Le Monde and Le Parisien were among the most mentioned Spanish and French sources, respectively.

❝❝ *Extracted Quotes*

Angela Merkel (Germany, Chancellor):
"We are convinced that it is not only fair, but also necessary to make available the funds now… that we will then gradually repay through several future European budgets".

Macron (France, President):
"The crisis we are experiencing is unprecedented and it implies, it imposes a response which must be collective and first of all European".

Bruno Covas (Brazil, Mayor of São Paulo):
"The city is coming to the limit of options"; "We need to decide if we want to test the limits, or if we will be prudent and firmly maintain social isolation for the time needed so that the health system doesn't collapse. We are closer than we would like."

🔍 *Fact Check*

Fact checked: claims by public authorities
- Fact checkers debunk a claim by Luca Zaia, the governor of Veneto region in Italy, that if the coronavirus weakens, it is proof that it is man-made ([open](#)).
- Fact checkers debunk claims that the WHO only started to recommend massive testing in April, reporting that the WHO started to recommend to "find, isolate, test" at the beginning of March ([afpfactuel](#)).

Fact checked: health claims
- Fact checkers debunk claims that the coronavirus remains in the throat for four days and drinking water and gargling eliminates the virus, reporting that there is no evidence of that ([vishvasnews](#)).

Fact checked: conspiracy theories
- Fact checkers debunk claims that humans are getting sick because the "bioengineered" coronavirus is reacting to 5G and a coronavirus vaccine "with an RFID chip" will be introduced as the cure for the disease ([verafiles](#)).
- Fact checkers debunk claims that the existence of a canine coronavirus vaccine demonstrates that a human vaccine for COVID-19 should already exist, explaining that the misunderstanding probably stems from the word "coronavirus" and how it pertains to a family of viruses ([newtral](#), [poligrafo](#)).

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