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INSTITUT NATIONAL
D'ÉTUDES DÉMOGRAPHIQUES

PRESS Release

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INED creates a website for international data on the demography of deaths related to the COVID-19 pandemic

https://dc-covid.site.ined.fr/en/

Since the pandemic began, many countries have provided daily counts of COVID-19-related deaths. To go further, in accordance with its missions to disseminate demographic knowledge, INED's scientific community is working to provide free access to data organized by sex, age group, and place of COVID-19-related deaths. For now, these data concern Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, but other countries should be analysed in the coming weeks. The data are centralized, analysed, and provided on a dedicated website: https://dc-covid.site.ined.fr/en/

Which populations are most vulnerable to COVID-19? At what ages do people die from it? How large are these populations? Where do these deaths occur? To answer these questions, INED researchers and engineers are focused on centralizing, harmonizing, and analysing data from many countries on coronavirus-related deaths. The study of mortality can provide a less biased indicator, due to the wide variety of screening methods used in different countries, than the study of the number of reported cases. Observing and comparing the number of COVID-19-related deaths thus reveal that the epidemic is following the same pattern in Germany as it is in France, Italy, and Spain.

INED has created a dedicated, bilingual website in English and French to make this important work available to the entire scientific community and the public alike.

This database can be used to:

- **Qualify data sources:** mortality in France is calculated from the total number of deaths recorded in the civil registry. In the context of the current pandemic, the French public health agency (Santé Publique France) has set up its own system for gathering information on deaths occurring in health-care facilities. Each day, these facilities report the number of deaths from COVID-19 by age and sex. However, these records represent only a part of the mortality related to the pandemic because they do not include deaths that occurred at home and in nursing homes. Other countries are facing similar situations. Interpreting these statistics therefore requires knowledge of their limitations. Discrepancies in data from different sources may be observed, depending on whether the sources include deaths at home and on when the data are updated.

- **Monitor the pattern of reported deaths from an international perspective:** the daily count indicates the pandemic's direction and possible points of reversal or acceleration. As such, comparison with other countries is critical because the coronavirus only reached different countries at different times. Their resulting curves must therefore be aligned according to the dates of the first death from COVID-19, and the associated key health events must be identified. This makes it possible to see a strikingly similar pattern across the world at the epidemic's outset, namely an exponential increase in the numbers of cases and deaths at the same daily rate. The pattern of deaths is similar in China, Italy, and France until 'Day 13'.

- **Address age, gender, and other disparities:** given that older people are vulnerable to this virus, population structure plays a key role. Worldwide, male deaths from COVID-19 outnumber female deaths, but the extent of this male disadvantage differs between countries. Specifically, the concentration of deaths among people aged 70 and over (75 in France) is much higher in Italy and France than it is in China. These initial results will have to be verified when more detailed data on the distribution of COVID-19-related deaths by sex and by 5- and 10-year age groups become available. To conduct reliable comparative analyses between countries, careful documentation must be provided on how data are collected in each country and what the data cover (total deaths, deaths in health-care facilities only).

A database for better understanding and preventing epidemics

Demography, an essential component of which is the study of mortality patterns, has the tools to rigorously assess the quality and comparability of all available data on COVID-19-related deaths — a prerequisite for analysing trends accurately and for making projections. A note provided on the website outlines the development of the pandemic and the public policy measures enacted in the countries studied.

This work is fully within INED's purview, as defined in article 3 of the decree (86-382) of 12 March 1986, to collect, centralize, and promote all demographic research, from France and abroad, and to inform the scientific community, public authorities, and the public about the results of its work.

For more information:

Website: https://dc-covid.site.ined.fr/en/

Read the attached interview with researchers France Meslé and Jean-Marie Robine.

About Ined:

The French Institute for Demographic Studies (Ined) is a public research institute specialized in population studies that works in partnership with the academic and research communities at national and international levels**.** Ined's approach to demography is resolutely open and interdisciplinary, implicating a wide range of disciplines including economics, history, geography, sociology, anthropology, biology and epidemiology. With its 1O research units and 1 research unit in partnership, Ined promotes communication and exchange within the scientific community and the general public while conducting numerous European and international research projects.

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