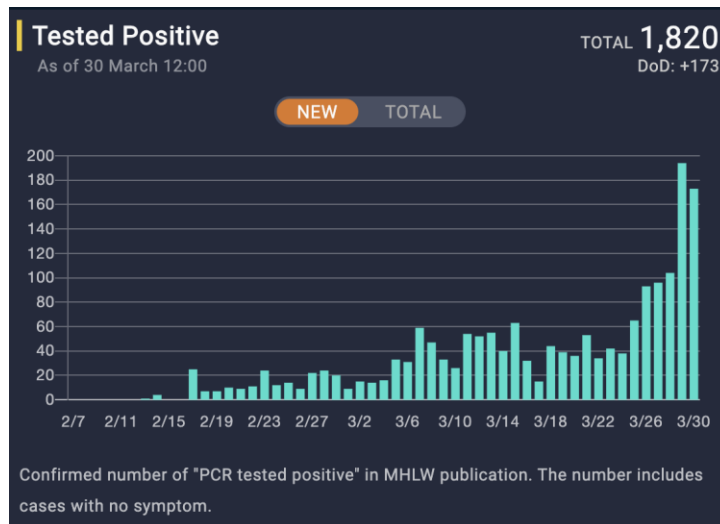


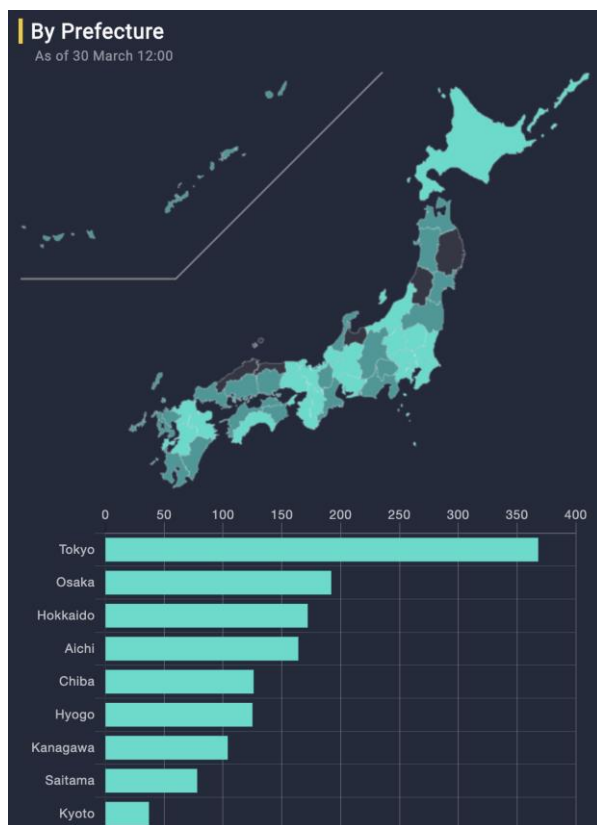
Situation report – Covid-19; Japan, Tuesday 31st of March 2020

Covid-19 Reported Caseload in Japan and Tokyo

Nationally, daily Covid-19 diagnoses continue to increase steadily though as yet do not clearly demonstrate the exponential growth which characterized outbreaks seen in Europe this month.



Concerns over the past week have focused on Tokyo as the region which now has the largest Covid-19 caseload:



Testing for Covid-19 in Japan

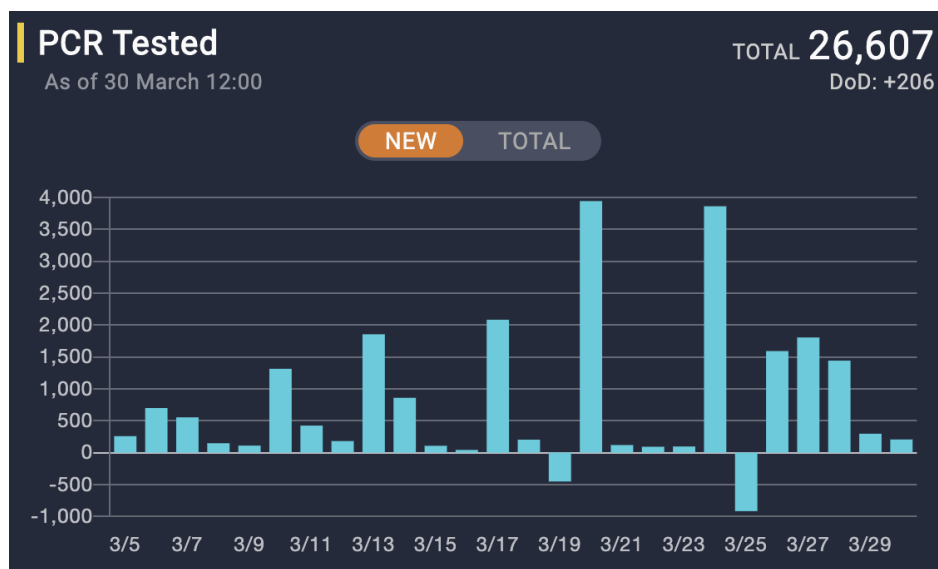
Daily case numbers for Tokyo were reported as-

- Fri (27/3/2020) – 40 cases
- Sat (28/3/2020) – 63 cases
- Sun (29/03/2020) – 68 cases
- Mon (30/03/2020) – 76 cases

At present social distancing measures are in place on a voluntary basis without enforced closure of businesses. However, the Japanese Medical Association announced yesterday that it would recommend an escalation of measures should the daily case load exceed 100, though in the final instance such a decision would be made at a policy level. Businesses should clearly be prepared for an imminent lockdown of some kind.

Healthcare providers have been informed that testing is now less restricted than was the case earlier in the year. Currently, patients with respiratory infections require an initial assessment including a blood test and a chest X-ray for initial screening. Should the results of these tests and their clinical picture suggest a possible Covid-19 infection, definitive testing for Covid-19 by means of a PCR test at a dedicated testing facility can then be arranged. However, patients continue to be cautioned that they will face a mandatory 14 day hospitalization if they test positive, regardless of the severity of infection. As such, individuals with milder symptoms are frequently discouraged from following through and obtaining a test. Informal advice is that the requirement for hospitalization may be relaxed in due course, as the capacity to hospitalize large numbers of patients with mild symptoms may be exceeded.

Testing numbers appear to remain low by international standards with a little over 26,000 individuals tested since the outbreak began (US reporting over 10,000 tests performed per day). In Japan, numbers are reported as tested individuals (not numbers of tests – the difference being due to some individuals being tested multiple times).



Total testing capacity in Japan is reported at 7,500 tests per day but it appears that only a fraction (perhaps 15%) of this capacity is in use. Negative numbers in the above graph are due to corrections made where regions had reported total test numbers (not tested individuals); large peaks are due to tests made over several days being reported to the health ministry on a single day.

Hospital Care in Tokyo

As case numbers are still low in relation to total hospital bed capacity, there is currently no reported pressure on bed availability. The MHLW (ministry of health, labour and welfare) has asked hospitals to prepare for an increase in cases by allocating dedicated hospital space (beds) for Covid-19 cases in three categories (mild, severe and critical). Individual hospitals are responding by arranging dedicated areas (wards or floors) for the care of coronavirus cases. Currently, across Tokyo, 500 beds are available for admission of Covid-19 patients with a stated aim of increasing this capacity to 4,000. Currently there is discussion about using non-hospital space in the event of an excessive case load but no physical steps are in place as far as I can determine. Should this step be required, hotels or potentially the Olympic village have been mooted as potential locations without an announcement of a definite decision.

References

Graphs and data sourced from MHLW as reported by Toyo Keizai - <https://toyokeizai.net/sp/visual/tko/covid19/en.html>