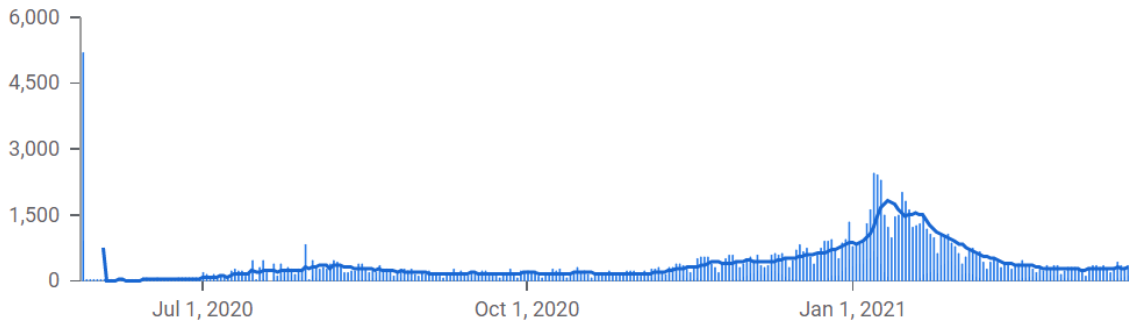


Situation report – COVID19; Japan 22nd of March 2021

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Current Situation in Japan

National number of diagnoses per day:



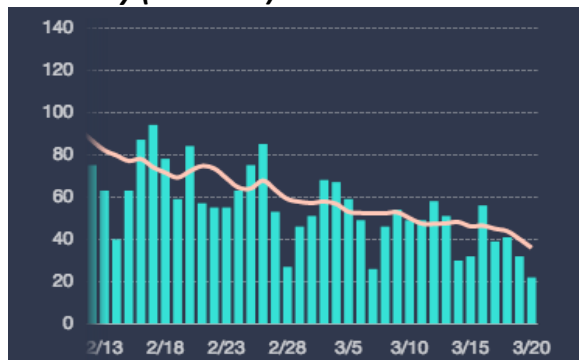
National Effective Reproduction Number (R 1.07)



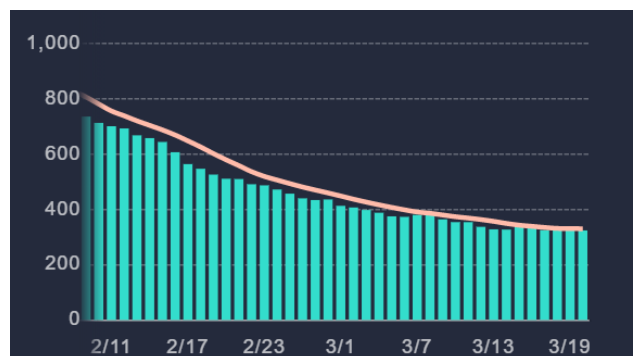
New COVID infections in Japan continue their slow rise from the nadir seen in the beginning of March. Despite this, and despite increasing awareness and reporting of viral variants throughout the country, neither explosive nor exponential growth has been observed. Japan's overall R_{eff} statistic remains essentially unchanged from last week. This is an overall positive for the

country; while increased local spread is seen in certain prefectures (see below), Japan's lifting of the state of emergency from numerous outlying prefectures on March 7 appears not to have exacerbated the COVID situation in Japan as a whole. The number of critically ill patients continues to fall, as does mortality, though these statistics lag by 2-3 weeks.

Mortality (National)



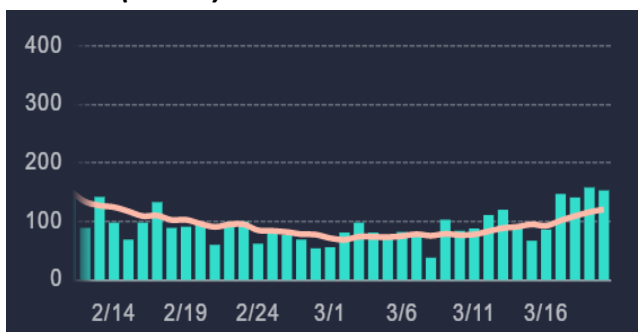
Critical Illness (National)



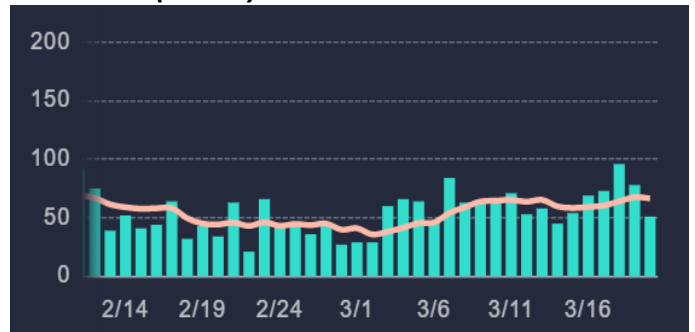
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Favorable national statistics likely represent the improvement of disease epidemiology in most suburban and rural prefectures, including Kyushu, Hokkaido/western Tohoku, and prefectures on the Japan Sea. Despite this, an aggressive rebound in infections seems to be occurring in particular prefectures including Osaka and Miyagi, both of which have seen R_{eff} statistics over 1.2. While prefectural and central governments are considering this growth in the context of viral variants, leading to increased surveillance for mutant strains, large clusters of variant or variant-driven spread have not been reported. For example, though Miyagi logged 125 new infections on March 20 (especially surprising given that all of Tokyo logged only 320 on the same day), genomic sequencing tests of 242 specimens revealed only 1 mutant strain (UK type) in a gentleman who had visited Tokyo roughly two week previously¹.

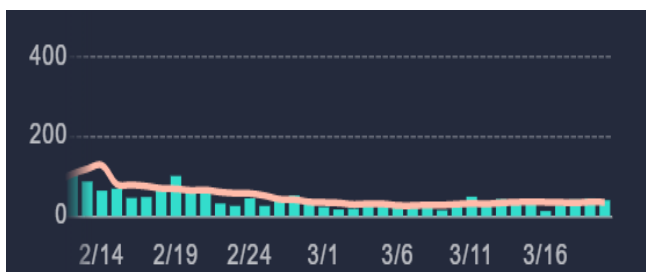
Osaka (R 1.25)



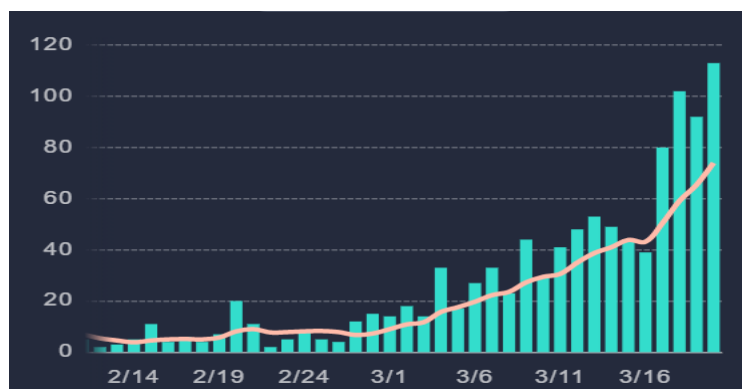
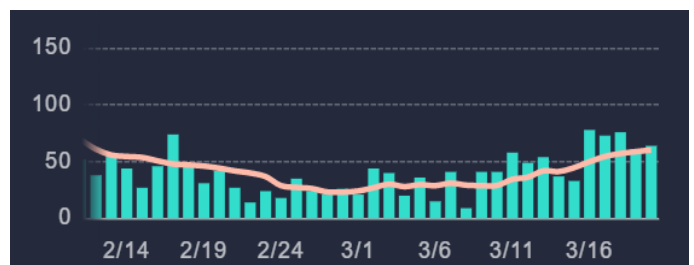
Hokkaido (R 1.01)



Fukuoka (R 1.04)



Hyogo (R 1.3)

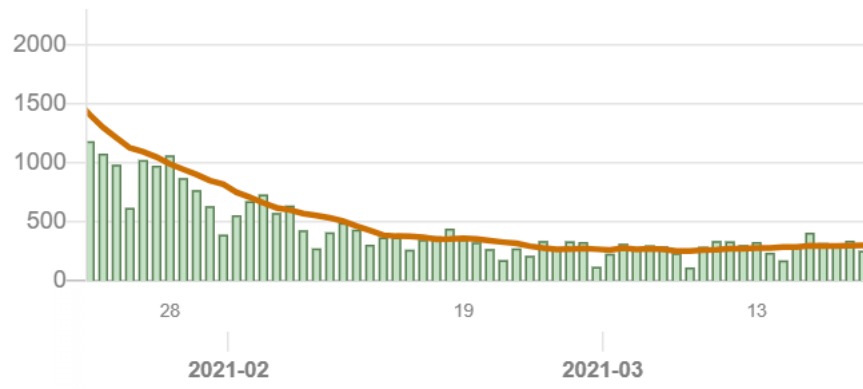


Miyagi (R 1.59)

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While additional scattered reports of variant virus have been reported throughout the country, there have been no large concentrations of mutant virus reported this week. As of March 16, there are 399 identified case of viral variants across 26 prefectures. From March 9-16, an additional 56 cases were identified in Hyogo, 16 in Saitama, 13 in Hokkaido, and 10 in Osaka².

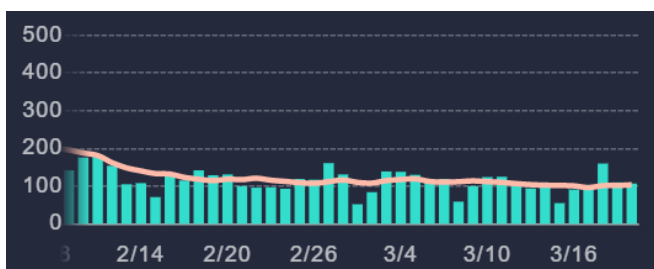
Current Situation in Tokyo & the Kanto Region



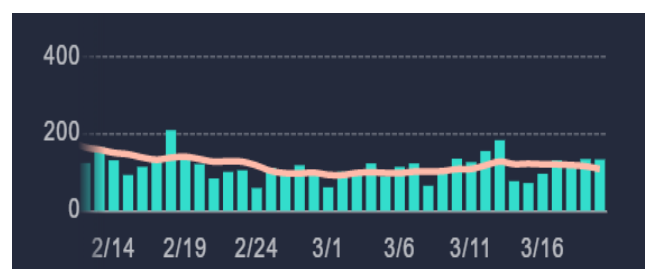
Tokyo daily cases (R 1.07)

Tokyo epidemiological curves remain flat as it exits emergency measures today. There remains overall optimism that viral spread can be kept in check and prevent a 4th wave as alarming as the 3rd. Adding to this optimism in the Kanto area are favorable R_{eff} statistics for neighboring prefectures: a slight increase was observed in Kanagawa, relative stability in Chiba, and a marked improvement in Saitama, which fell from 1.13 last week to 0.89 today.

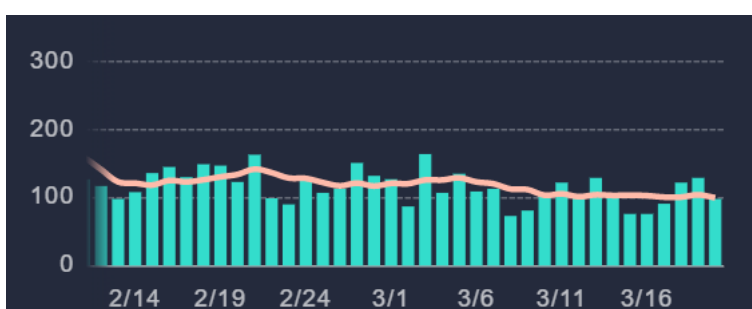
Kanagawa prefecture (R 1.0)



Saitama prefecture (R 0.89)



Chiba prefecture (R 0.97)

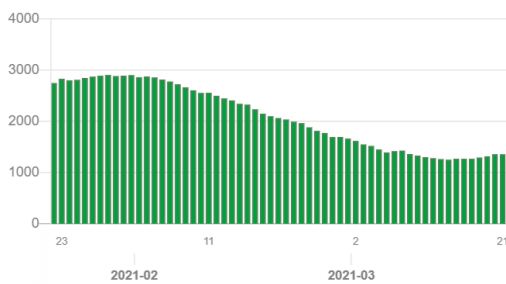


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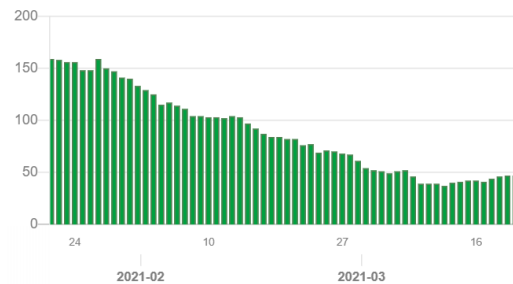
Hospital Care in Tokyo

Tokyo has seen a subtle increase in hospitalizations over the last week with 1372 hospitalized patients on Mar 22, up from a nadir of 1250 on Mar 14 2021. Areas of increasing infection are primarily in western urban Tokyo and along Tokyo's southern border abutting Tokyo Bay, with slightly decreasing rates of infection in central Tokyo. Similarly, patients requiring ICU level of care have increased to 47 persons, up from a nadir of 39 persons on Mar 12 2021. Despite this, number of ICU patients in Tokyo has remained flat for the last 3 days. The number of COVID-dedicated hospital beds in Tokyo remains unchanged over the week with a total of 332 beds for those requiring critical care and 5048 beds for routine ward care, reflecting more than adequate supplies of beds at the current time; routine hospital bed occupancy stands at a mere 27.2%, while ICU bed occupancy is at 14.2%.

Total in-hospital patient numbers, Tokyo (exc. Hotel stays)

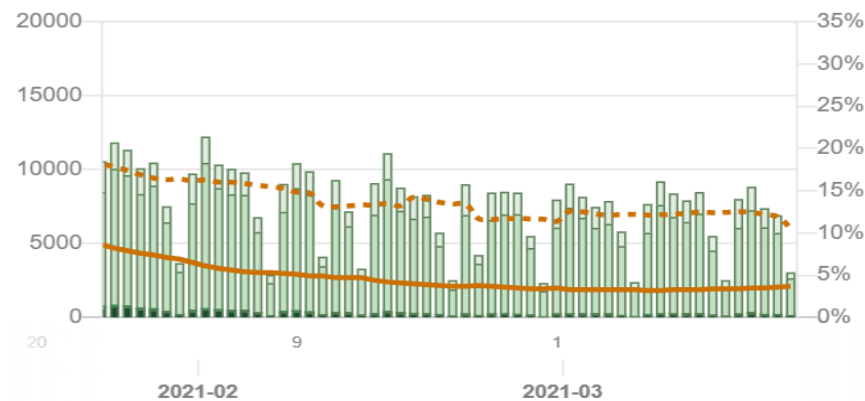


Patients Requiring Intensive Care, Tokyo



Testing in Tokyo

- Number of positive PCR tests
- Number of people positive for antigen test
- Number of people with negative PCR test
- Number of people negative for antigen test
- Number of people inspected (7-day moving average)
- Positive rate



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With the exception of cyclic fluctuations associated with decreased weekend testing (and reporting), testing in Tokyo appears to remain similar to that seen in the last week of February 2021, lower by roughly 200 fewer tests per day compared to the first 2 weeks of March. The rate of positive test results continues shows a gradual increase to 3.7% today from 3.5% last week.

COVID-19 Vaccination in Japan

To date, 553,454 healthcare workers have received at least 1 dose of Pfizer's COVID vaccine, reflecting 11.5% of Japan's targeted healthcare workforce. Another shipment of vaccine arrived in Japan yesterday with an additional 654,615 doses.

Pfizer's vaccine continues to be the only vaccine approved for use in Japan. Both Moderna and AstraZeneca applications are languishing on regulators' desks, further slowing down swift vaccination efforts by stymieing supply chains. Nonetheless, GOJ's plans for an April 12 rollout to cover Japan's 36 million elderly residents (aged 65 or above) remain in place, to be followed by vaccination for those with high-risk conditions. PM Suga announced recently an ambitious goal to have all residents of Japan vaccinated by June 30th 2021.

References and Resources

Further details of the government's plans are available on the website of the Prime Minister's office:

<https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/headline/kansensho/vaccine.html>

References

Reported Caseload Graphs and data sourced from MHLW as reported by Toyo Keizai and the Tokyo metropolitan government –

<https://toyokeizai.net/sp/visual/tko/covid19/en.html>

<https://stopcovid19.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/en/>

<https://www.stopcovid19.jp/#Tokyo>

Resources

How to get help if you suspect that you have COVID19 (Tokyo residents)

<https://stopcovid19.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/en/flow>

FAQ: How foreign residents can get coronavirus vaccinations in Japan

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20210212/p2a/00m/0na/046000c>

Citations

¹<https://kahoku.news/articles/20210320khn000002.html>

²<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/special/coronavirus/newvariant/refectures.html>