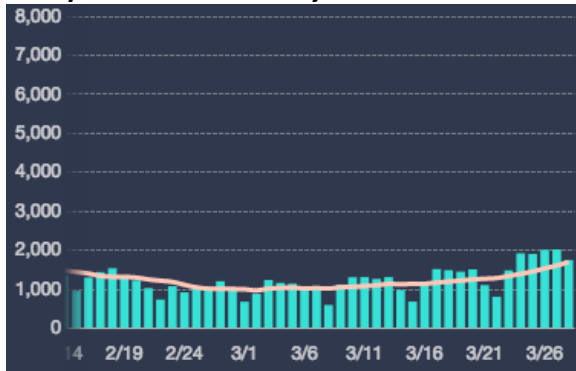


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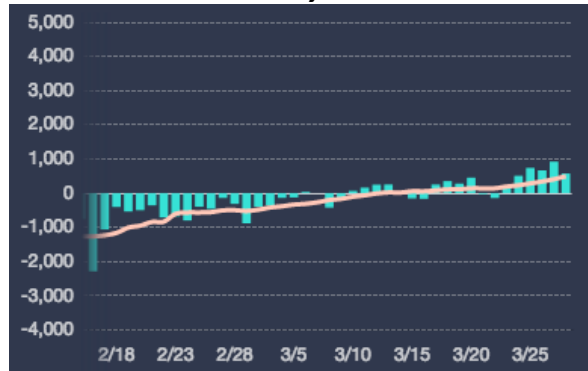
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Current Situation in Japan

Test positives nationally:



Active cases nationally:



National Effective Reproduction Number (R_{1.2})

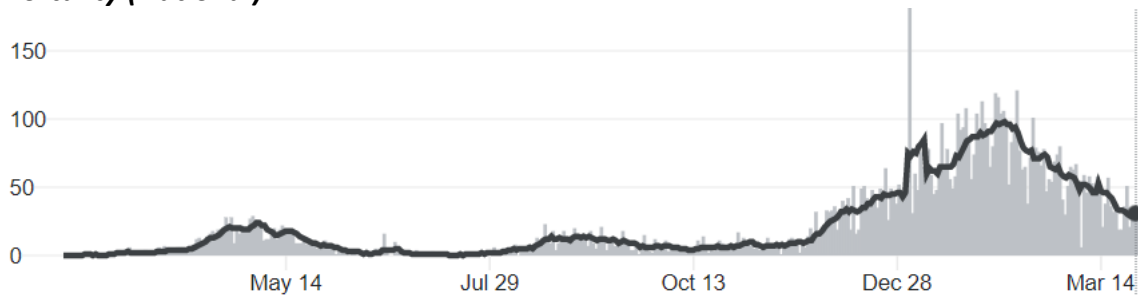


New COVID infections in Japan continue to slowly rise once again, as Japan inches closer to the opening of a “Fourth Wave” of COVID19 infections. Despite an understandable angst in national and local media, however, this upward climb remains fairly gradual, with a national R_{eff} statistic of 1.2 today. Steady or even falling numbers in those urban areas historically associated with

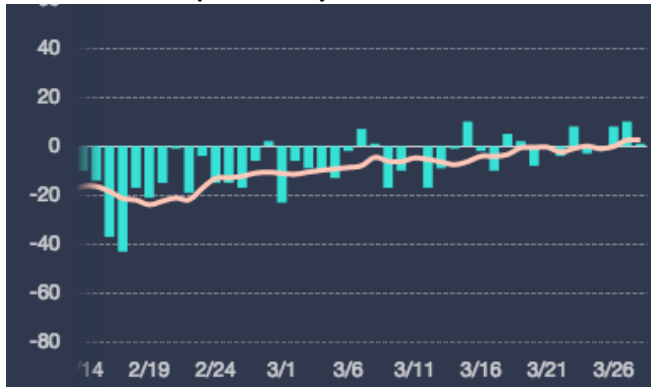
early disease spread have been noted—in the last week, R_{eff} statistics for Hokkaido, Fukuoka, and Kanagawa have actually dropped slightly, and yet infection seems to be growing nationally. This discrepancy begs the question from where the national rise is stemming? While disease transmission appears to be flat in the majority of prefectures, national average statistics are likely being skewed by a handful of prefectures in which the disease is spreading quite rapidly. Of note, Osaka has seen its R_{eff} grow from 1.25 to 1.56 over the week, while Hyogo prefecture continues to see increased disease transmission. Miyagi prefecture, though posting a mild improvement with R_{eff} falling from 1.36 to 1.3 over the week, also continues to post high numbers of new cases, alarming given its small population size and relative sparseness.

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Mortality (National)



Critical Illness (National)

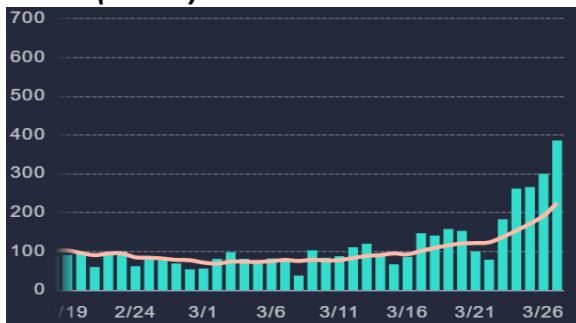


Japan recently posted its first net increase in patients being admitted to ICU in over 2 months. This predominantly reflects a worsening health situation in rural areas of Japan, which often have poorer healthcare resources, infrastructure, staffing, and capabilities, as well as a larger proportion of elderly residents. As admission to advanced levels of care for

life support follow infection by roughly 2 weeks, I anticipate a quickly growing number of ICU cases over the next 2-4 weeks. Similarly, steady declines in national mortality from COVID, since a peak on Feb 10 2021, have now reached a plateau.

Despite overall anxiety regarding an incoming fourth wave, urban areas from which COVID has historically first spread seem to be demonstrating stable or lower transmission numbers (with the exception of Osaka) over the last week. This is surprising and may reflect an increased vigilance against COVID in more urban areas. Hokkaido, which has been `the tip of the spear` for previous waves 1-3, has shown a slight drop in disease transmission, achieving an R_{eff} of <1 , while Fukuoka, a disease driver in Kyushu, appears to also be doing remarkably well in keeping the disease at bay.

Osaka (R 1.56)

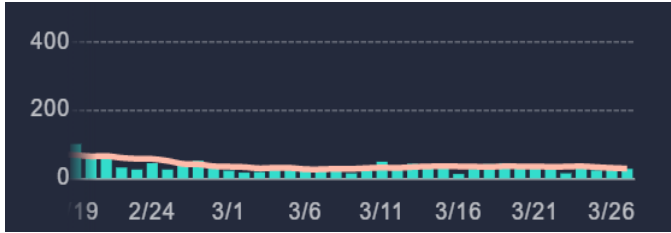


Hokkaido (R 0.95)

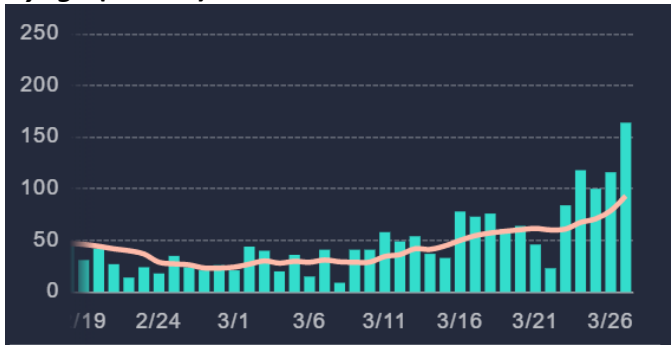


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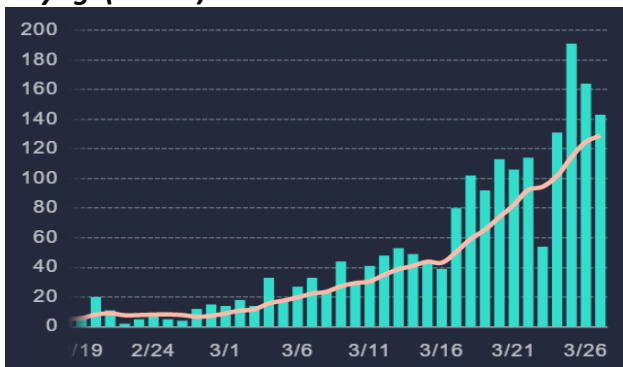
Fukuoka (R 0.88)



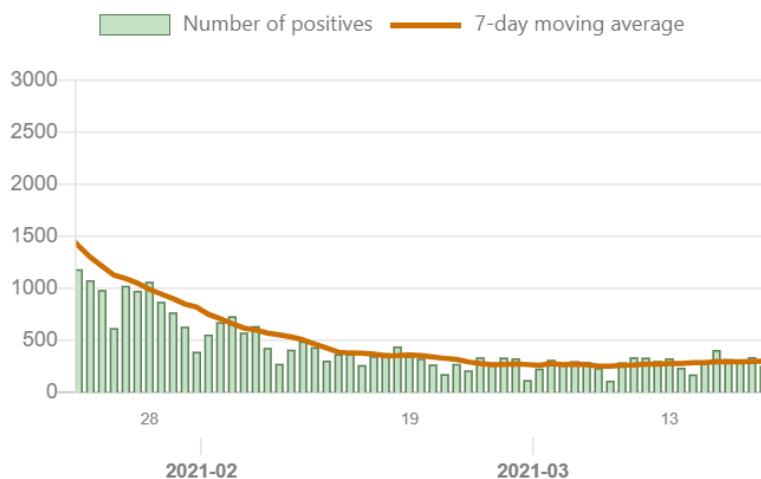
Hyogo (R. 1.36)



Miyagi (R 1.49)



Current Situation in Tokyo & the Kanto Region



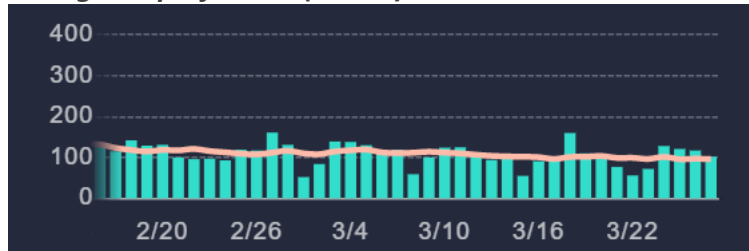
Tokyo daily cases (R 1.12)

Viral transmission in Tokyo continues to hover just above an R_{eff} of 1 in its first week out of emergency measures (which were replaced by an essentially modified set of similar restrictions on eating/drinking establishments, set to run

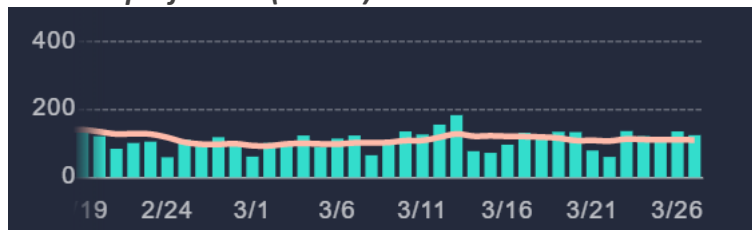
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through April 21, 2021.) This modification, rather than wholesale lifting, of restrictions is proving to be a prudent public health strategy as transmission statistics have remained favorable in virtually all neighboring Kanto prefectures. Even Saitama, which had posted a robust R_{eff} of 1.2 around March 13 2021, appears to be containing transmission with an adequate degree of success. Of note, further indication of spread of Brazil variant, found previously in Saitama, has not been identified.

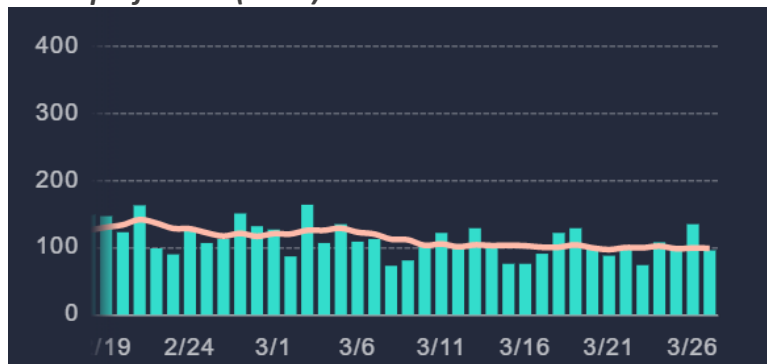
Kanagawa prefecture (R 0.95)



Saitama prefecture (R 1.01)



Chiba prefecture (R 1.0)

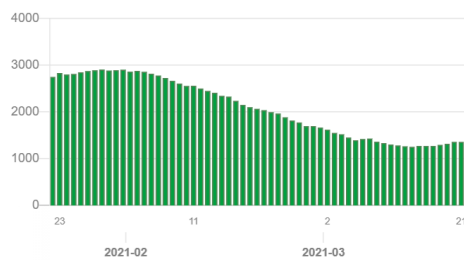


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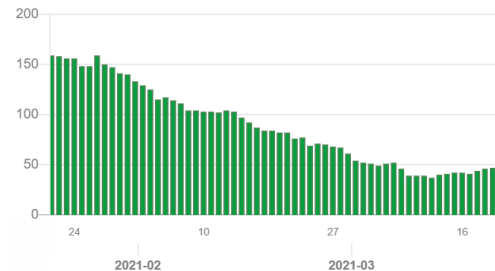
Hospital Care and Testing in Tokyo

Hospital capacity available for COVID 19 patients in Tokyo remains unchanged at 5048 routine care beds, for a bed occupancy of 28.4%. 332 beds for those requiring critical care also remains unchanged from previous weeks, representing an ICU bed occupancy of 12%. 3,290 beds remain available in hotels for patients who require admission to limit contagion. The Metropolitan Tokyo website has slightly altered its reporting to state that the medical system is “under pressure,” rather than the more dire previous language of “under strain.”

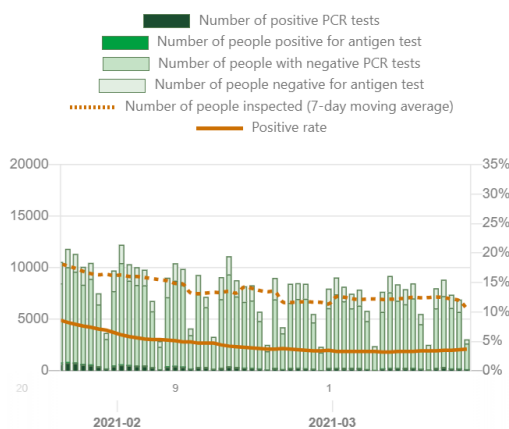
Total in-hospital patient numbers, Tokyo (exc. Hotel stays)



Patients Requiring Intensive Care, Tokyo



Number of Tests (Tokyo)



Test numbers in Tokyo remain steady at a 7-day moving average of roughly 6900 tests performed daily. The rate of positive test results has continues to slowly increase, up to 4.2% today from 3.8% last week.

COVID-19 Vaccination in Japan

Vaccination of healthcare workers will reach the 1 million mark this week. GOJ plans to rollout vaccine for those aged 65 or above on April 12; these plans remain unchanged. Pandemic Minister Taro Kono, in an announcement yesterday, anticipates receiving 10 million doses per week in May, though I anticipate that actual execution of vaccine administration will take substantially longer than that, possibly past the end of summer 2021, given the current pace of vaccine administration.

Pfizer’s vaccine continues to be the only vaccine approved for use in Japan, though scheduled shipments of both Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines are slated for imminent arrival, and pending approval for use by PMDA. An advisor to the Cabinet suggested that patients may eventually have a choice of which vaccine they receive, though this appears

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somewhat unlikely in the short- or medium-term horizon, given both the slow logistics of vaccine administration, as well as surprisingly long approval times.

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>