

Tracking COVID-19 and flattening the curve

COVID-19 trackers and dashboards

In a bid to show the visual representation of the spread of COVID-19 around the world, many institutions have developed a dashboard that records the daily increase in the number of cases globally and by countries, which also include the number of fatalities. The dashboard is updated several times a day to keep up with new data.

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has a dashboard for tracking global spread of the COVID-19. Another dashboard was developed by the [Center for Systems Science and Engineering \(CSSE\)](#) at the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) to provide researchers, public health authorities, and the public with a user-friendly tool to track the outbreak as it unfolds.^[1] Likewise, [Africa CDC](#) has a dashboard that is focused on the continent's COVID-19 spread.

Flattening the curve (Source: CDC)

The epidemic curve of a disease is used to visualize the onset of a disease outbreak. The “**curve**” researchers are talking about refers to the projected number of people who will contract COVID-19 over a period of time, using a theoretical number and modeling. There are two curves. The first curve shows the disease spread without any intervention. The faster the infection curve rises, the quicker the local health care system gets overloaded beyond its capacity to treat people. The second curve shows what the disease would look like if interventions were done to slow the rate of new infections, a much flatter curve. A slower infection rate means a less stressed health care system, fewer hospital visits on any given day and fewer sick people being turned away.

Flattening the curve is slowing a virus' spread so that fewer people need to seek treatment at any given time in order not to overwhelm the healthcare system. From previous pandemics, the steps being employed to flatten the COVID-19 curve are: social/physical distancing, testing and contact tracing and lockdowns or stay-at-home practices.

Reference

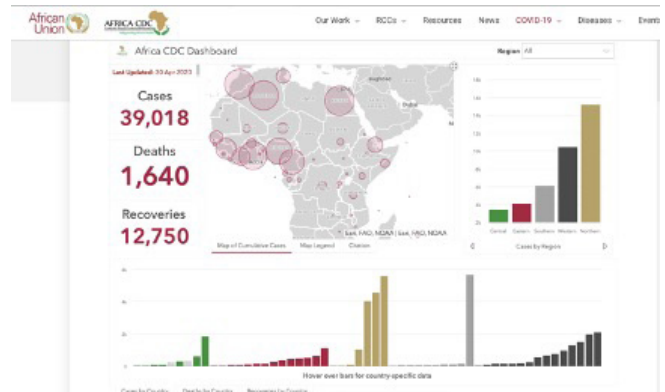
1. Dong E, Du H, Gardner L. [An interactive web-based dashboard to track COVID-19 in real time.](#) Lancet Infect Dis; published online Feb 19, 2020.



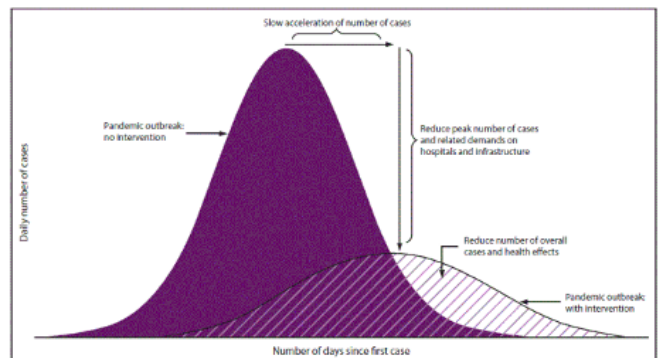
WHO Dashboard



Johns Hopkins dashboard



Africa CDC dashboard



Flattening the curve (Source: CDC)