

Expert Meeting on the Novel Coronavirus Disease Control
Analysis of the Response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Recommendations
(May 14, 2020)
Summary

1. Introduction

2. Evaluation of the infection situation, etc.

(1) Infection situation (epidemiological situation)

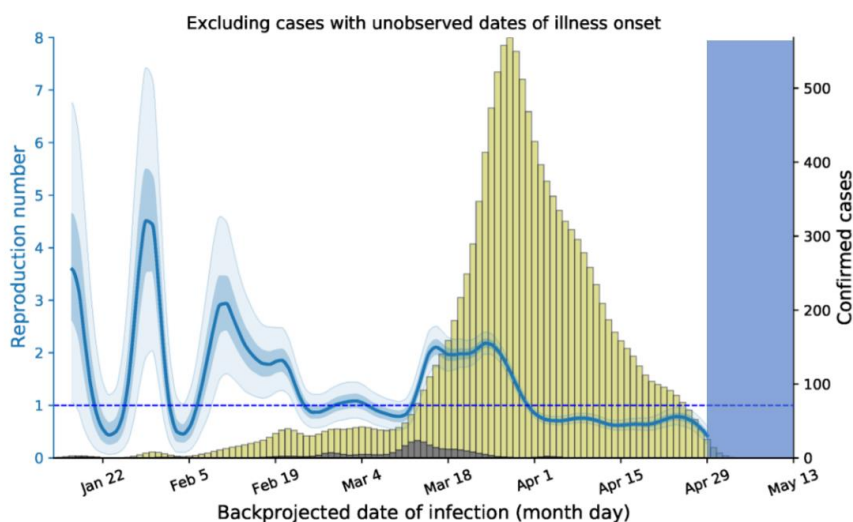
(i) Situation in each prefecture

- The number of new infections has been steadily decreasing.
- The number of new infections remains at 200 per week in Tokyo, and that in Hokkaido, Kanagawa, Osaka, and Saitama remains at 50 and more. Meanwhile, no newly infected patients have been confirmed in nine prefectures for the past three weeks or longer, in five prefectures for the past two weeks, and in 14 prefectures for the past week.

(ii) Trend in the effective reproduction number

- The nationwide effective reproduction number has remained below 1 since around early April. The estimated nationwide figure on April 28 was 0.6.
- The effective reproduction number has continued to be below 1 and is on a downward trend, as the number is 0.4 in Hokkaido, 0.3 in five prefectures in the Kanto region (Tokyo, Chiba, Saitama, Kanagawa, and Ibaraki), and 0.7 in three prefectures in the Kinki region (Osaka, Kyoto, and Hyogo).

[Nationwide effective reproduction number]



(2) Systems for delivering medical care

- As of May 1, the prefectures had coordinated with medical institutions to secure 31,077 beds, and 14,781 of those beds have already been specifically assigned in these institutions.
- A decreasing trend in the numbers of both hospitalized patients and patients with severe symptoms has been confirmed.

(3) General Overview

- The situation continues to require caution in such prefectures as Tokyo, Hokkaido, and Osaka, while in the other prefectures, the number of new infections, etc. has dropped to the level before late March, when the outbreak began to expand.
- Regarding systems for delivering medical care, a sufficient number of beds for patients who need hospitalization have been secured, while the numbers of both hospitalized patients and patients with severe symptoms have been on a downward trend.

3. How to determine whether to lift the state-of-emergency measures

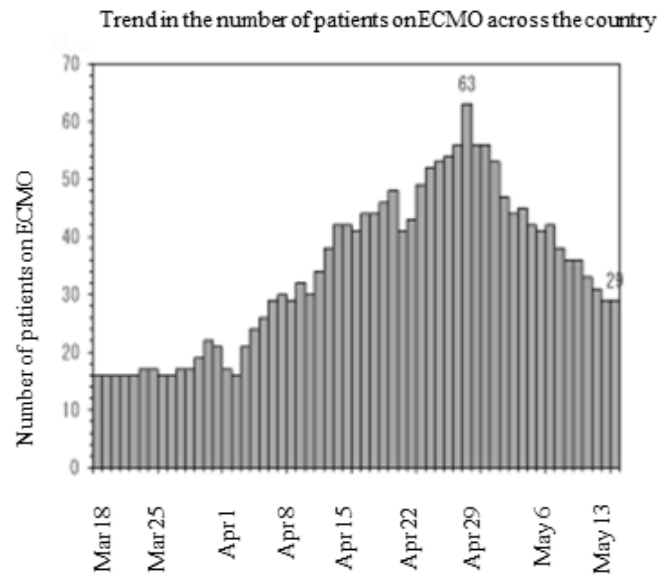
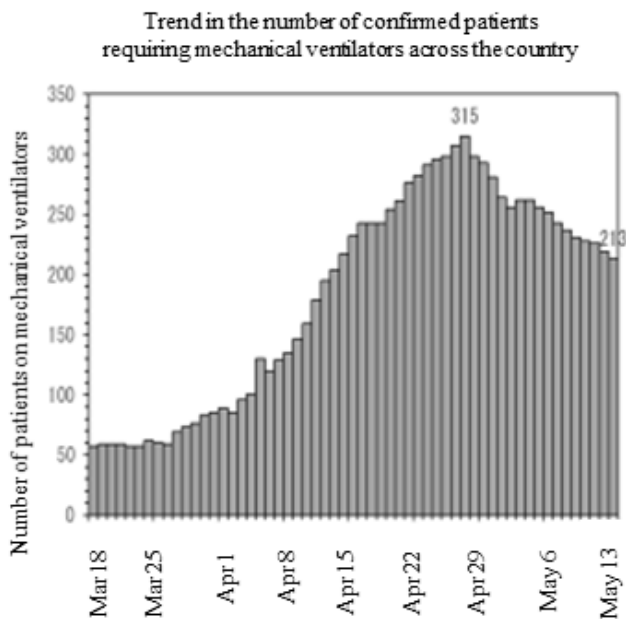
- The state of emergency declared on April 7 was aimed at: (i) in order to prevent an explosive spread of infection, preventing the collapse of medical services and thereby decreasing the numbers of patients with severe symptoms and deaths; (ii) improving systems, including expanding the medical system; (iii) reducing the number of new infections to the extent where it is possible to control the disease through counter-cluster measures; (iv) restraining movement from urban areas to other regions to prevent an extensive spread of the infection; and (v) expecting close coordination and leadership from prefectural governors.
- A judgment will be made on withdrawing the "request for thorough behavior modification" depending on whether the above objectives (i) to (v) are met. Comprehensive decisions will be made based on such factors as (i) the infection situation (epidemiological situation); (ii) systems for delivering medical care (medical situation); and (iii) the establishment of testing systems.
- Criteria will be stricter than those in other countries, from the viewpoint of keeping the number of deaths low. (For comparison, the seven-day cumulative number of newly infected patients per 100,000 people must be 50 or below in Germany, while the three-day average number of newly hospitalized patients per 100,000 people must be 2 or below in the State of New York, USA.)

(1) Infection situation (epidemiological situation)

- Comprehensive decisions will be made mainly based on (i) and (ii) below:
 - (i) The number of new infections: a downward trend can be confirmed
 - (ii) The cumulative number of reported new infections per 100,000 people in the past week: approximately below 0.5
 - The above number is the level at which it was possible to provide a more meticulous response to new patients and clusters of patients. In the case of Tokyo, the number is the level of new infections in early and mid- March, which is before the current spread of the infection.
 - In cases of cluster infections with identified transmission routes, decisions can be made while excluding the impact of such infections, as long as the influence of the infections on neighboring areas is found to be limited.
- The infection situation in neighboring prefectures and those with massive movement of people, such as metropolitan areas, will be taken into account.

(2) Systems for delivering medical care (medical situation)

- It is indispensable to ensure the systems in place prevent the collapse of medical services even if the number of infections rises.
 - (i) A downward trend in the number of patients with severe symptoms (the numbers of those hospitalized in ICUs and those on ECMO or mechanical ventilators)
 - (ii) Systems with the capacity to deal with a rapid increase in patients in the future have been secured



(3) Improvement of testing systems

- The ability to appropriately identify the trend in new infections will be developed, while testing systems will be established.
- Trend in the number of PCR and other tests
 - It is guaranteed that a certain minimum number of tests will be conducted.
 - The ratio of positive samples is not considerably high.

4. How to determine whether to reimpose a state of emergency and the need for monitoring

- As the risk of outbreak occurring again will remain for the time being, it is necessary to continue to be cautious and strengthen the outbreak surveillance system and response capabilities in preparation for a new rise in infections.

(1) How to determine whether to reimpose a state of emergency

- State-of-emergency measures have a huge impact of the lives of citizens, so it is important to keep the spread of infection below the level that would require such measures as much as possible. A swift and necessary response is crucial if the infection shows signs of spreading again.

- Close attention will be paid to the outbreak of cluster infections.
- The government needs to promptly designate areas where the state-of-emergency measures should be imposed if it makes a comprehensive decision that such areas are in the following situations.

(i) Infection situation

- Comprehensive decisions will be made based on the following indices:
 - i. The cumulative number of reported infections per 100,000 people in the past week;
 - ii. Doubling time; and
 - iii. The ratio of cases with unidentified transmission routes.
- Indices for reference include the effective reproduction number and trends in the number of PCR and other tests.

(ii) Medical situation

- Attention will be paid to whether the following indices of i. and ii. are approaching their peak levels, considering the importance of preventing the collapse of the systems for delivering medical care:
 - i. The trend in the number of patients with severe symptoms; and
 - ii. The trend in the number of hospitalized patients.

(2) Need to monitor the infection situation, etc.

- In light of the potential for the infection to begin spreading again, each prefecture will sufficiently monitor the infection situation, etc.

5. Basic principles for balancing socio-economic activities with preventing the spread of the infection

- Some other countries curbed the growth in the number of infections by such measures as lockdown, but reintroduced strong measures following reports of clusters of patients after easing restrictions.
- Experience with counter-cluster measures to date has revealed settings with a high risk of infection and reconfirmed that it is possible to prevent the spread of the infection if everyone follows the basics of preventing infection, shown in (i) and (ii) below:
 - (i) Thoroughly avoiding settings that can accelerate the spread of the infection (settings with a chain of cluster infections); and
 - (ii) Practicing basic measures against infection, which consist of maintaining physical distancing, wearing masks, and washing hands.
- To balance socio-economic activities with preventing the spread of the infection, it is important to implement focused measures of gradually raising the level of socio-economic activities while thoroughly avoiding the above settings with a high risk of infection.
- In addition to measures to prevent infection, it is essential for citizens to properly practice the "new lifestyle" (see the Annex) in their daily lives to prevent the spread of the infection.
- Even in cases where regions are excluded from the state-of-emergency measures, meticulous

and gradual measures will be taken according to the regional risk assessment (regional category).

(1) Basic policies for measures to transition from the classification of Prefectures under Specific Cautions, etc.

(i) Citizens' lives

- The response to this infection is expected to take a long time.

➤ Continue basic measures against infection

➤ Continually practice the "new lifestyle" in daily life

- Avoid traveling from Prefectures under Specific Cautions, etc. and refrain from traveling to such prefectures, etc. as much as possible, and especially avoid settings with the "3Cs."

(ii) Business activities

- We have called for each industry to create guidelines, etc. to prevent the spread of the infection and implement them in each workplace.

- It is necessary to proactively create a safe and secure working environment for workers.

- Efforts will be promoted to reduce people-to-people contact, such as staggered working hours and commuting by bicycle, in addition to the promotion of working remotely (teleworking).

- It is necessary to continually call for organizers of nationwide and large-scale events, etc. to take the especially cautious measures of canceling or postponing them unless they cannot address risks sufficiently.

- Although there is no clear evidence for how many people should be allowed to attend an event, possible options for the time being include holding events, etc. with up to 100 participants and at up to 50% capacity.

(2) Necessity for responses based on the regional risk assessment (regional category)

- Each prefecture will be classified under the following three categories according to the local infection situation and in light of the principles for the areas subject to the state of emergency and regional classifications in the recommendations, dated April 1. Appropriate measures against infection will be taken in each region.

(i) Prefectures under Specific Cautions

It is necessary to tightly contain the number of new infections by "thorough behavior modification" (ideally 80% reduction in people-to-people contact in these prefectures).

(ii) Prefectures under advisory for expanding infections

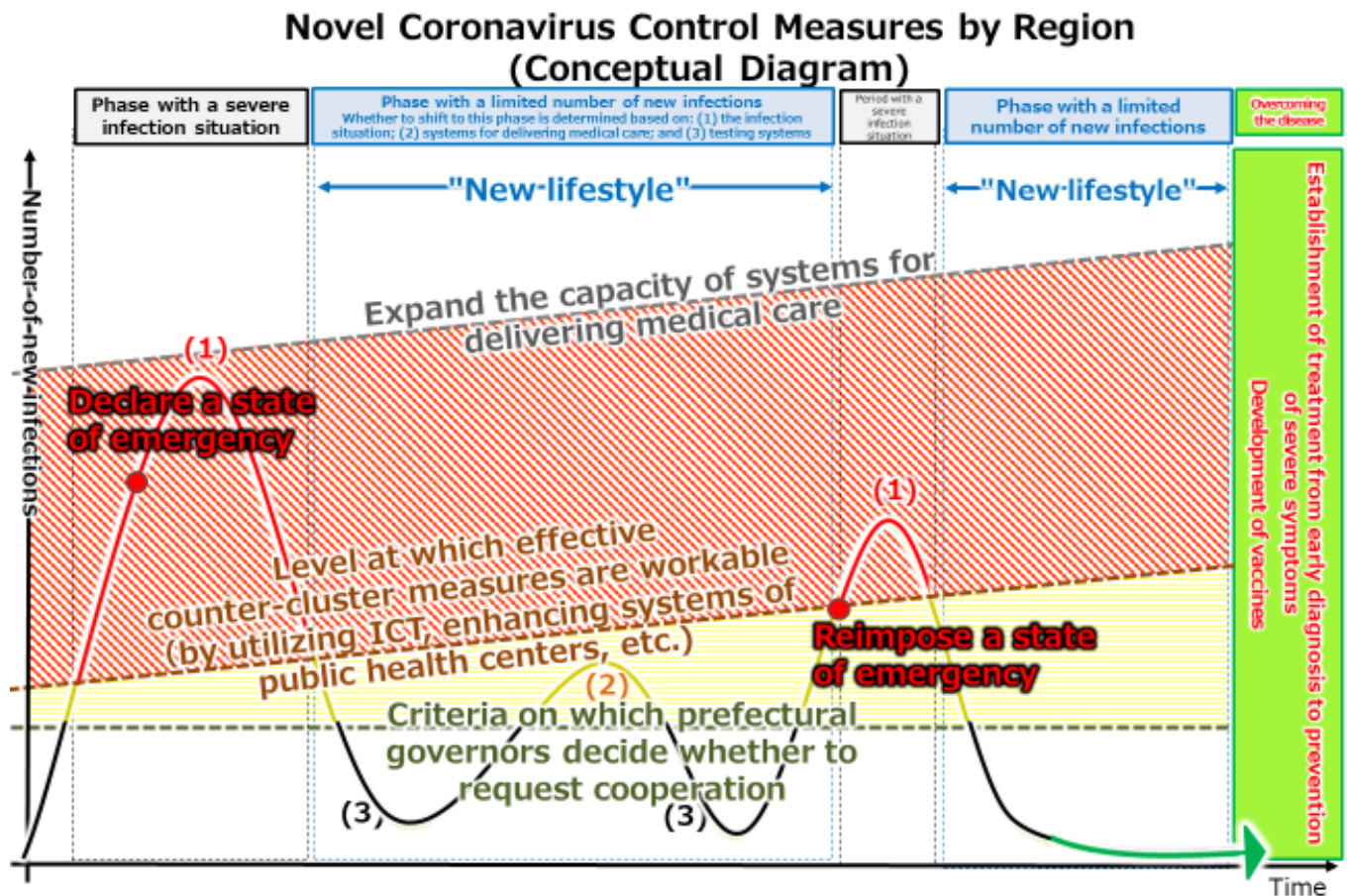
Criteria will be set in advance for deciding whether to step up measures against infection. The designation of these prefectures will be judged, for example, by the number of new infections, etc. at around half the levels set in the criteria for designating Prefectures under Specific Cautions. While monitoring of the infection situation and thorough practicing of the "new lifestyle" are put in place, measures necessary for preventing further spread of the infection will be taken promptly and appropriately when required.

(iii) Prefectures under observation for infections

It is important to continually monitor the infection situation and to continue to practice the "new lifestyle" to prevent the infection from spreading. Traveling across prefectures under

observation for infections and organizing events with a relatively small number of participants are possible only on condition that basic measures are taken against infection.

- (3) Prejudice and discrimination that hinders the balance between socio-economic activities and preventing the spread of the infection
- The central and local governments should make efforts to disseminate accurate knowledge on the disease to eradicate malicious prejudice and discrimination, and take appropriate measures to prevent human rights violations.



6. Measures to prevent the spread of the infection and the collapse of medical services

- (1) Improvements to the systems of public health centers
- It is necessary to improve the systems of public health centers so that they can perform their duties smoothly in cases of a rising number of infections.
- A major challenge has been identified in quick and reliable information sharing among public health centers, medical institutions, prefectures, the government, and other entities. A pilot use of HER-SYS (Health Center Real-time Information-sharing System on COVID-19), an information-gathering and managing support system for swiftly sharing such data as patient information among parties concerned, will start in the coming days. The system needs to be put in place across the country as soon as possible and is expected to be utilized for more efficient and effective measures.

(2) Strengthening counter-cluster measures

- Efforts will be made to publish necessary data, including information on the main types of facilities where clusters of patients have emerged.
- In order for each person to spontaneously grasp the infection situation and modify their behavior, it is important to grasp the frequency of contact with others and potential contact with those testing positive. As such, consideration to introduce a contact tracing application will be expedited.

(3) Improving systems for testing pathogens

- It is important to establish local systems for properly conducting various tests, including PCR and other tests as well as antigen tests. This requires such measures as promoting efficient testing systems.
- The criteria for calculating the positive rate in PCR and other tests vary from one prefecture to another, making it impossible to report a uniform, national positive rate. Hence, it is important to enable comparison of the situation in each prefecture by refining the framework for reporting test results.

(4) Securing systems for delivering medical care

- Thorough preparations are necessary, as it is expected that the infection will spread again.

(5) Situation surrounding medicine, etc.

(i) Therapeutic medications, etc.

- It is necessary to develop vaccines, therapeutic medications, etc. as quickly as possible so that people can truly feel secure about leading their daily lives.
- Remdesivir was approved as a therapeutic drug under exceptional measures, with growing expectations that such initiatives as clinical trials and observational studies of other drugs will proceed.

(ii) Antigen tests

- The antigen test approved on May 13 has the following characteristics:
 - i. It can quickly determine whether those tested are infected or not;
 - ii. It does not require any special equipment or reagent, or transportation of samples; and
 - iii. It requires at certain minimum amount of viruses to detect antigens.
- The test is expected to be conducted mainly on symptomatic patients, and necessary testing systems should be secured along with those for PCR tests.
- It is important to secure systems to allow a wide range of medical institutions to conduct antigen tests, and it is necessary to establish these systems along with reporting systems to appropriately gather information on conducted tests.
- At the same time, efforts should be made to expand PCR and other tests.

7. Conclusion

- No new infections have been confirmed in more than half of all the prefectures (28 prefectures) in the past week.

- It is necessary to continue paying close attention to the emergence of cluster infections as well.
- To balance socio-economic activities with preventing the spread of infection when a long-term response is expected, it is necessary to gradually raise the level of socio-economic activities, and it is important to follow the basics of preventing infection by such methods as thoroughly avoiding settings with a chain of cluster infections and practicing basic measures against infection.
- The government is called on to devise sufficient financial support measures for businesses when it has no alternative but to request their cooperation in restricting the use of their facilities for the time being.

Example of practicing "New Lifestyle"

(1) Basic infection prevention measures for each person

Three basics for preventing infection:

① Keeping physical distance, ② wearing a mask, ③ washing hands

- Keep a distance of two meters as much as possible, or at least one meter, between two persons
 - Chose outside rather than inside if you are to play
 - Avoid standing right in front of each other during conversation as much as possible
 - Wear a mask when you go out or talk inside even without any symptoms
 - Wash your hands and face first when you get back home, followed by changing clothes and showering as soon as possible
 - Carefully wash your hands with water and a soap for approximately 30 seconds (also possibly with hand sanitizer)
- ※ Pay more attention to your health, especially when meeting those who may have a high risk of serious symptoms, such as the elderly or people with chronic diseases.

Infection prevention related to traveling

- Refrain from traveling to and from where the infection is prevailing
- Refrain from traveling upcountry or for leisure. Business trips only when it is unavoidable
- Keep a record of the people you meet and the time of meeting in case you get infected
- Carefully follow how the infection is prevailing locally

(2) Basic lifestyle for daily life

- Wash and sanitize hands frequently
 - Make sure to observe coughing etiquette (by covering your mouth)
 - Ventilate frequently
 - Keep physical distance
 - Avoid gatherings in crowded places, close contact settings and closed spaces**
 - Check your health condition and measure body temperature every morning
- Do not force yourself to go out, and stay home if you have symptoms of fever or cold



(3) Lifestyle for each scene of daily life

Shopping

- Use online shopping
- Shop by yourself or in a small group, at off-peak hours
- Use electronic payment
- Plan your shopping in advance and shop quickly
- Refrain from touching displays like samples
- Keep a distance while lining up at the cashier

Leisure, Sports etc.

- Select places like parks at off-peak time
- Refer to videos for home muscle training or yoga
- Jog in a small group
- Keep a distance as etiquette when passing others
- Utilize booking systems for leisure
- Do not stay long in small rooms
- Keep a distance or stay online for singing or cheering others

Public Transports

- Refrain from chatting
- Avoid peak-hours
- Also take a walk or use bikes

Meals

- Take away or delivery
- Enjoy meals at outside spaces
- Serve individually, avoid sharing plates
- Do not sit face-to-face, rather besides
- Concentrate on eating, refrain from chatting
- Avoid serving alcohol, sharing glasses or sake cups

Family ceremonial occasions

- Avoid banquets or meetings with large numbers
- Decline participation when you have symptoms of fever or cold

(4) New working style

- Work remotely and rotate commuting shifts
- Keeping a distance while commuting during different working hours
- Open and widen working spaces
- Use online meetings
- Exchange business cards online
- Wear a mask and ventilate venues in case of a face-to-face meeting

※ Infection prevention guidelines for each business sectors will be prepared by relevant organizations.