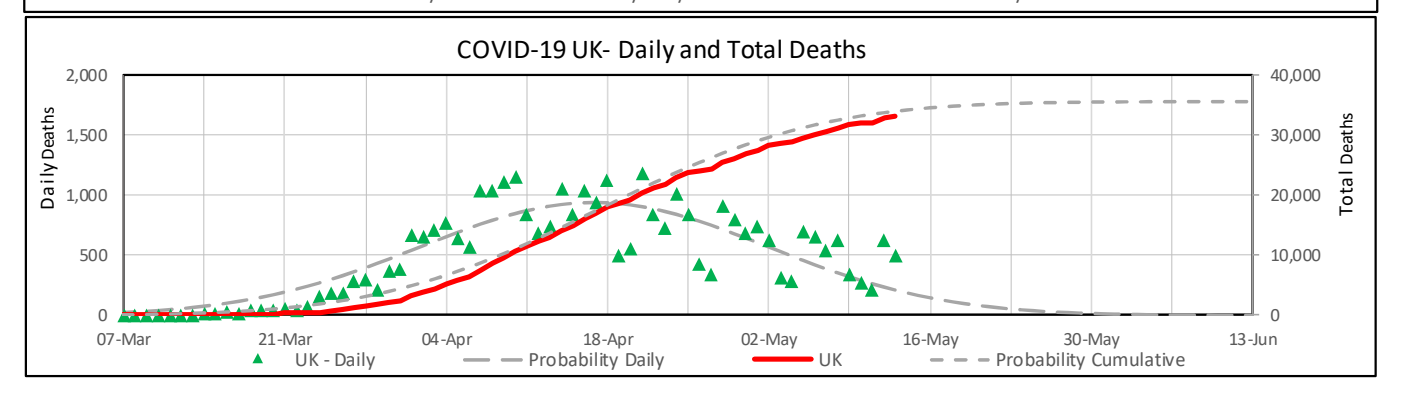
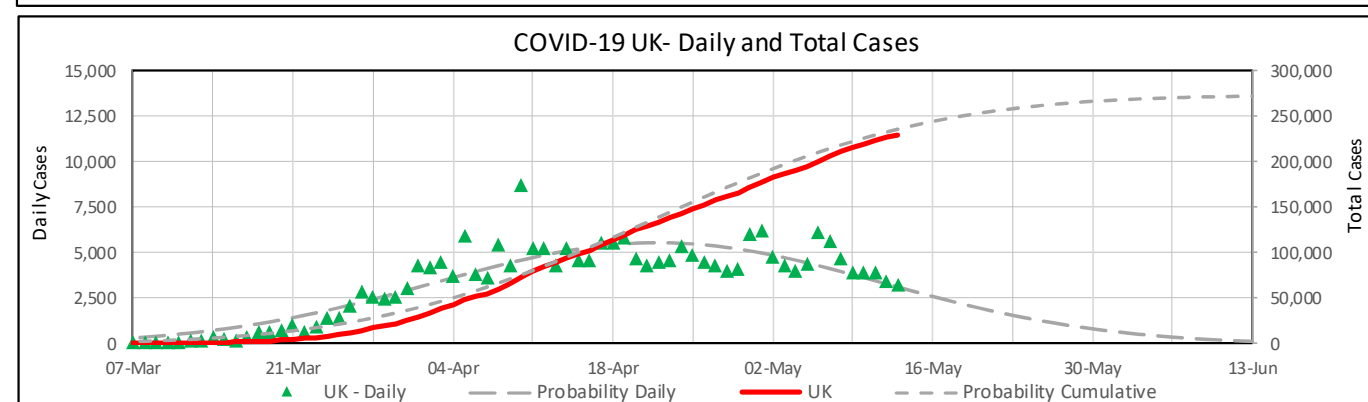
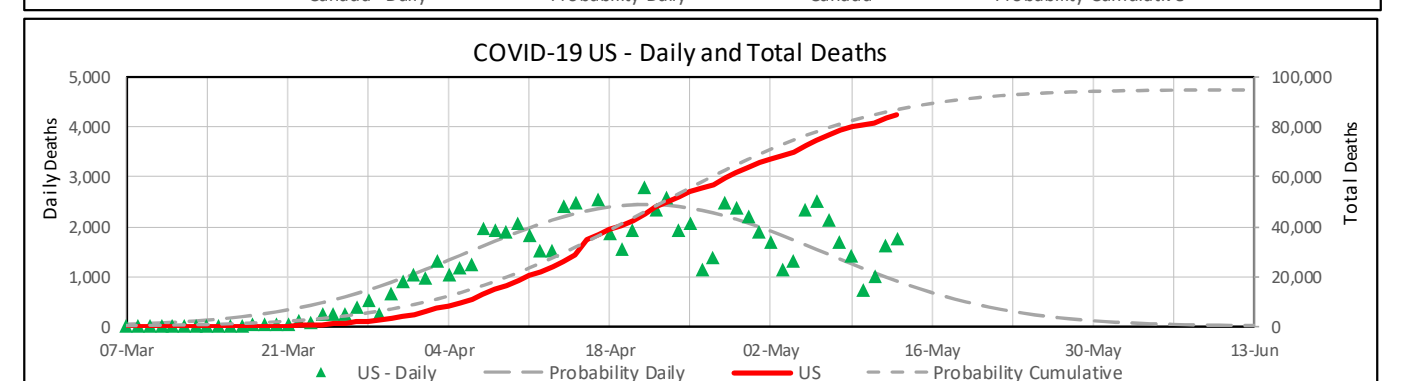
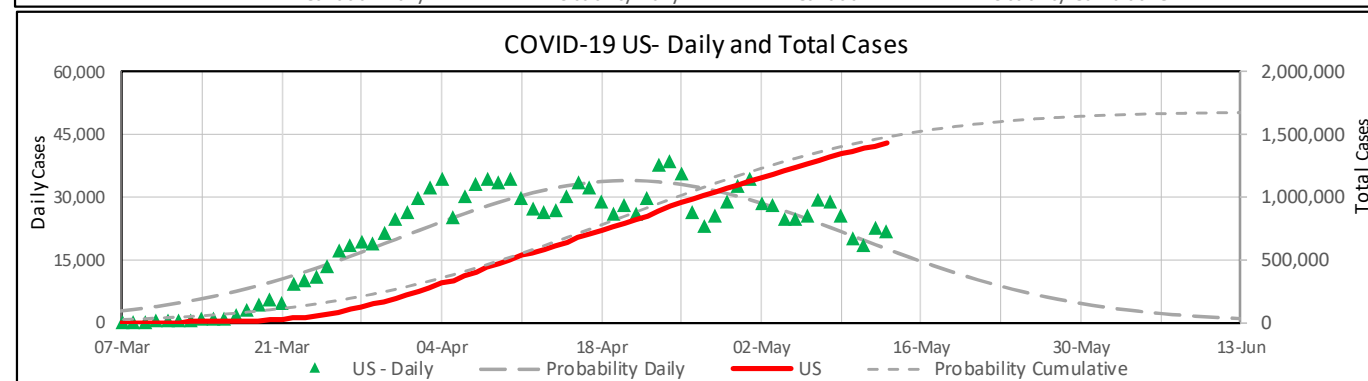
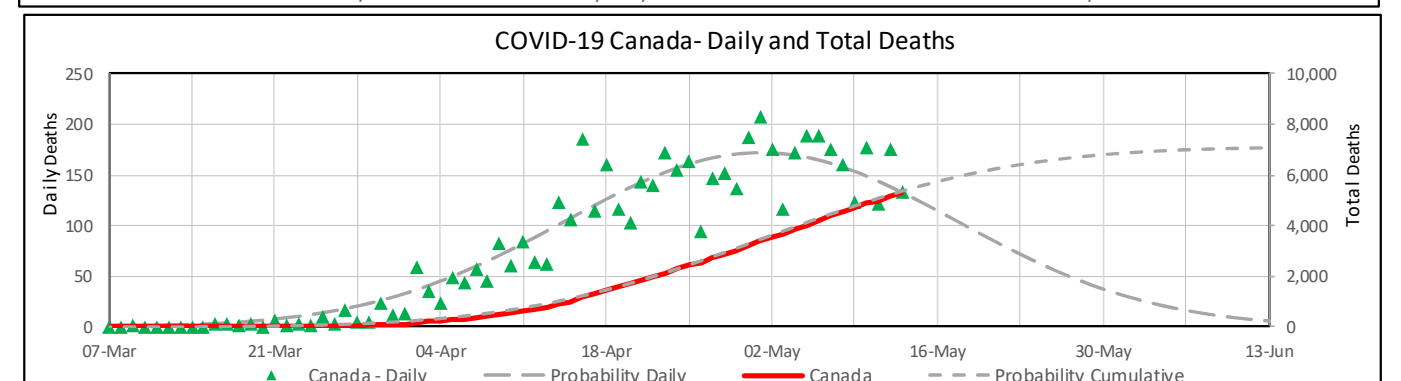
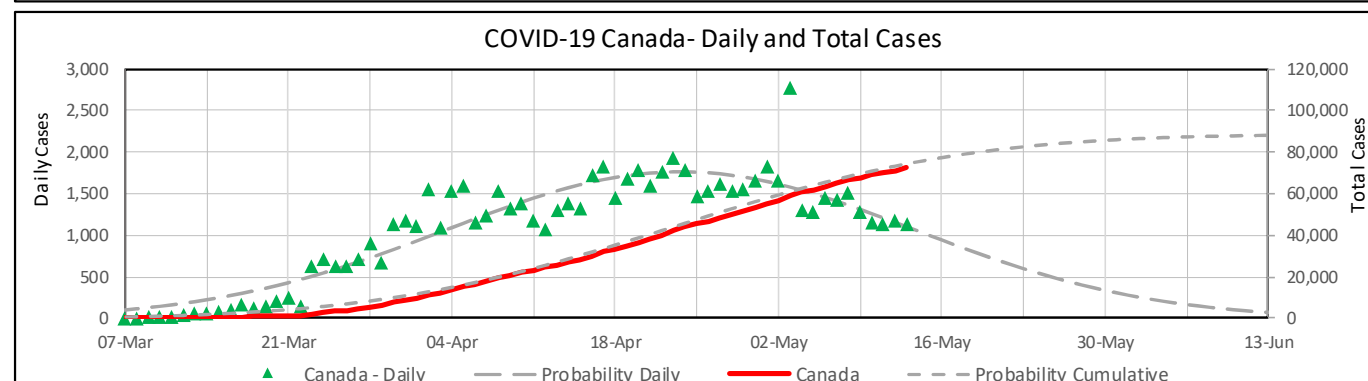
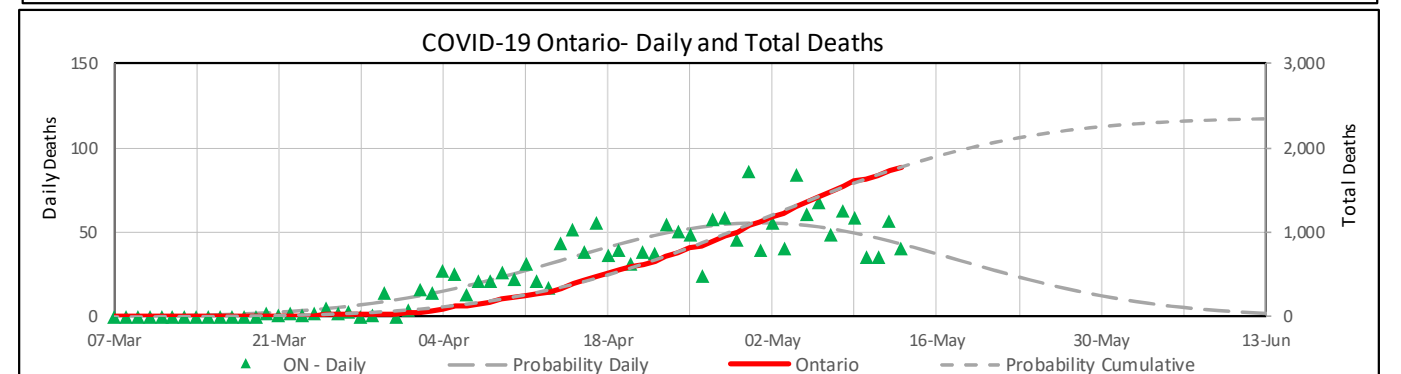
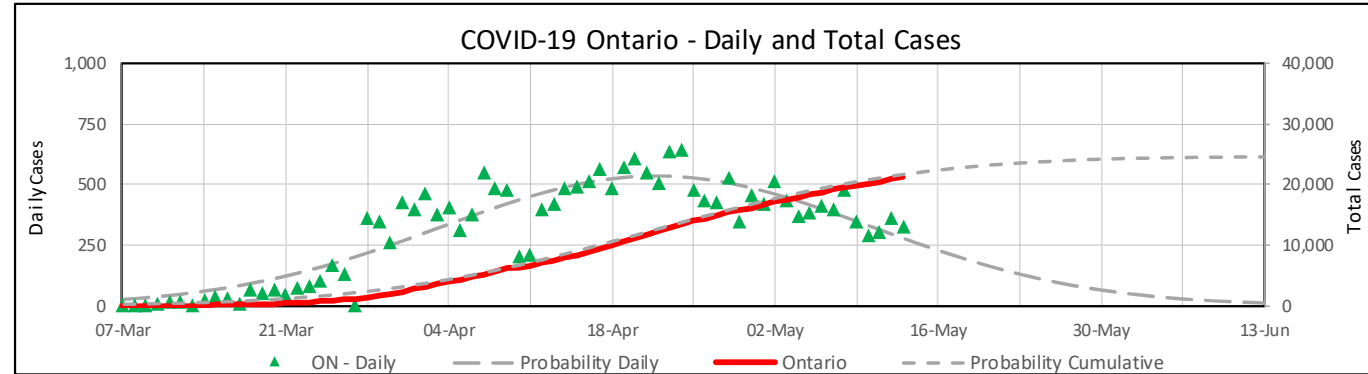
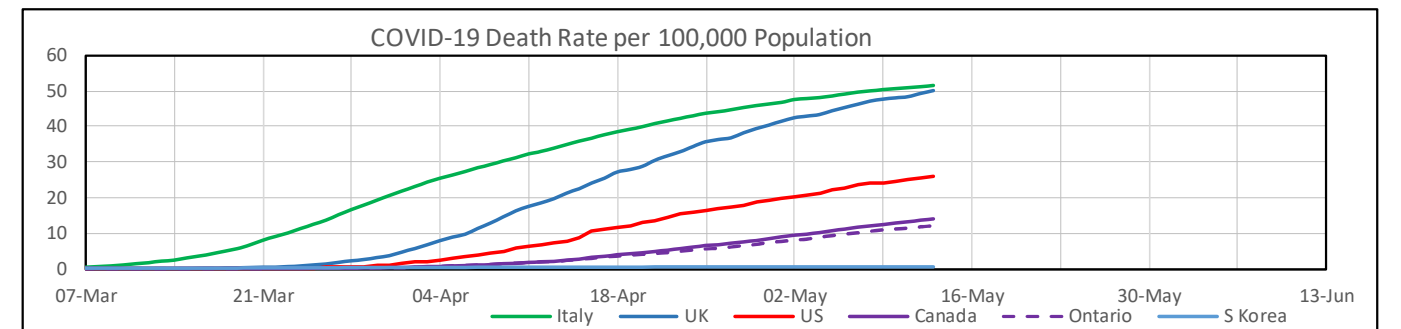
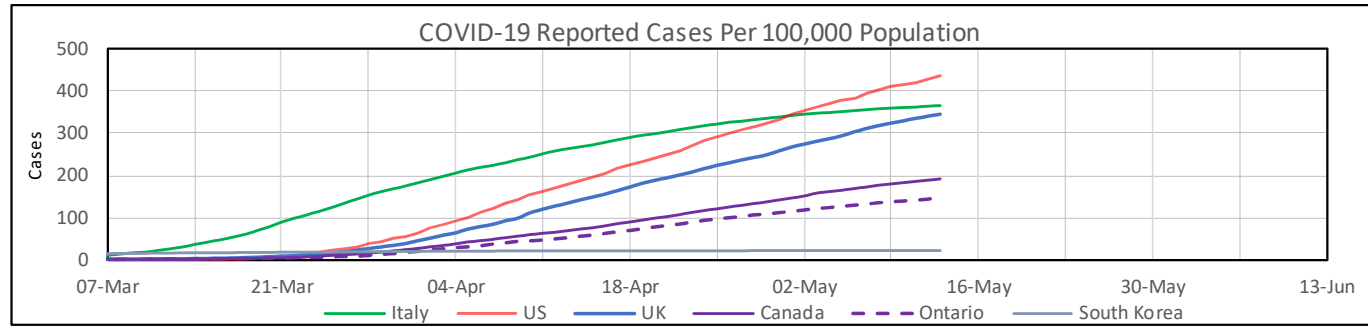


COVID-19 Observations – 14 May 2020 – by Alex Harrington

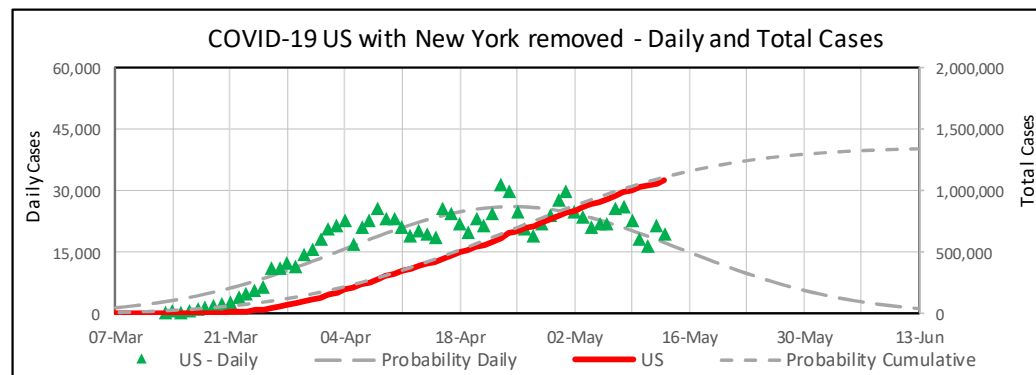


Another week of insight into a pandemic – bet you never thought you’d live through one of these. I’ve rearranged the charts a bit – kept all the main charts above and grouped charts and tables related to testing on this page. I’ve changed some labels on the charts to make them clearer (I hope). The probability model lines are the dashed greys – I’ve used different sized dashes for each and labelled them so you can tell daily from cumulative. I added Ontario to the summary graphs.

First I have to apologize to those interested in the UK data. A little gremlin in the data tables caused one portion to look much worse than actual. I understated the level of testing per day being done – it is actually much closer to other countries used in the comparisons. Everything else about the UK data was fine – that is, it was correct – some aspects aren’t necessarily fine.

I’m expecting some of this stuff to get really stupid and possibly ugly in the next little while. Remember a few weeks ago I said all the UK death data changed because they had excluded long term care homes. The same thing is happening in the US. There is a bunch of data on long term care homes being held by the feds – it will probably make deaths rise a fair bit. It’s not clear when (or if) these data will be released – they’re being “edited”. Plus, there are hints that the US may claim that hospitals are inflating the case and death numbers. We can only hope this kind of lunacy stays in the US – with everything else going on that’s the last thing that’s needed now.

The US continues as the world leader in reported cases per 100,000 population – having passed the 400 mark. The UK is on track to overtake Italy just below that 400 spot. Canada sits at about 190 with Ontario just below 150. Everyone seems to have passed the peak for cases, but it can be deceiving and sometimes it’s just wishful thinking to think we’re going down. I’ve made a chart for the US with New York state removed from the data – those data were easier to get than New York City. New York City was hit hard and their data contributed significantly to the rise in the US. That chart is



on the left and it is not as clear that cases are on the decline – it could be the case count is hovering on a plateau deciding which way to go. How it goes will depend to a large part on how people behave as restrictions are lifted over the next week or two.

When we look at deaths it’s a slightly different story that depends on where the virus hit the hardest. Italy and the UK were punished in long term care facilities and the senior population and the death rate per 100,000 population for both countries is about 50. The US is about half of that and Canada and Ontario are about half again.

So let’s look at testing to see if we’re getting anywhere. There’s something you have to realize about testing data - apart from the other things I’ve said and noted on the tables. These tests are not instant. They take time to complete – many days. And there are backlogs of cases. So what we see on the charts often represents something that happened days ago. But all tests are not the same so some may represent two days ago and some three days ago etc. And this is the stuff being used to make decisions. So when the data takes a jump or it looks like things are in the dumpster, it could be from a bunch of tests all arriving from any number of days ago at the same time. Remember that - when you think everything is fine, it’s probably not.

Ontario has increased its testing target to 19,000 per day and is slowly working towards it – averaging nearly 16,000 per day for the last few days. On a population basis, Ontario has surpassed other jurisdictions.

In terms of the testing required for more easing of restrictions, we have further to go. As I’ve mentioned, you want the tests per case to be at least 100. This means Ontario has to more than double what is being done now. Other jurisdictions have even further to go. Since the beginning of April Ontario has increased its testing by a factor of five – from 3,000 to 15,000. Now all they have to do is slightly more than double where they are now. And of course we need tracking – same old story. The testing issue has to be given more priority if there is any hope of easing restrictions without a surge in cases. That doesn’t seem to be happening, or if it is, it is not being talked about much.

COVID-19 Testing			COVID-19 Tests per Reported Case	
	Tests per Million (Total to Date)	Tests per Day (per million) (Last 7 Days Average)	Total to Date	Last 7 Days
South Korea	13,292	5,808 (113)	62	291
Italy	44,096	60,000 (991)	12	53
Canada	31,349	28,454 (761)	16	23
US	30,313	312,557 (950)	7	14
UK	21,795	62,857 (946)	6	15
Ontario	33,801	15,948 (1,095)	23	45
Italy, US and Ontario report total tests, others report people tested Total tests can be 25-50% higher than people tested			Italy, US and Ontario report total tests, others report people tested Total tests can be 25-50% higher than people tested	

Let’s have another look at Sweden for clues to how to come out of this. The latest data are on the right. Their death rate continues to be higher than in neighbouring countries - four to eight times higher, and also greater than the US but less than the UK and Italy. The cases per 100,000 population is only slightly more than Canada. But their testing is low – about half of Canada or the US, and the tests per case is one of the lowest. So we don’t really know how widespread cases are.

COVID-19 Scandinavian Countries				
	Cases per 100k	Deaths per 100k	Tests per M	Tests per Case
Sweden	273	34	17,351	6
Denmark	184	9	57,532	31
Norway	152	4	38,220	25
Finland	110	5	22,885	21
Finland reports total tests, others report people tested Total tests can be 25-50% higher than people tested				

After all this, we still don’t know what the model for coming out of this phase might be. As with everything else about this pandemic, we’ll just have to wait and see.

Our lockdown has been extended until June 2, although some additional businesses will be allowed to open in the next few days. Some parks can open, no malls but individual stores. Sports with individual competitors can restart. More widespread changes are coming – here soon and in other places it’s happening now. We should see what effect this has on things over the next couple of weeks. In addition, the Canada - US border will probably remain closed until June 21.

One thing we should remember – all of this is just practice for when the next wave hits in the fall. This thing will not go away.

Take care of yourselves and don’t endanger others.