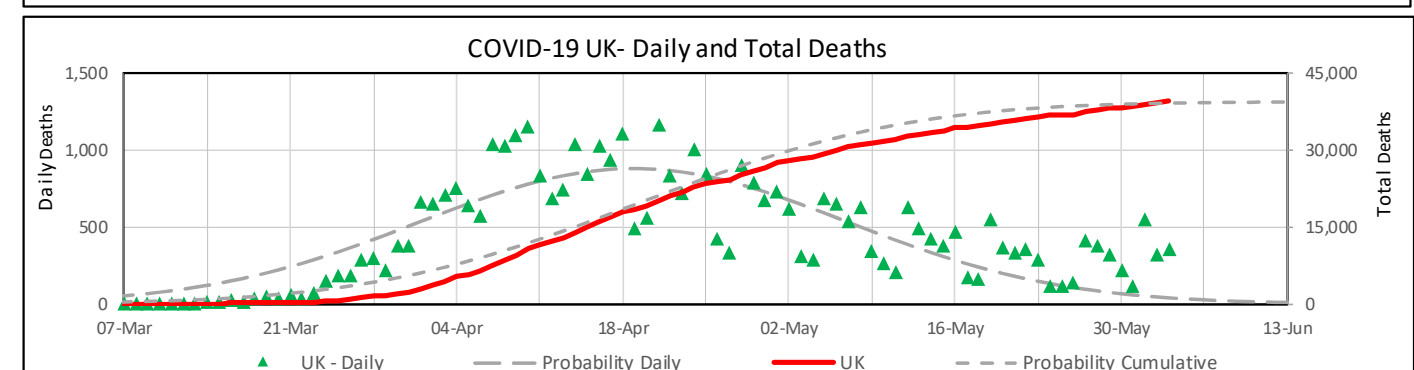
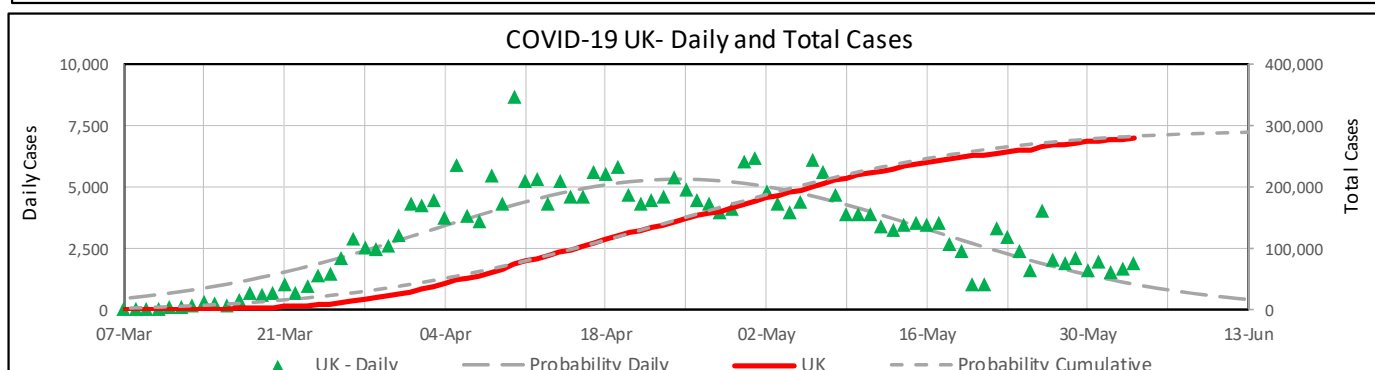
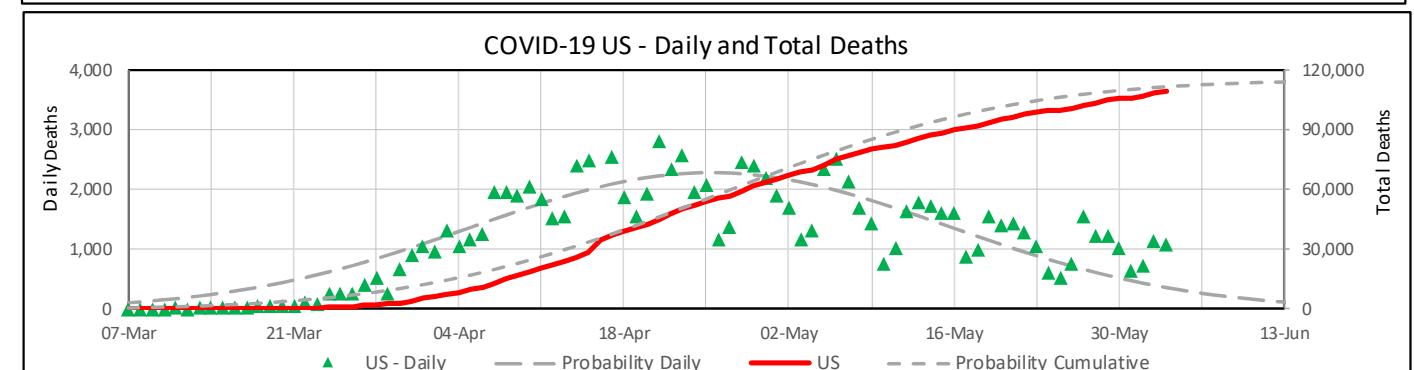
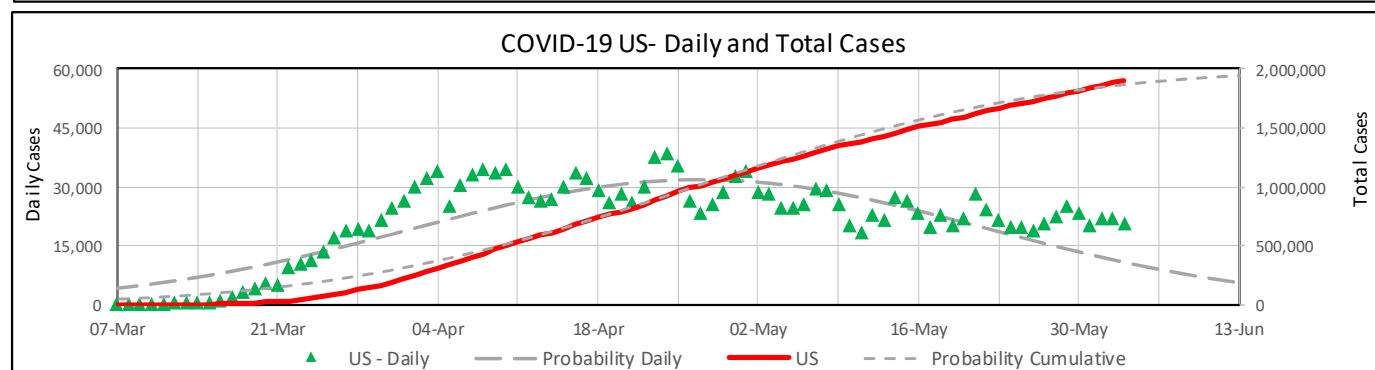
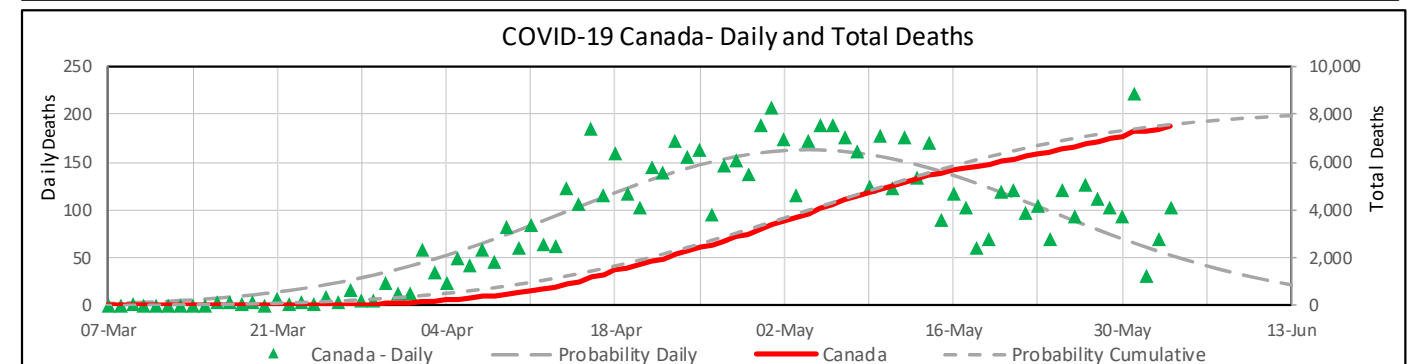
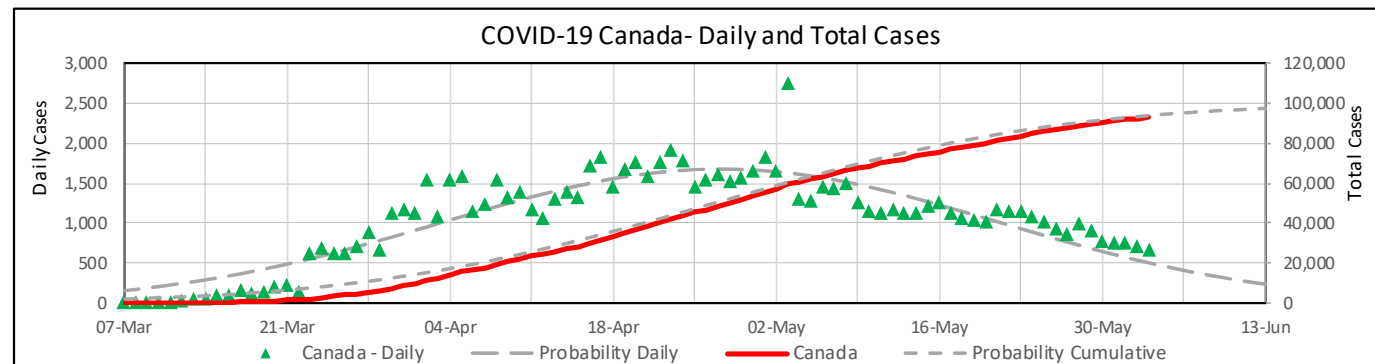
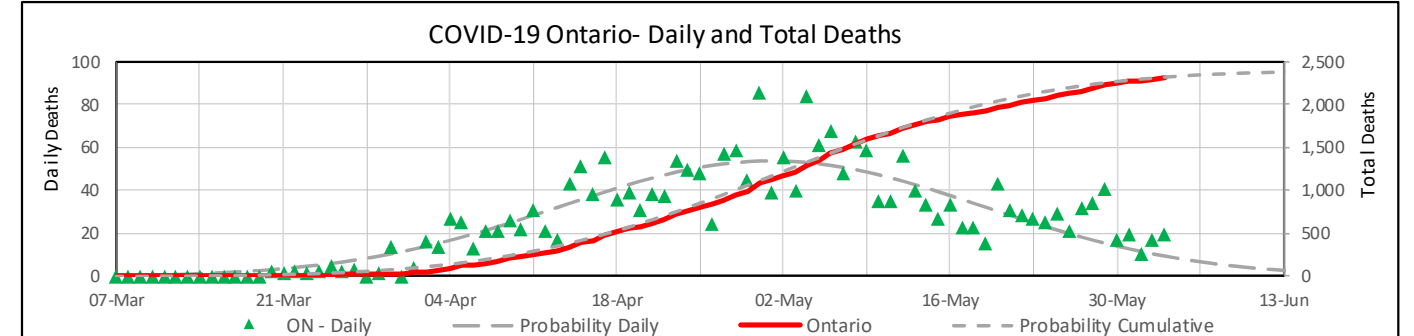
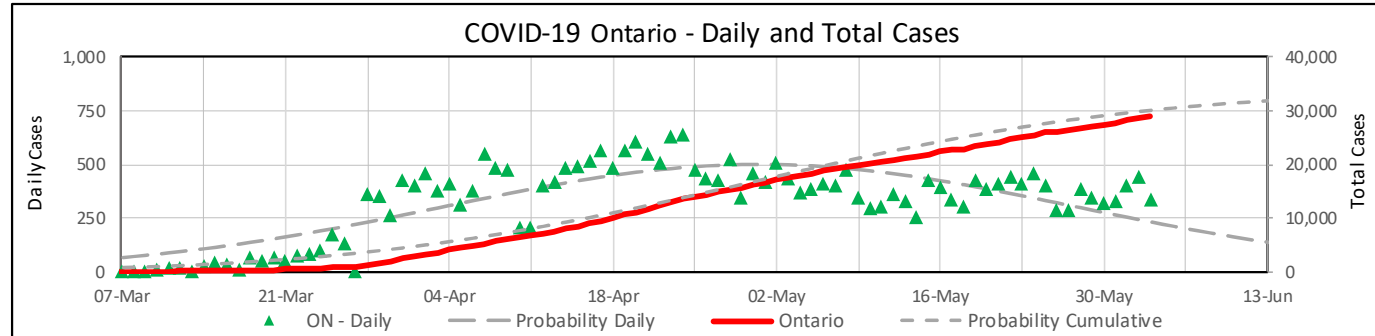
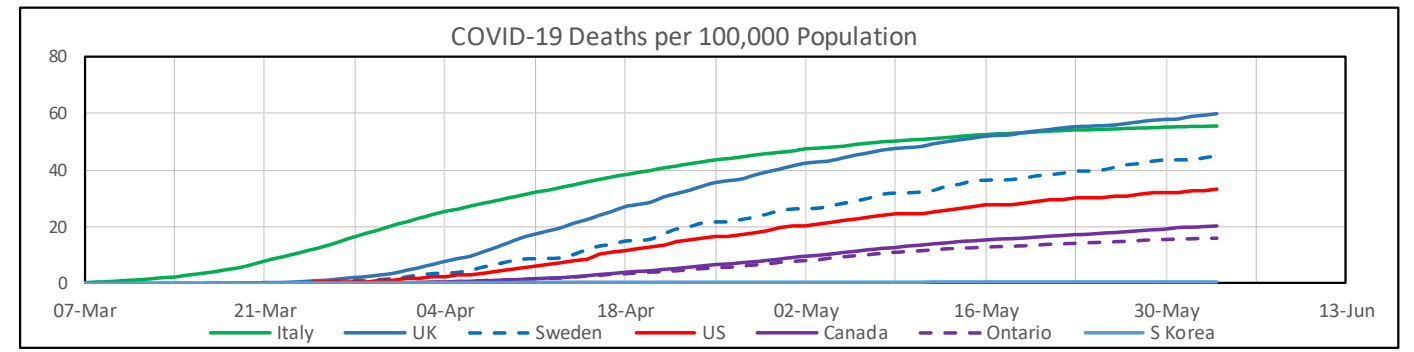
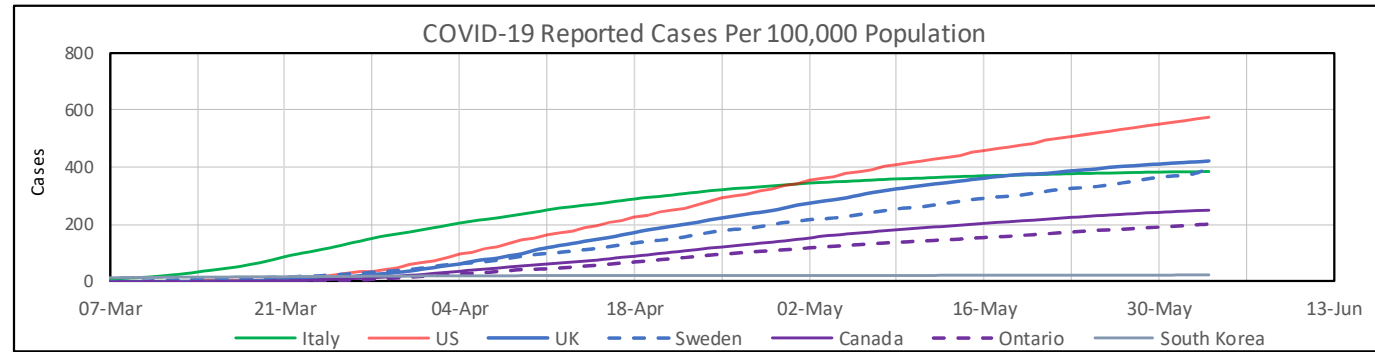


COVID-19 Observations – 04 June 2020 – by Alex Harrington



Yesterday, Sweden’s chief epidemiologist said he might have gotten it wrong. Too many people died. He didn’t say what he might have done differently.

So here we are in the middle of a pandemic (actually closer to the start than the end) and no one really knows what to do. It doesn’t matter right now anyway because there’s a better story to follow with all the rioting in the US. We get a rest from the endless virus coverage so we can see endless protest coverage.

The charts are in their usual places, just like the heavens. And they seem to be confirming what I thought last week. The charts on the right are most telling – The decline in case rates has slowed significantly, and death rates seem to be levelling. I thought deaths might decline a bit further, but it appears the virus can always root out the vulnerable from among those afflicted.

The US and Sweden lead in new cases per day per million population, pushing 75, with a large jump in cases in Sweden. Canada and the UK are less than half that at about 25 new cases per day per million. The UK seems to have dropped from the high case group to the low case group – not sure what’s going on there – perhaps they’re being more diligent. What’s interesting is that the case curves are not behaving like Italy, whose curve has risen, peaked and dropped, and is now tailing away. The others are much more drawn out so this will last for a while. The deaths per day per million population seem to be converging to a range between 2 and 5, with Sweden and the UK at the high end of the range.

What does this tell us? To me it seems we are probably going to follow a Sweden-like path, totally unintentionally, but also unavoidably. Unintentional because we kept hearing of lockdowns, followed by testing and contact tracing blah bablah bablah. I have not seen it. I’ve looked – not really hard, I don’t spend 24 hours a day at this, but I do carry out searches to see if anything’s happened, I check the various news sources etc. If something as important to the next step of our response to this pandemic had occurred, I would think it would make the news. Without that, and with our level of testing well below what’s needed to identify where the virus is, we’re flying blind. Just as Sweden did. You can see in the test data in the table to the right that Sweden has one of the lowest levels of testing. Although we have more testing, it is relatively unfocused.

Unavoidable because people and the economy will be hard pressed to endure another lockdown if cases rise. So preventative measures have to be followed with the economy opened – just as Sweden did (but they never closed). So here we are – everyone is pretty well in the same place – economy screwed up, stuck with social distancing, masks, no large gatherings – just waiting for this to end.

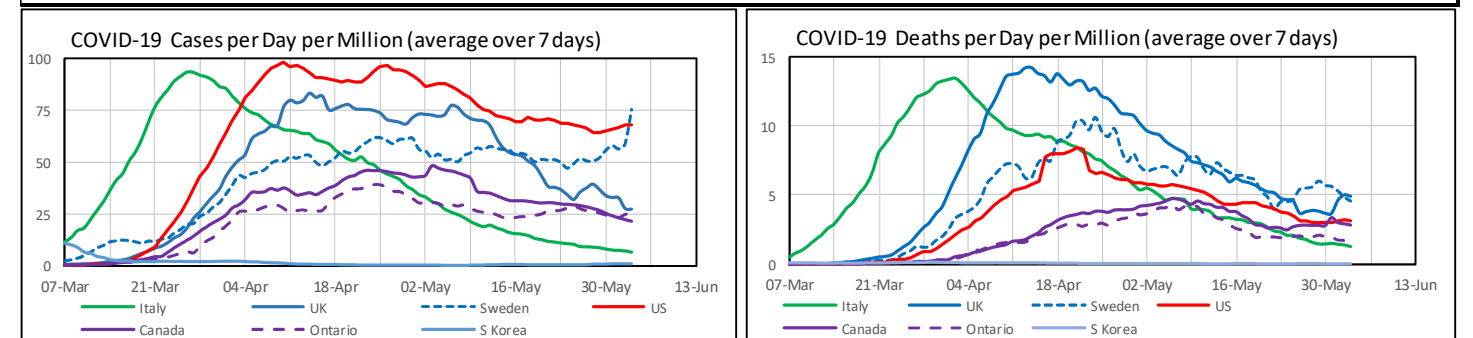
And we have to rely on data to determine how well we’re doing. I think some places are in data fatigue. The UK hasn’t reported how much they’ve been testing in two weeks. Suddenly today all the data from the UK appears and its changed. Same with a couple of other places. People are reworking their data. Remember the long-term care death data I mentioned from the US a couple of weeks ago – due at the end of May? No sign of it. We are probably underestimating many things about where we are with this virus.

Ontario keeps saying it’s testing capacity is increasing but it never tests up to capacity – it averaged nearly 18,00 tests in the last week – capacity is 21,00. Or is it 24,000? It changes so often I can’t remember. But still no testing plan. Although the Province has announced today it is appointing Dr. Jane Philpott to lead Ontario Health Data Platform - presumably the means of better detecting and responding to COVID 19. They hope to launch this platform by July.

I’m cynical and don’t expect too much in terms of a “next phase” in “fighting the virus”. None of the tools we need are there yet and I’m skeptical of a July launch – perhaps the end of July. It is good to see action rather than words. Until then, we may see more flareups over the summer – agricultural areas with a lot of migrant workers may be hit. Vacation spots may be hit as people venture out. And when they go home, their home base will be hit. And high-density manufacturing plants are always at risk.

COVID-19 Summary Data											
	Tests per Million		Tests per Day		Tests per Reported Case		Cases per Million		Deaths per Million		Deaths Per Case
	Total to Date	Average over Last 7 days	Total	Per Million	Total	Last 7 days	Total to date	Average per day Last 7 days	Total to date	Average per day Last 7 days	Total to date (%)
South Korea	18,679	14,854	290		83	358	226	0.9	5	0.01	2.4%
Italy	66,061	55,714	920		17	152	3,862	6	555	1.2	14.4%
UK	45,304	64,286	968		11	36	4,212	27	598	4.9	14.2%
N. America											
US	55,354	431,781	1,312		10	20	5,779	68	332	3.1	5.7%
Canada	46,936	32,142	859		19	37	2,488	21	200	2.8	8.1%
Ontario	53,969	17,737	1,217		27	48	1,994	25	159	1.5	8.0%
Scandinavia											
Sweden	28,837	5,243	519		7	7	4,001	75	450	4.6	11.2%
Denmark	93,506	8,951	1,542		46	226	2,027	7	100	0.4	4.9%
Norway	46,988	1,767	329		30	146	1,579	2	44	0.05	2.8%
Finland	34,870	2,736	496		0	64	1,252	6	58	0.2	4.6%

Italy, US, Ontario and Finland report total tests, others report people tested. Total tests can be 25-50% higher than people tested



To top it all off, we have politicians and others, ranting about government controlling our right to gather in numbers or move where we want or wear what we want. Not just in the US but in Canada as well. So expect to see more cases as people are encouraged to ignore safety precautions.

And more deaths.

We still have a long way to go. Unless this virus tires of us as much as we’ve tired of it. Unlikely – we’re too easy for it.

Take care of yourselves and don’t endanger others.