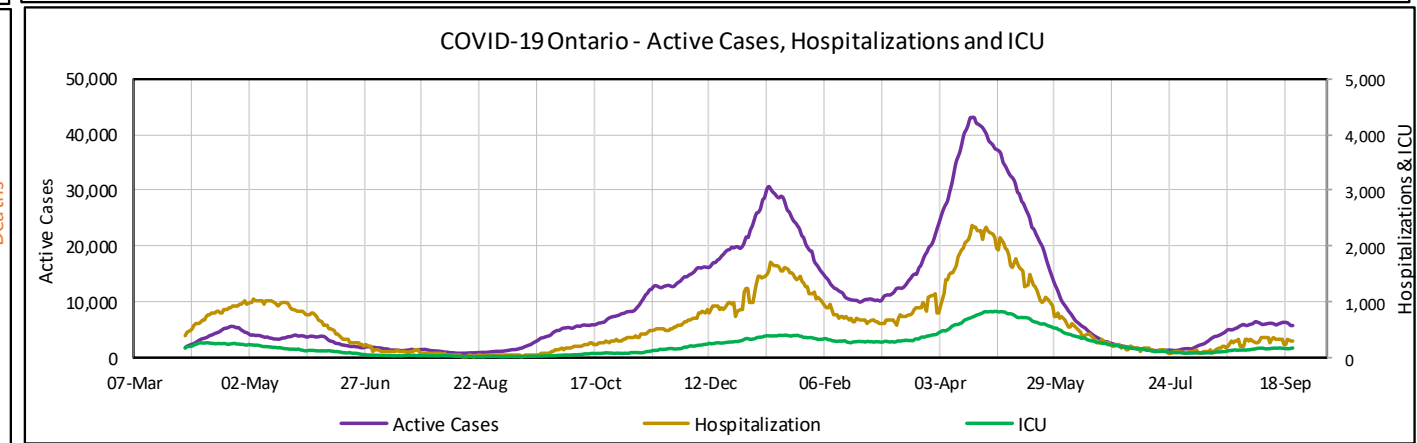
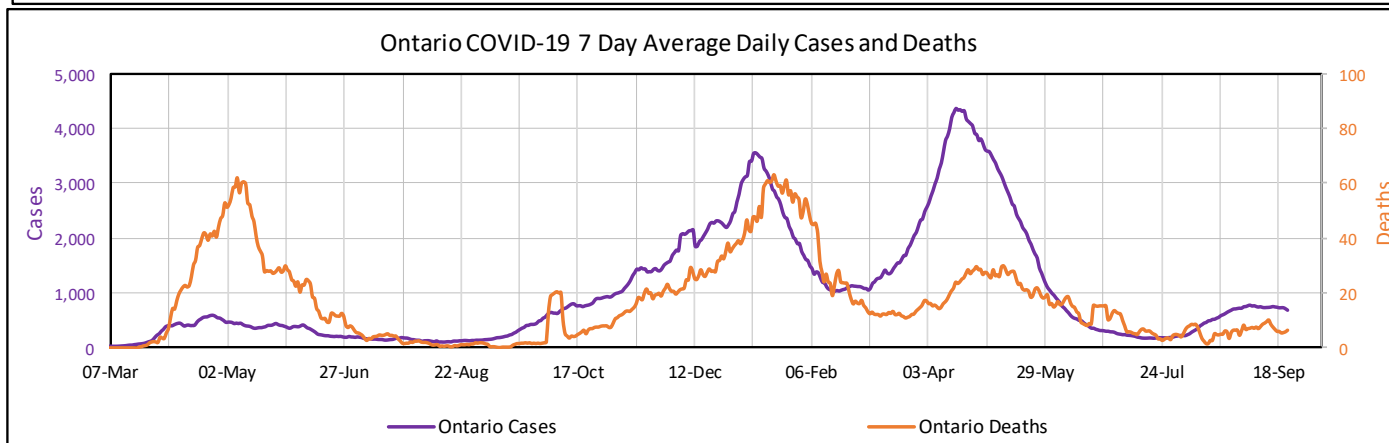
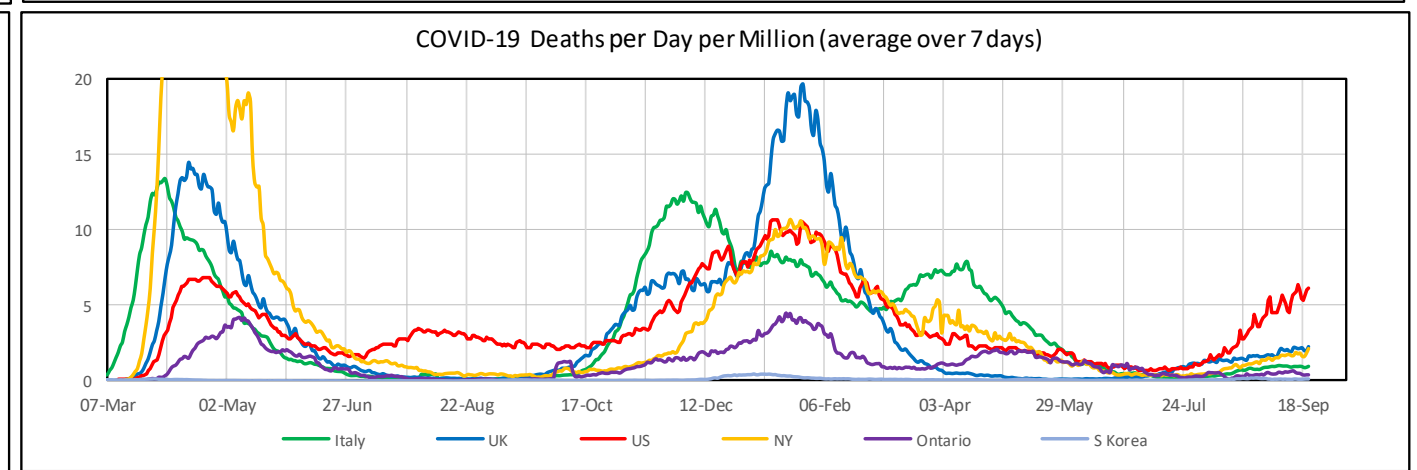
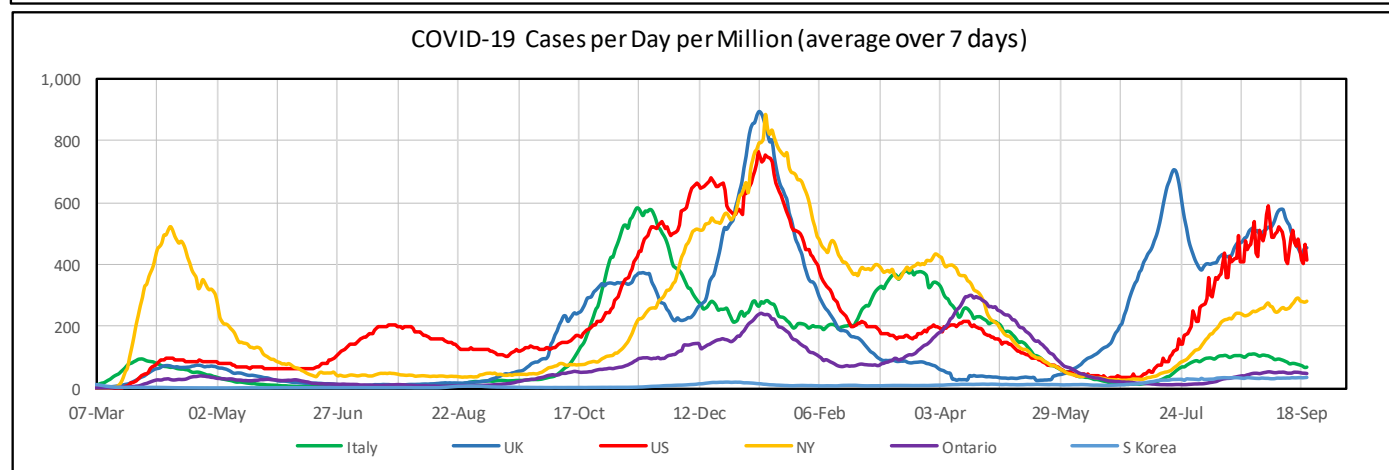
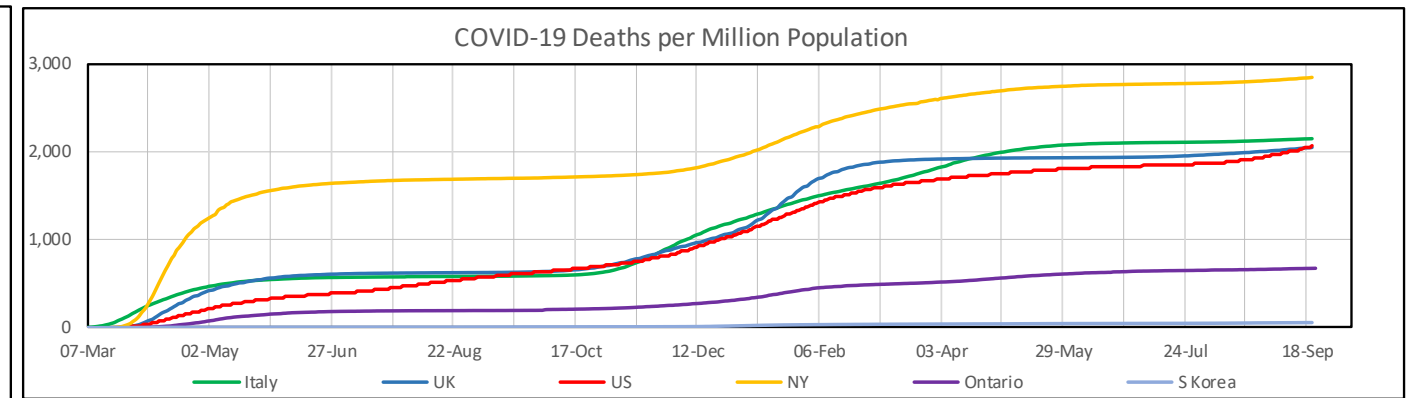
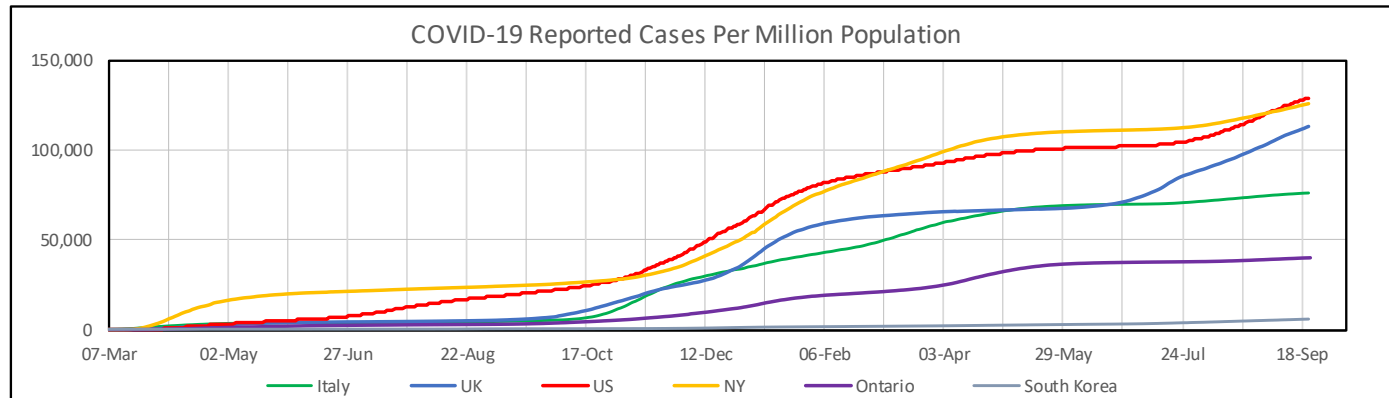


COVID-19 Observations – 23 September, 2021 – by Alex Harrington



Yesterday was the first day of the *vaccine passport* requirement for admission to designated areas. The government web site providing the necessary documentation shut down intermittently throughout the day – not an auspicious start. I expect that things will go downhill from here. All reason has been lost during the pandemic. Anti vaxxers have apparently lost their ability to think and analyse, and have abandoned their sense of responsibility to others. The new restrictions will only harden their resolve, and more insane ideas will fuel their objections – the latest theory is that the government will put vaccine in salad dressing. You just can't argue with this level of lunacy – everyone knows that few antivaxxers use salad dressing. Faced with exclusion and increasing disdain, we can only expect their reactions to be more animated and hostile.

I had a conversation with an anti vaxxer recently, someone I was totally surprised to find in this camp. The conversation was short. It started with a claim that the vaccine is still experimental. This in despite of its having received full FDA approval, and having been administered to hundreds of millions of people, with few significant side effects. (Don't start with me on the testicles falling off because of the vaccine and all that stuff. I'm talking about real side effects.) This was followed by an argument that it is strange that we have not been able to find a vaccination for the common cold but this vaccine was done in a year and these are all coronaviruses. Where to start with this one? First, the cold is not a coronavirus, it is a rhinovirus. And while we're at it, the flu is not a coronavirus either, it is an influenza virus. They are different viruses – you can see it if you look at electron microscope scans – something I do regularly just to pass the time. Second, the RNA based vaccines have been under development for years, all that happened was these vaccines had to be "tuned" to the coronavirus. So there is really nothing strange or sinister about it. All to no avail, of course, and very depressing.

And then there are masks. Many think that now we're vaccinated, we can do away with masks. There are several flaws in this argument. Vaccinated people can carry and spread the virus, even more so with the delta variant. The first surgical masks were developed to protect the patient from the surgeon – to prevent exhaled germs and microbes getting into open incisions during surgery. That is the main purpose of the mask – to protect others from your cooties – the ones you exhale that can carry the virus on moisture from your breath. Another benefit of a mask is that it filters the air you breathe, helping to prevent the virus getting into your throat and lungs. Even though you may be vaccinated, you don't want to get the virus – you can spread it, and the delta variant can make you sick, in spite of your vaccination.

There are now noises about the six foot separation – why do we need it, there's no science to back it up, and on and on. If you look at videos of mask tests, you'll see that six feet is about the distance over which a normal exhalation dissipates – more if you yell, less if you breathe shallowly. You don't need a tape measure – all you need is common sense.

Common sense will tell you this – the virus is still here. A vaccine will protect you. A mask will protect you and others. Distancing will keep you away from the main source of the virus – water droplets exhaled by someone with the virus.

This virus will be here for a long time, so we will have to learn to live with it. But the antivaxxers have guaranteed that we will have another winter where cases are high enough to pose a threat to the health care system. This will prolong our need to wear masks and distance, and have the government monitor our progress. I don't care if the antivaxxers get sick now - let them. Unfortunately, it can't happen fast enough to get us out of this stage of the pandemic. I do care that their selfishness and ignorance impacts so many by clogging up the health care system.

Take care of yourselves and don't endanger others.

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	Last 7 days	Total to date	Average per day Last 7 days	Total to date	Average per day Last 7 days	Total to date	
		Total	Per Million								(%)
South Korea	256,034	34,226	668	45	18	5,680	37	47	0.1	0.8%	
Italy	1,476,802	280,951	4,640	19	69	76,662	67	2,154	1.0	2.8%	
UK	3,968,560	966,042	14,540	35	33	113,364	455	2,044	2.3	1.8%	
US	1,696,031	1,420,333	4,316	13	10	128,882	415	2,062	6.1	1.6%	
Ontario	1,225,349	31,229	2,143	31	48	39,939	47	664	0.4	1.7%	

South Korea and Canada report people tested. The others report total tests. Total tests can be 10-50% higher than people tested

