

# UK could have Europe's worst coronavirus death rate, says adviser

Daily death toll shows the situation is comparable with other badly hit countries, says Jeremy Farrar

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An air ambulance advanced trauma team lands in south-east London.  
Photograph: Guy Corbishley/Alamy

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The UK could end up with the worst coronavirus death rate in Europe, one of the government's leading scientific advisers has said.

Prof Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust and a pandemics expert on the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), said the figures of almost 1,000 daily hospital deaths showed the UK was in a similar situation to other European

countries that had been badly affected.

Just hours before the news that the number of hospital deaths had hit 10,612 as of 5 pm on Saturday, Farrar told BBC One's The Andrew Marr Show: "Numbers in the UK have continued to go up. I do hope that we are coming close to the numbers reducing. But yes, the UK is likely to be certainly one of the worst, if not the worst affected country in Europe."

He held up Germany as an example of a country with a lower death rate that had "very early on introduced testing on a scale that was remarkable and continued to do that and isolate individuals and look after those who got very sick".

Confirmed UK cases

84,279

New cases

5,288

UK deaths

10,612

England

66,330

Scotland

5,912

Wales

5,297

NI

1,806

Data from Public Health England at 6:48 BST 12 Apr 2020.

France has recorded a daily death toll of more than 1,000, but unlike the UK, it has been including mortality in care homes in its daily figures.

Sharma said it was a global pandemic and that different countries were at different stages in the spread of the disease. He insisted that the measures the UK had taken were on course to slow the trend of number of deaths and the advice to stay at home was aimed at flattening the curve.

Later, Matt Hancock, the health secretary, did not dispute Farrar's analysis, but said the government was advised by many different experts and that the future spread of the virus was "unknowable". He said it underlined the importance of the government's advice to stay at home during Easter.

A disputed recent study from world-leading disease data analysts projected that the UK would become the country worst hit by the coronavirus pandemic in Europe.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in Seattle predicted 66,000 UK deaths from COVID-19 by August, but this was revised down to 37,000 later because of the recent slowing in the increase of the death rate.

The 66,000 figure had been rejected by scientists whose modeling of the probable shape of the UK epidemic is relied on by the government. Prof Neil Ferguson of Imperial College London said the IHME figures on “healthcare demand” – including hospital bed use and deaths – were twice as high as they should be.

In March, the Imperial College London team said the number of deaths could reach 260,000 in the UK with no restrictions on movement, but they hoped to get this down to 20,000 with the lockdown strategy.

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Source:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/12/uk-could-have-europes-worst-coronavirus-death-rate-says-pandemic-expert>

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