

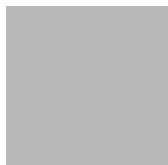
PAUL SCHERRER INSTITUT



Markus Müller :: CMT/LSM :: Paul Scherrer Institut

Random Testing for a safe exit from the COVID19 lockdown

LSM Seminar, Paul Scherrer Institute, May 7 2020



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Peter Derlet (PSI, EPF Lausanne, ETH Zürich)

Christopher Mudry (PSI, EPF Lausanne)

Gabriel Aeppli (PSI, EPF Lausanne, ETH Zürich)

Using random testing in a feedback-control loop to manage a safe exit from the
COVID-19 lockdown

Online preprints:

[arXiv:2004.04614](https://arxiv.org/abs/2004.04614)

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.09.20059360v2>

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1101/2020.04.09.20059360v2](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.09.20059360v2)

A simple theoretical physicists' approach

To show how statistical, random sampling can save lives and costs



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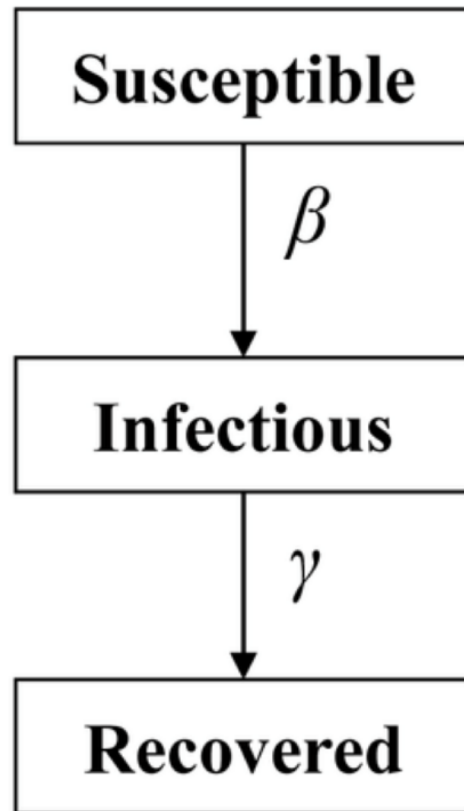
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Please ask questions during the talk!

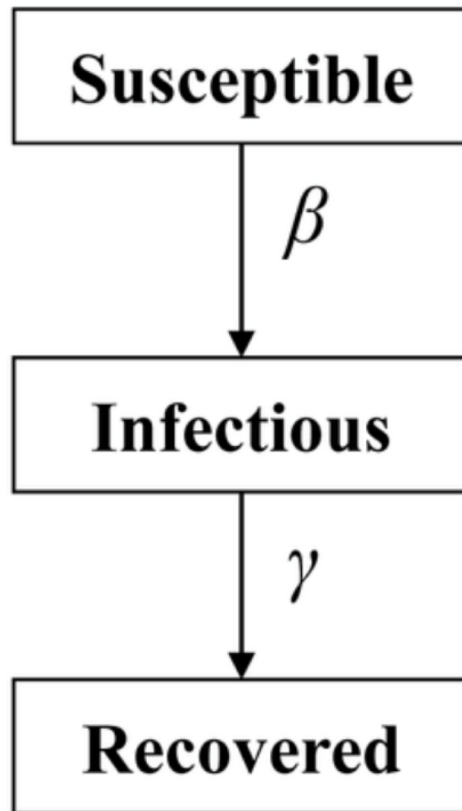
Fragen während des Vortrags sind willkommen!

Questions bienvenues pendant l'exposé!

Simplest epidemiologic model: Global SIR model - Susceptible-infected-recovered



Simplest epidemiologic model:
Global SIR model - Susceptible-infected-recovered

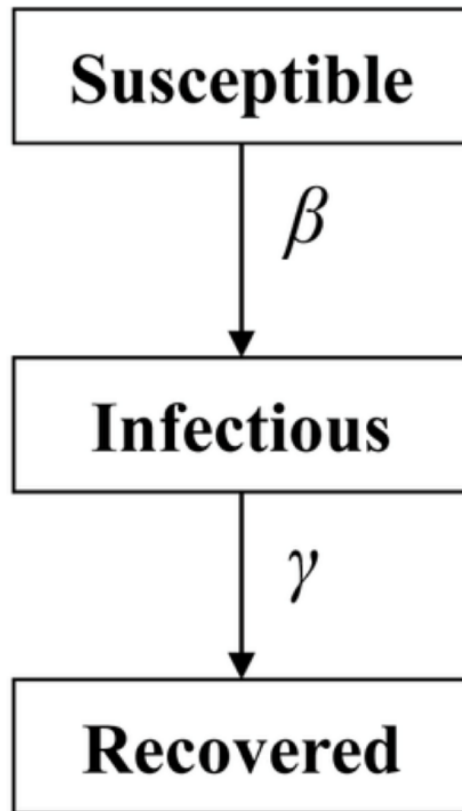


$$\frac{dS}{dt} = -\beta SI$$

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta SI - \gamma I$$

$$\frac{dR}{dt} = \gamma I$$

Simplest epidemiologic model:
Global SIR model - Susceptible-infected-recovered



$$\frac{dS}{dt} = -\beta SI$$

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta SI - \gamma I$$

$$\frac{dR}{dt} = \gamma I$$

SIR model (susceptible-infected-recovered)

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \left(\bar{\beta} \frac{S}{N} - \gamma \right) I$$

Basic infection rate

Susceptible fraction
of population

- Recovery
- Death
- Detection+quarantine

SIR model (susceptible-infected-recovered)

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \left(\bar{\beta} \frac{S}{N} - \gamma \right) I$$

Basic infection rate

Susceptible fraction
of population

- Recovery
- Death
- Detection+quarantine

- Physical distancing
- Reduced economy
- Lockdown

- Immunization

- Contact tracing
- Mass population screening

SIR model

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \underbrace{\left(\bar{\beta} \frac{S}{N} - \gamma \right)}_{k(t)} I$$

Unmitigated
growth rate

$$k_0 \equiv \bar{\beta} - \gamma \approx \frac{\ln 2}{3} \approx 0.23$$

Reproduction number

$$R_0 = \frac{\bar{\beta}}{\gamma} = 1 + \frac{k_0}{\gamma} \approx 3$$

$$\gamma^{-1} \approx 10$$

SIR model

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Exponential explosion:

$$k > 0; R > 1$$

SIR model

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \underbrace{\left(\bar{\beta} \frac{S}{N} - \gamma \right)}_{k(t)} I$$

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Reproduction number

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$$\gamma^{-1} \approx 10$$

Exponential decrease:

$$k < 0; R < 1$$

SIR model

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \underbrace{\left(\bar{\beta} \frac{S}{N} - \gamma \right)}_{k(t)} I$$

Unmitigated
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Reproduction number

$$R_0 = \frac{\bar{\beta}}{\gamma} = 1 + \frac{k_0}{\gamma} \approx 3$$

$$\gamma^{-1} \approx 10$$

Stability (with least restrictions):

$$k = 0; R = 1$$

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0. Diagnostic use: patients, medical staff

1. Suppressing $k(t)$

Ferretti et al Science, March 2020

- Contact tracing (BUT: asymptomatic spread is dangerous!)
- Massive screening of entire population

2. Monitoring $k(t)$

- Measure $k(t)$ via random sampling
- • Assess policies with minimal delay
- • Feedback and control loop to reach optimal steady state:

$$k = 0 ; R = 1$$

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Always use both approaches: (2) monitors the success of (1) !

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Goal: Identify and quarantine infected households within a serial time $\rightarrow R < 1 ; k < 0$

Test every household once per 6 days!

$$N_{\text{test}} = \frac{N_{\text{Household}}}{6} \text{ daily, i.e. } \begin{array}{l} 22.000.000 \text{ (USA)} \\ 700.000 \text{ (CH)} \end{array} !!$$

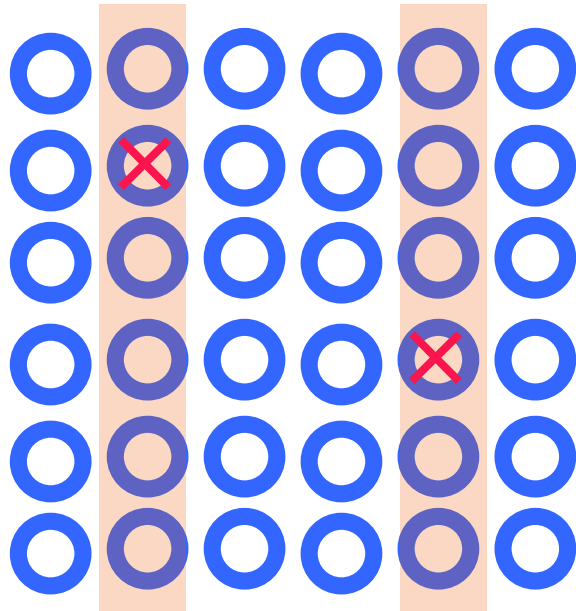
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How to carry out such large numbers of tests?

Testing large numbers: Pool testing



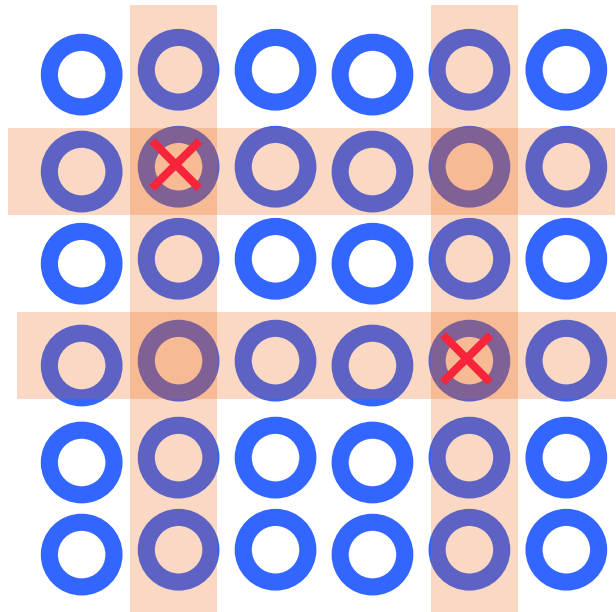
A very old idea

For COVID19, see:

R. Hanel, St. Thurner,

arXiv 2003.09944

Testing large numbers: Pool testing



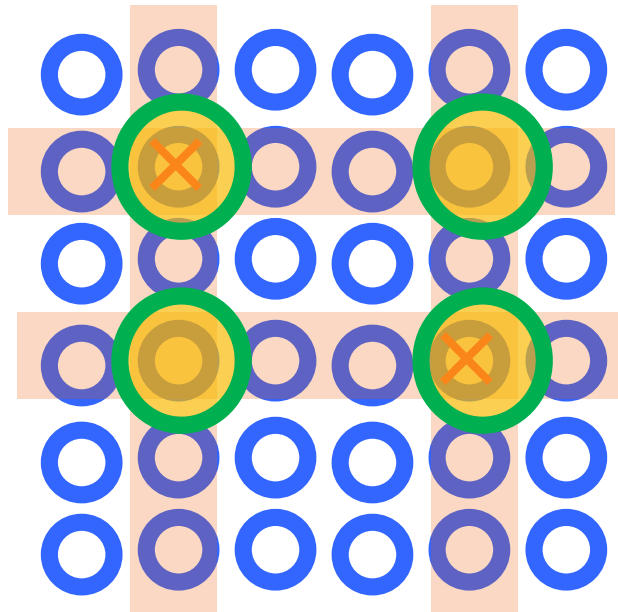
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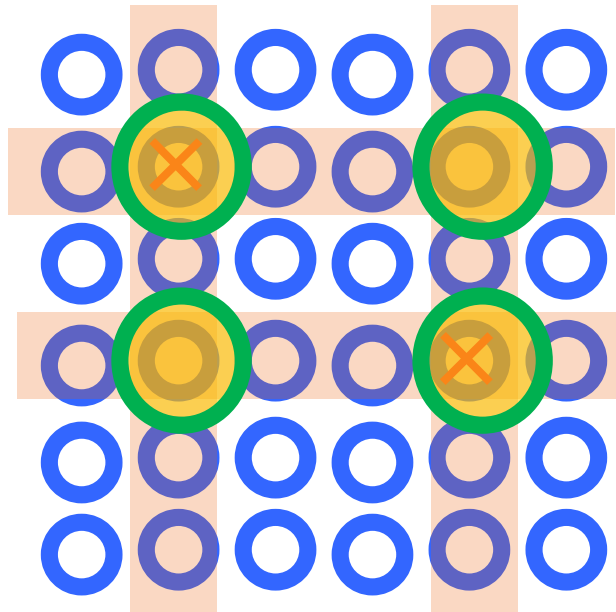
With 8 tests find the infected!

Reduction of required tests by a factor $3i_0^{2/3}$

i_0 : Prevalence (infected fraction of population)

$$i_0 = 0.001 \rightarrow \frac{N_{\text{PCR}}}{N_{\text{test}}} = 0.03$$

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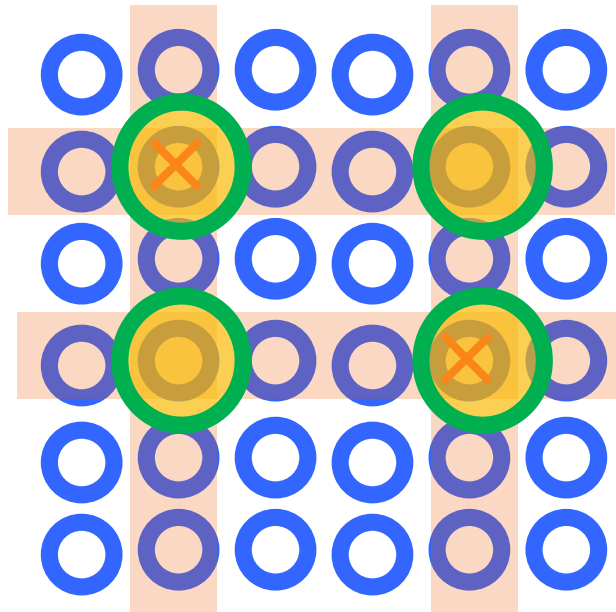
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Testing large numbers: Pool testing



More precise analysis / proposal:

Feasibility of COVID-19 Screening for the U.S. Population with Group Testing

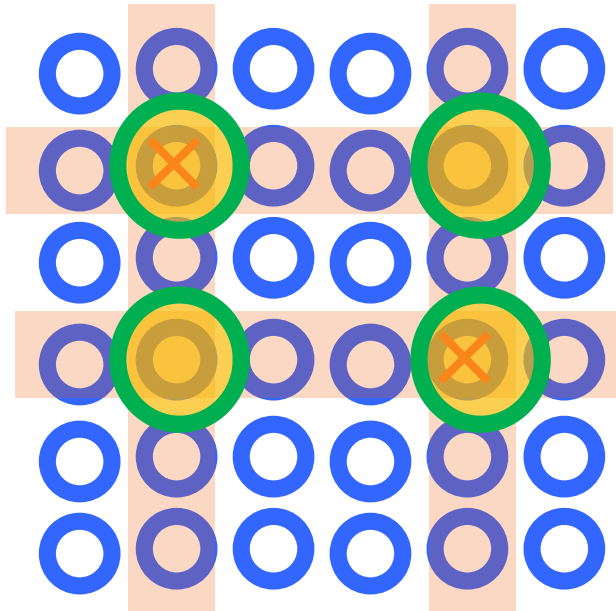
P. Frazier et al, April 2020 (Cornell)

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Testing large numbers: Pool testing



BUT:

Pooling COVID19 virus is hard:

So far only pooling of small numbers of tests has worked.

Reduction of required tests by a factor $3i_0^{2/3}$ Daily PCR:

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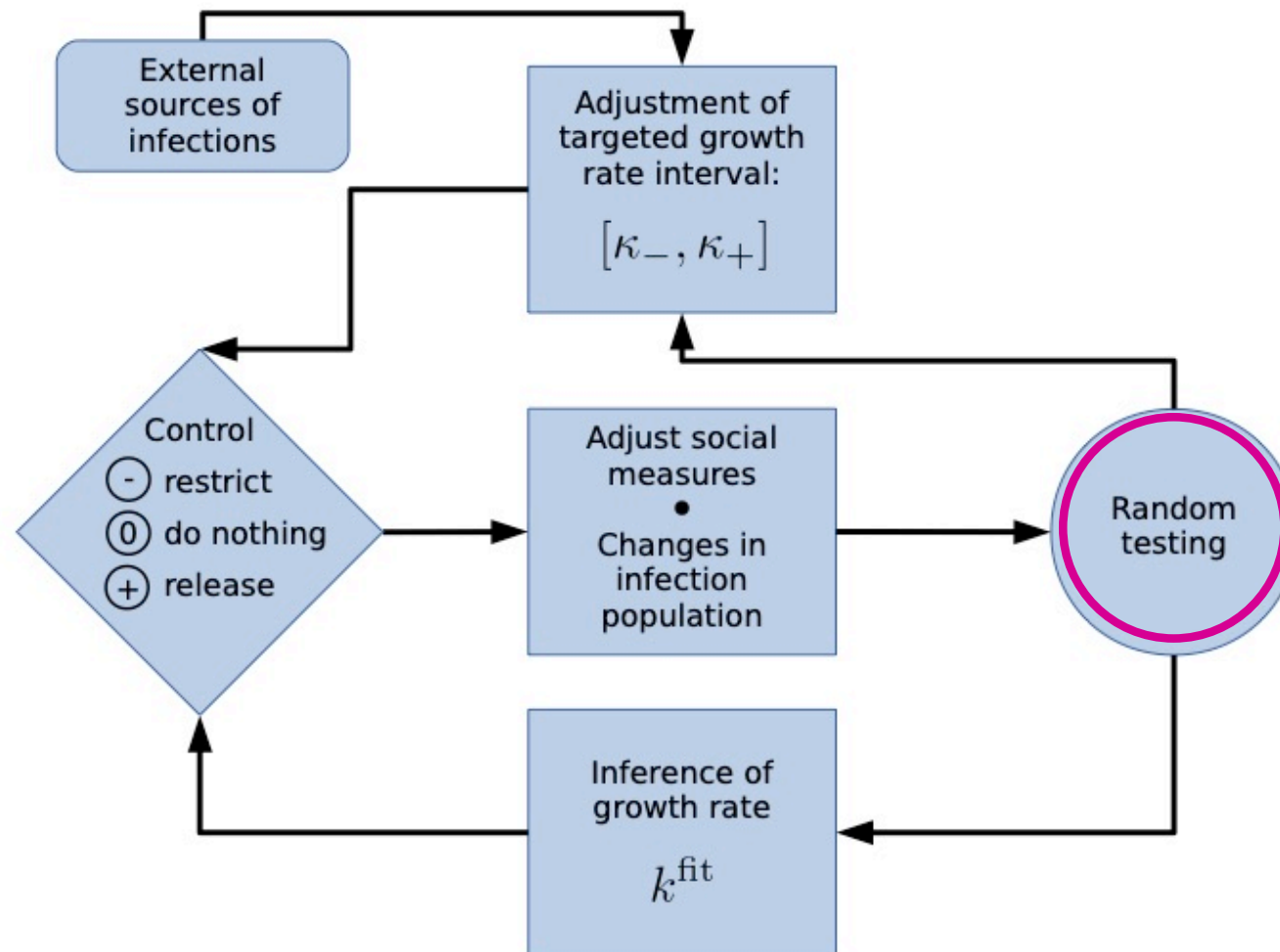
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Feedback and control loop -- like a thermometer!

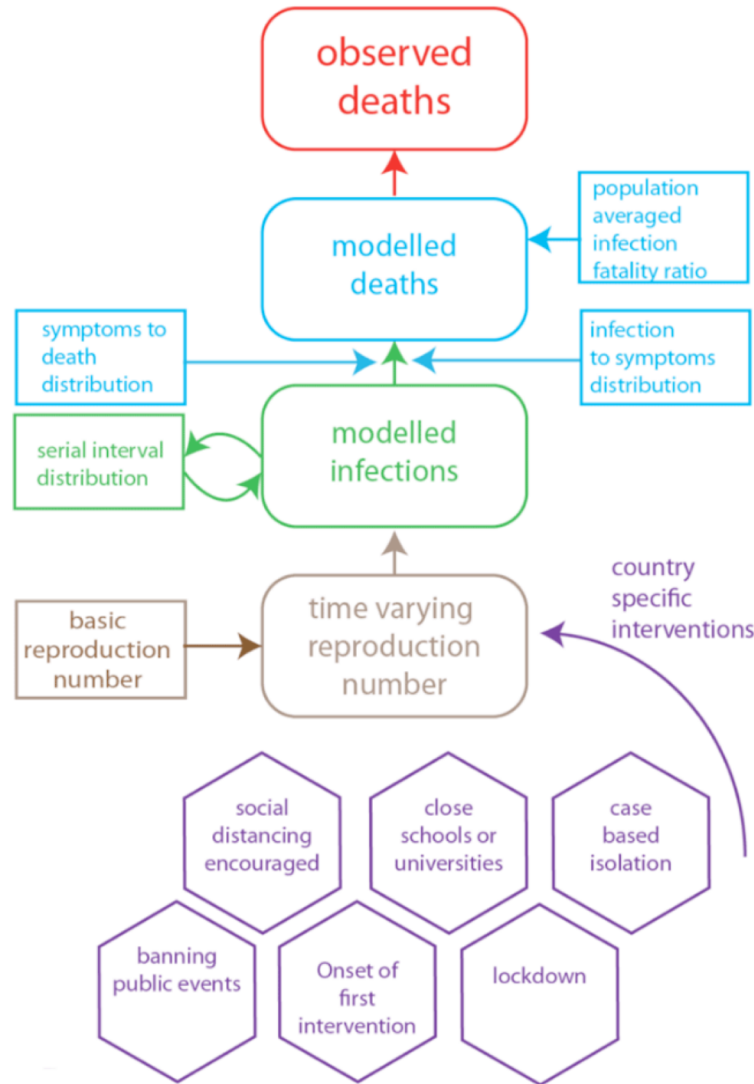


No representative sampling = almost blind flight



Or driving from the back seat with only rear view

Post-diction of infections from death numbers



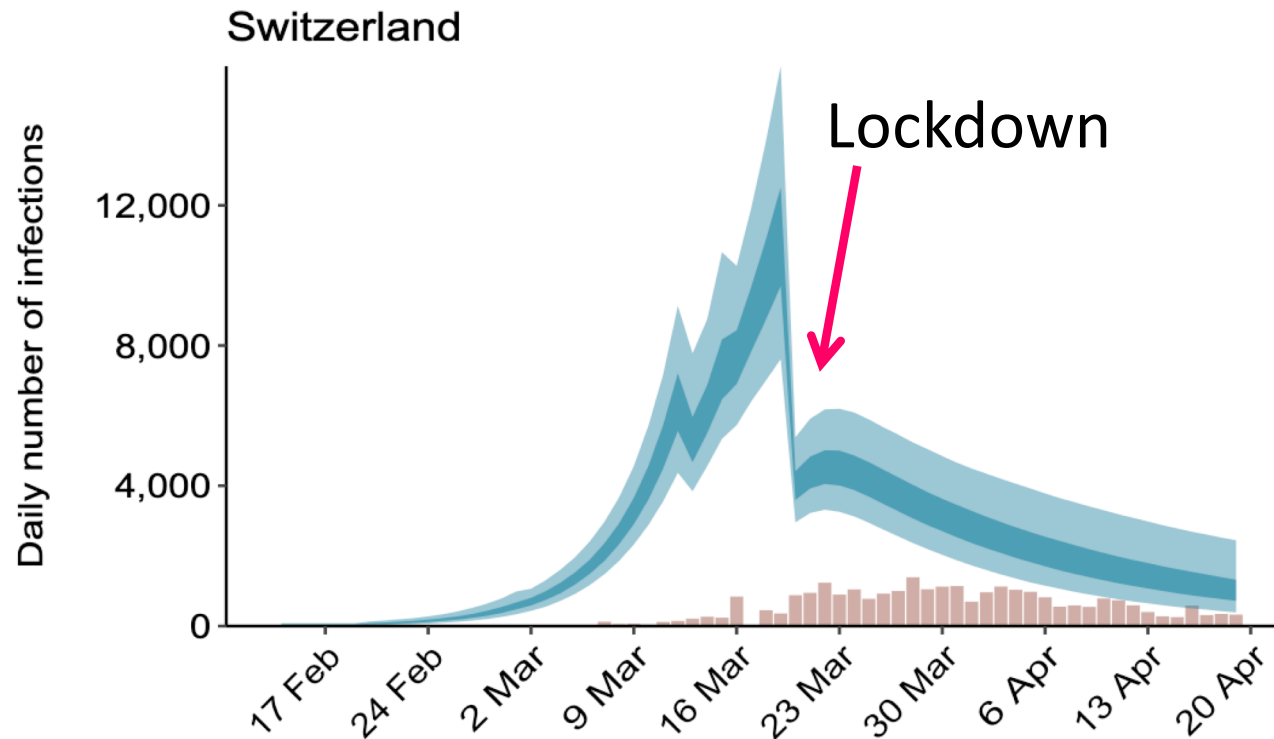
*N. Ferguson et al,
Imperial College
Covid19 Report
No.13*

*Many groups in
Switzerland use
similar modelling*

Post-diction of infections from death numbers

*N. Ferguson et al, Imperial College
Covid19 Report No.13*

Daily number of infections

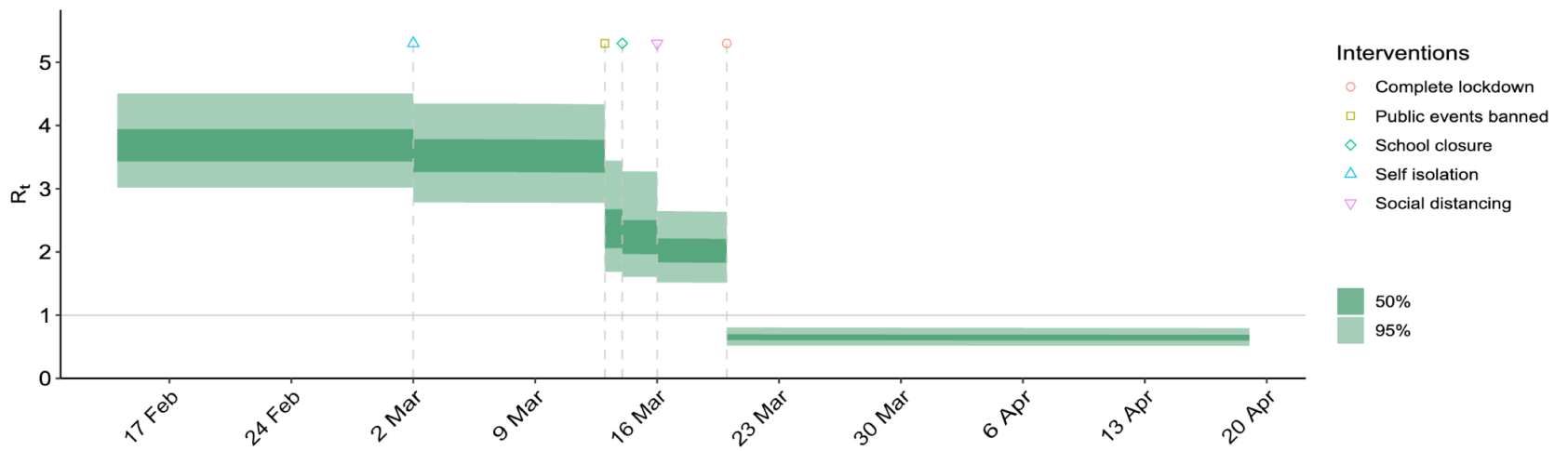


Daily number of infections, brown bars are reported infections, blue bands are predicted infections, dark blue 50% credible interval (CI), light blue 95% CI.

Post-diction of infections from death numbers

*N. Ferguson et al, Imperial College
Covid19 Report No.13*

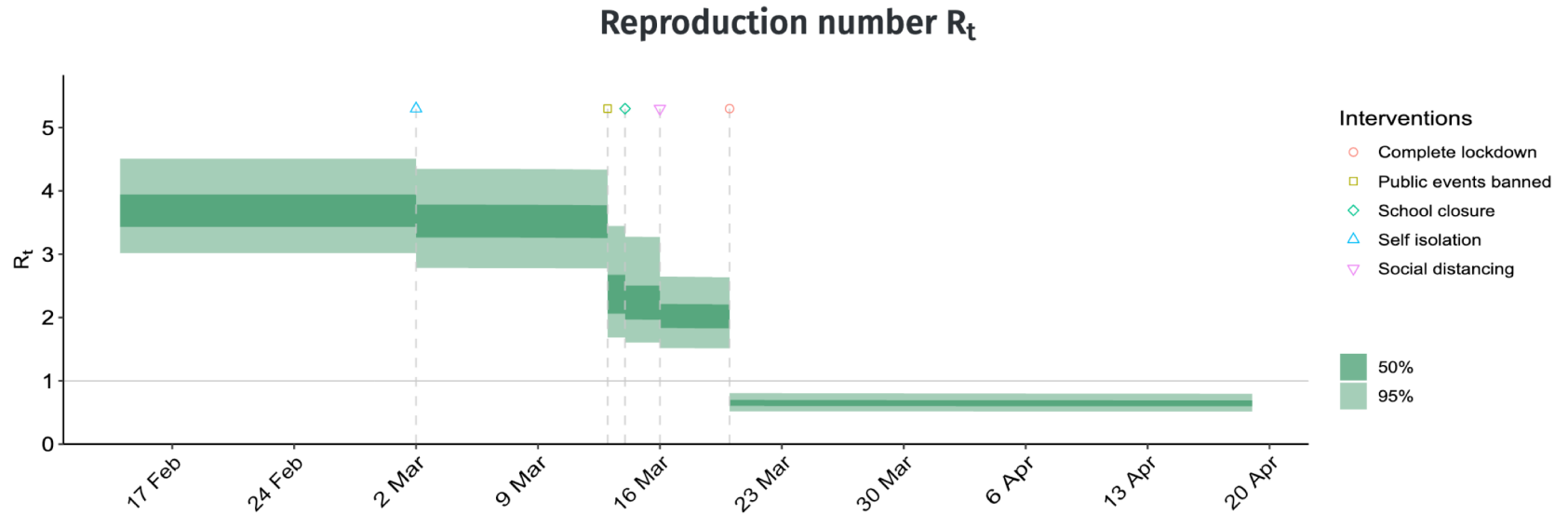
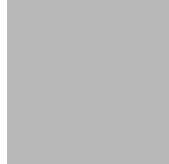
Reproduction number R_t



Time-varying reproduction number R_t , dark green 50% CI, light green 95% CI. Icons are interventions shown at the time they occurred.

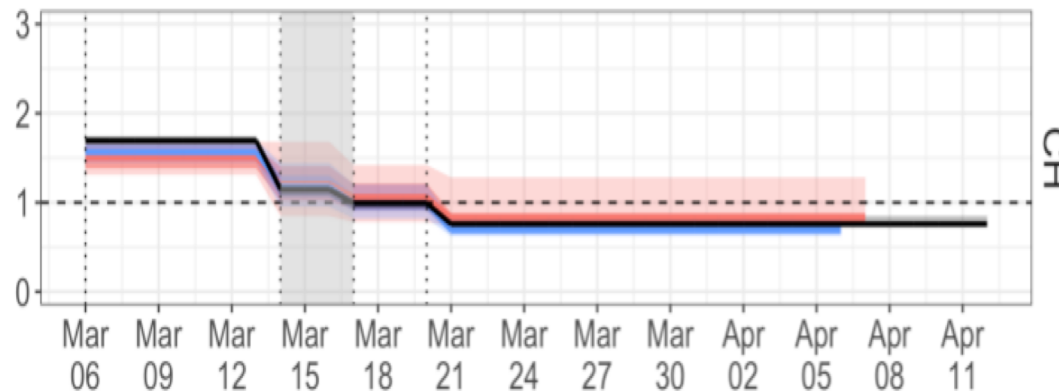
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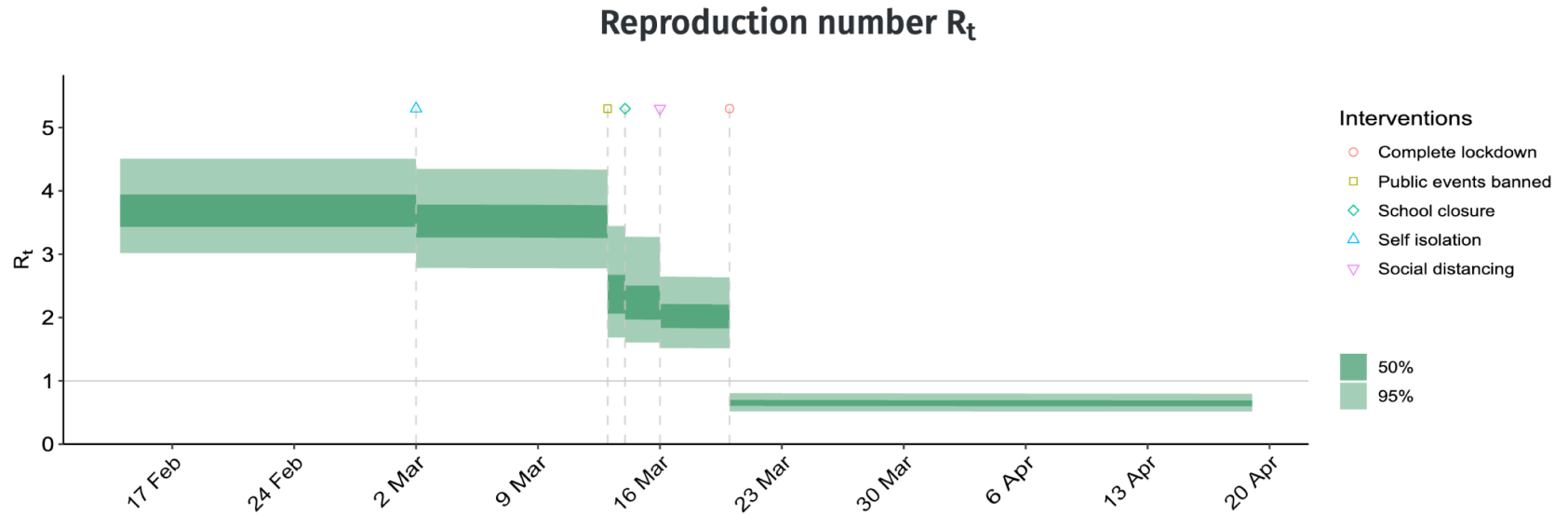
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*T. Stadler, ETH
Monitoring COVID-19
Spread in Switzerland*



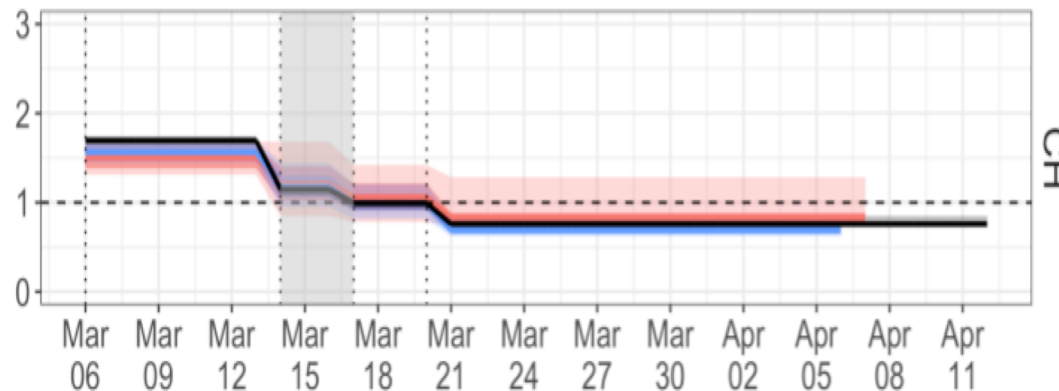
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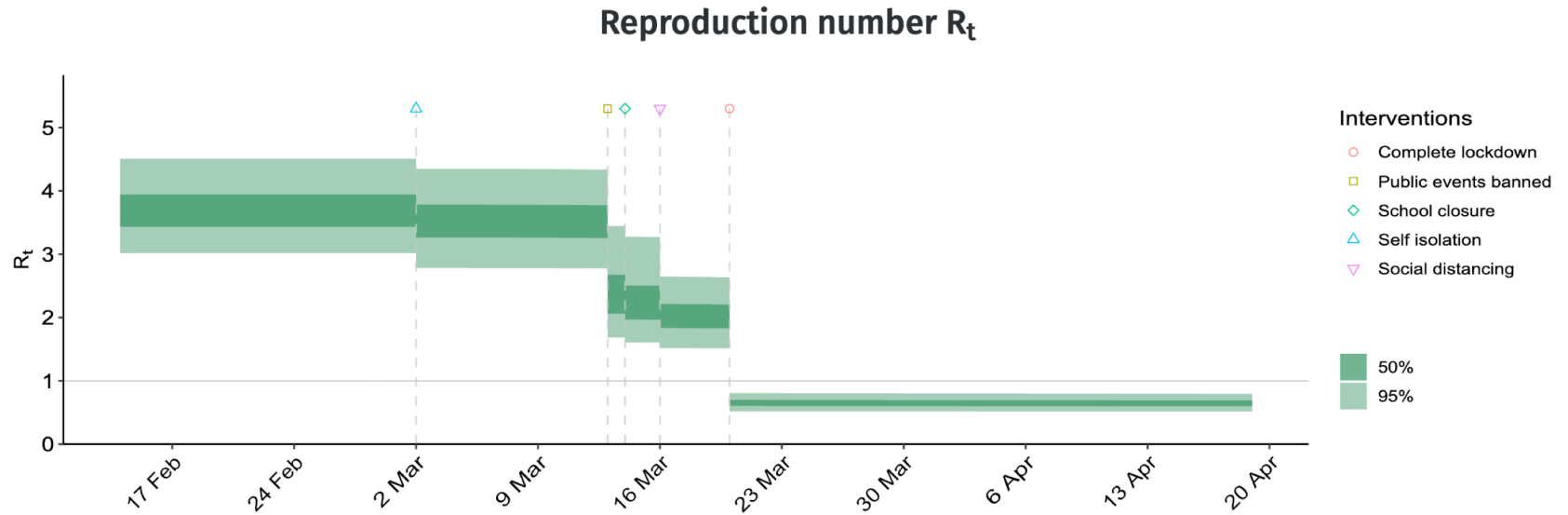
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- Model-dependent results!
- ~ 14 day delay

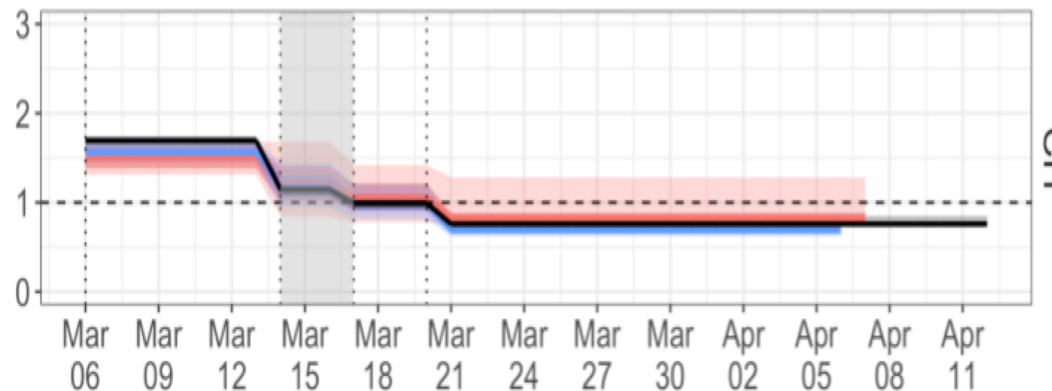
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- Model-dependent results!
- **~ 14 day delay**

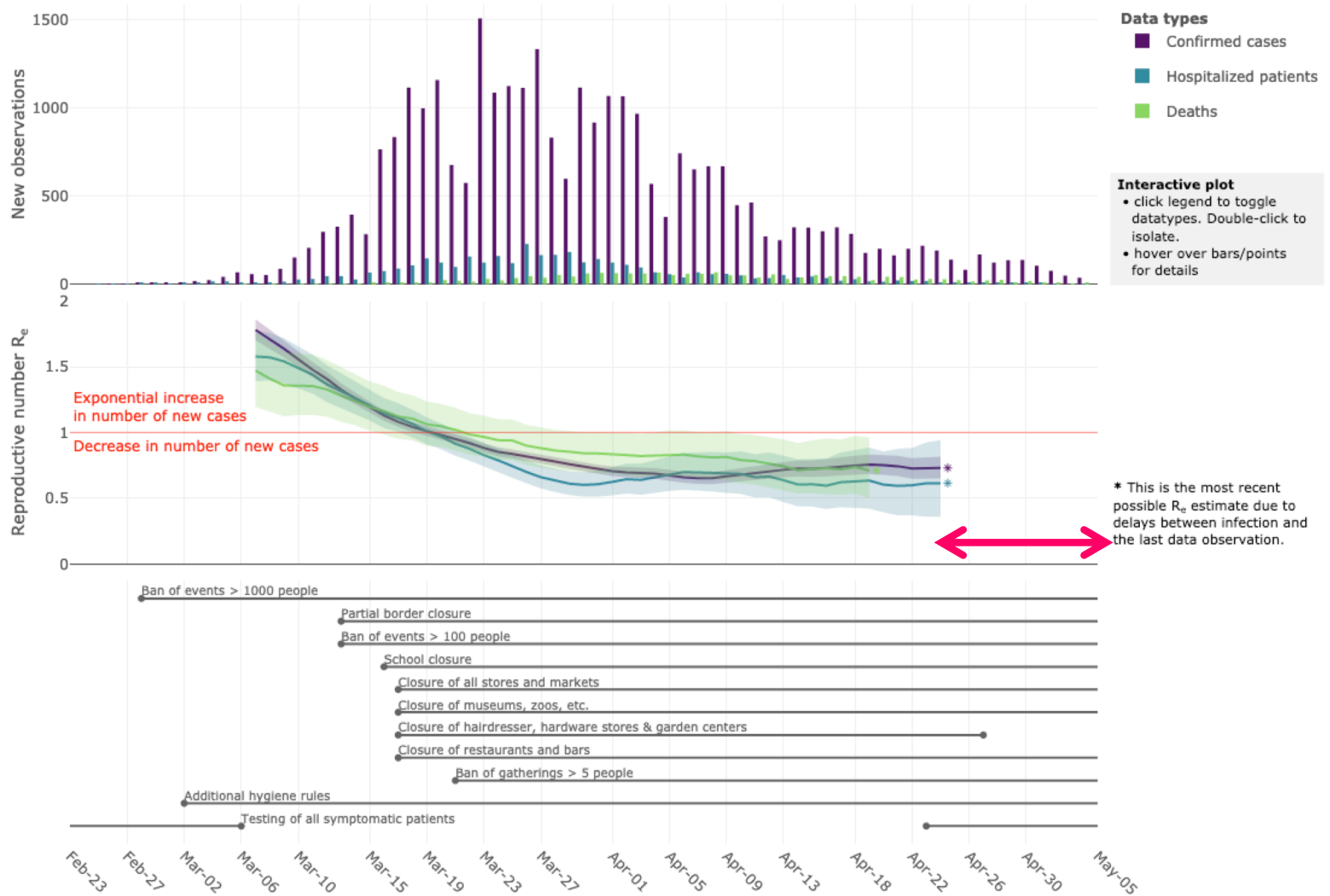
Undetected doubling in 3 days results in 10-30 times increase of prevalence!

Measuring the reproduction number: Status quo

Webpage of the Swiss Nat. Task Force

Effective reproductive number

The effective reproductive number R_e quantifies the average number of infections caused by an infected individual. We provide here a daily update of the effective reproductive number R_e in Switzerland.

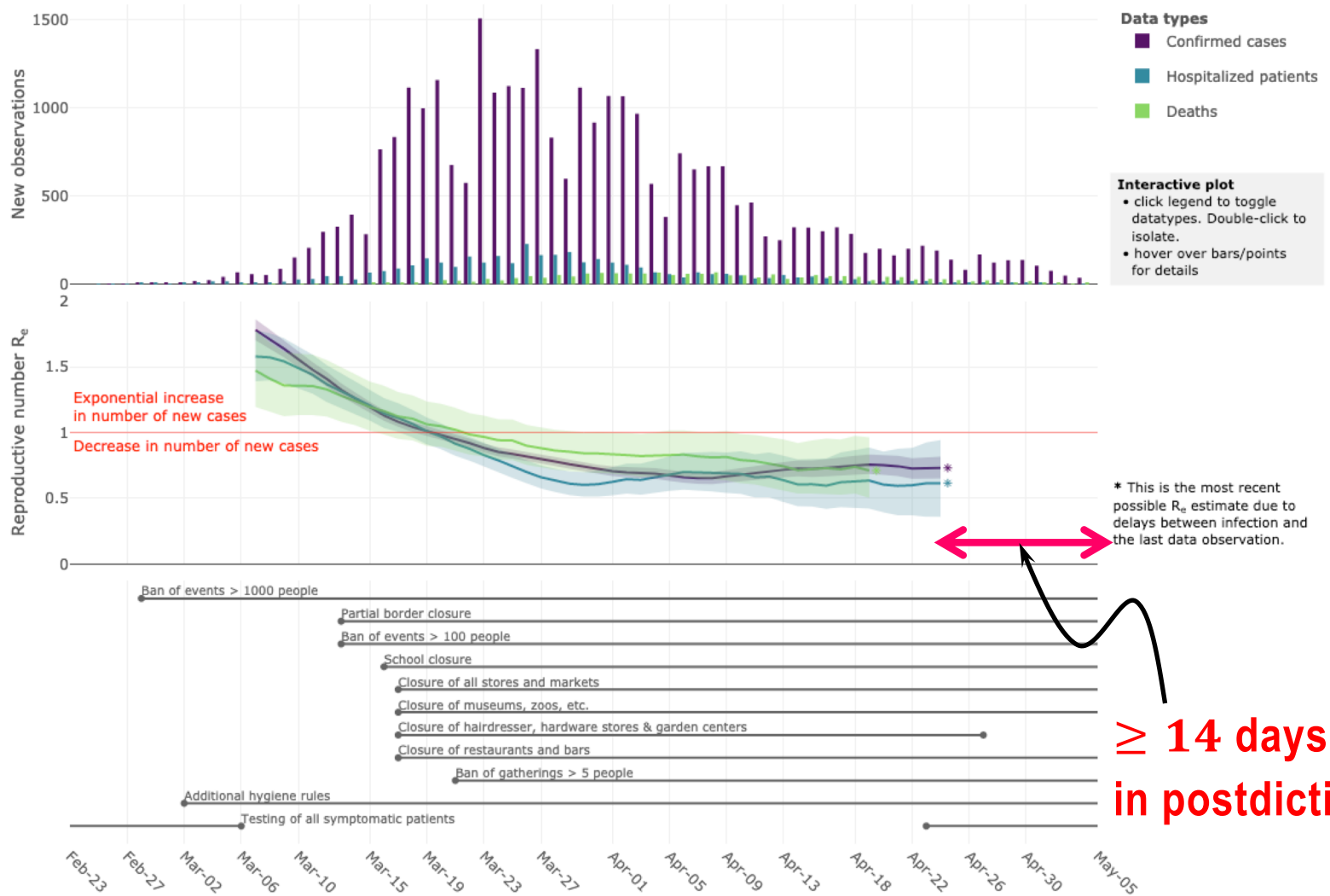


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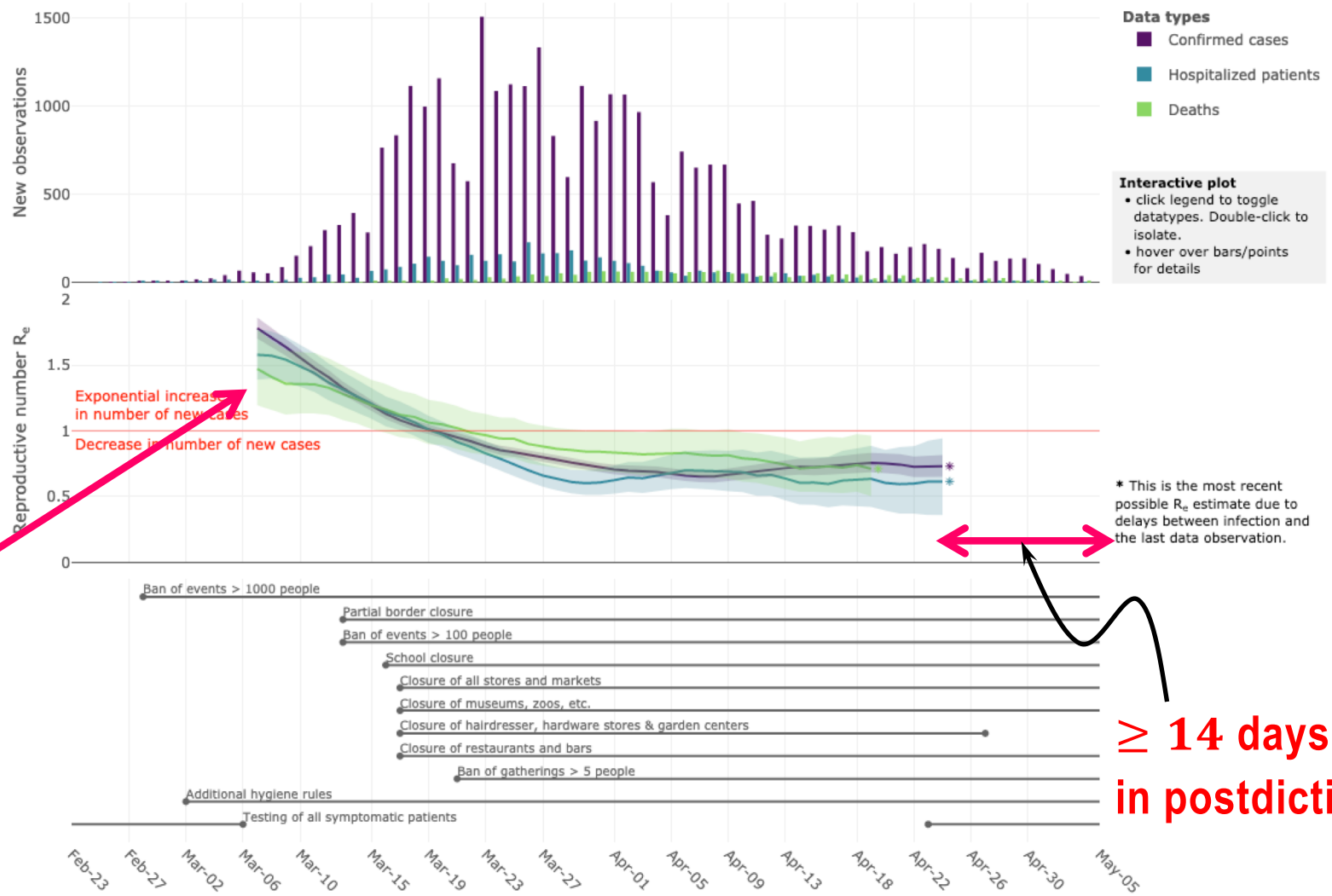


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1. Depends on model / fit
 2. Large uncertainty due to small numbers

≥ 14 days delay in postdiction!

Appendix A - overview of modelling results in Switzerland

Model	Method	R_0	R_e	Time-window for R_e	Data	Comments	Reference
EPFL	Stochastic transmission model applied at national and cantonal levels, fitted using multiple-iterated filtering	3.1 (95% CI: 2.8-3.5)	0.5 (95% CI: 0.4-0.7)	March 30 until now	openZH	Also provides regional estimates	https://jcblemai.github.io (to be updated to reflect these new numbers)
Swiss TPH	Deterministic, geo-spatial, age-stratified difference equation model. Simultaneously fitted to 30 European countries through MCMC framework.	3.8 (3.6-4.1)	0.7 (0.4-0.8)	Calculated after each control measure change, latest March 20 until now	ECDC (confirmed cases, deaths) FOPH (hospital and ICU admissions)	Pairwise relative efficacy of interventions assumed, scaled with calibration factor. Delay to maximum efficacy also calibrated.	Shattock et al. (manuscript in preparation)
ETH Zurich, Basel	EpiEstim	1.9 (95% CI 1.7-2.1) (Re value at March 6)	0.7 (95% CI 0.6-0.8) (Re value at April 9; due to 10 day reporting delay, we cannot get more recent estimates)	Daily changes possible; also changes upon measures possible (see link under References for detailed results)	openZH & FOPH	Also provides regional estimates	https://bsse.ethz.ch/cevo/research/sars-cov-2/real-time-monitoring-in-switzerland.html
ETH Zurich, UZH	Bayesian MCMC parameter estimation, simultaneously fit to daily number of cases, daily number of deaths, hospitalisations and ICU data.	2.78 (95% CI 2.6 - 2.9)	0.85 (95%CI 0.84-0.88)	March 17th until now	openZH	All parameters are free to vary in a reasonable range adopted from reported studies. Effect of lockdown is estimated to be 69% reduction (95CI 66%-71%)	
University of Bern 1	Deterministic transmission model, Bayesian Hamiltonian Monte Carlo methods	1.8 (95% CrI: 1.7-1.9)	From 0.02 (95%CrI: 0.001-0.12) in Ticino to 0.67 (0.44- 0.87) in Zentralschweiz	~ March 17 until April 10	FOPH	Also provides regional estimates	Manuscript in preparation
University of Bern 2	Deterministic transmission model, maximum likelihood estimation	2.7 (95% CI: 2.5-3.1)	0.4 (95% CI: 0.3-0.6)	March 17 until now	corona-data.ch	-	https://ispmbern.github.io/covid-19/swiss-epidemic-model/
Imperial College	Bayesian backward calculation	~ 3.5 (95%CI: 2.8-4.3)	~ 0.6 (95%CI: 0.5-0.8)	March 20 until now	ECDC	-	https://mrc-ide.github.io/covid19estimates/#/details/Switzerland
University of Geneva (Keiser group)	Stochastic compartmental model, age-structured (3 age groups)	~ 5.3	~ 0.7	March 20 until now	FOPH	Can be adapted for canton-level estimates; contact structure between age groups modelled	In preparation

Confidence intervals of different models do not overlap!

Can we do better?

- Avoid 14 days delay
- Remove modelling uncertainty

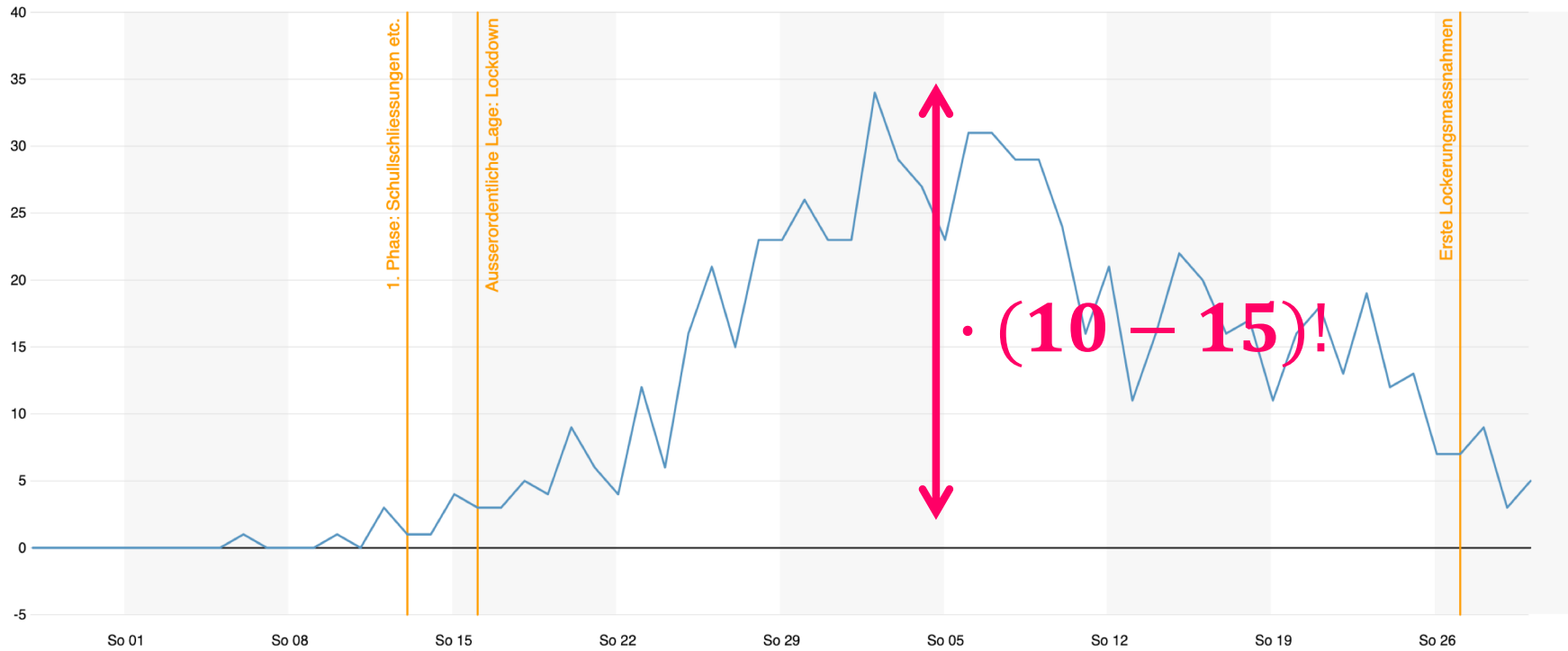


Delay in death numbers (Geneva)

Gesundheit, neu gemeldete Anzahl SARS-CoV-2 Verstorbene, Genferseeregion

Einheit: Anzahl

Quelle: Kantone, STAT



Lockdown

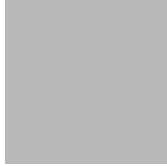
Peak in deaths

3 weeks!

• (10 - 15)!



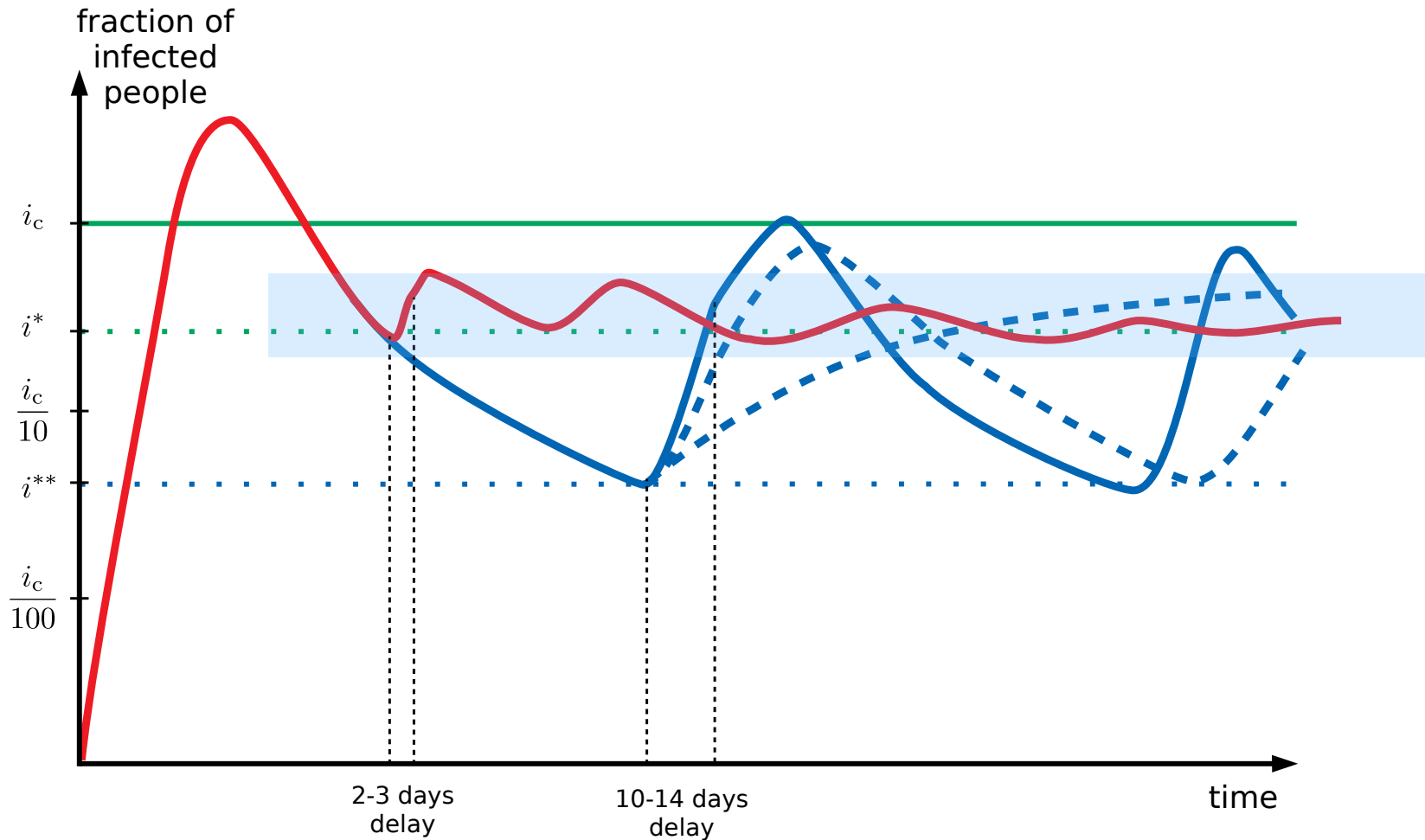
Benefit of shortend delay



Benefit of shortend delay

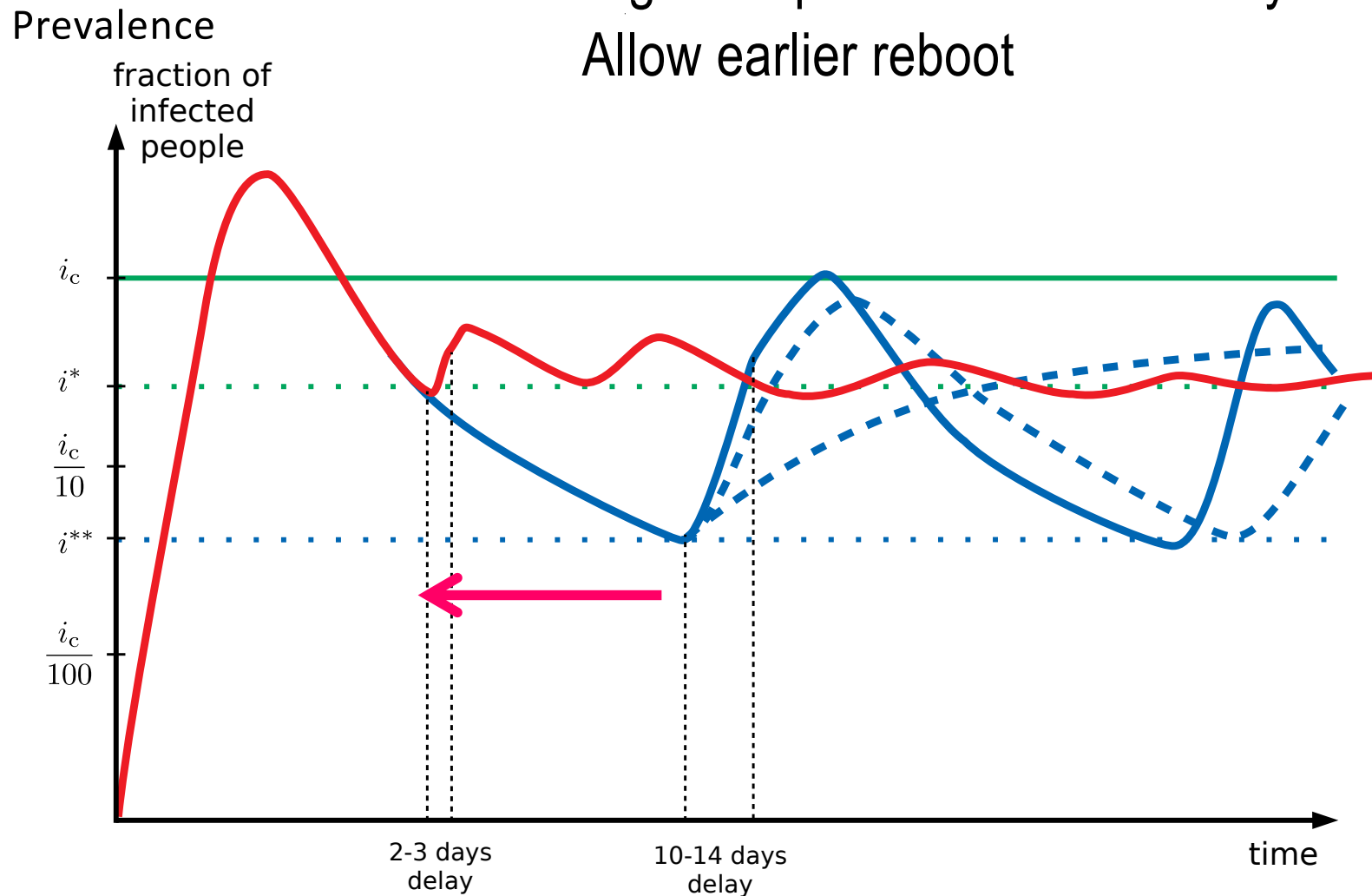
1. Reduce unwanted increase of prevalence
→ damps oscillations

Prevalence

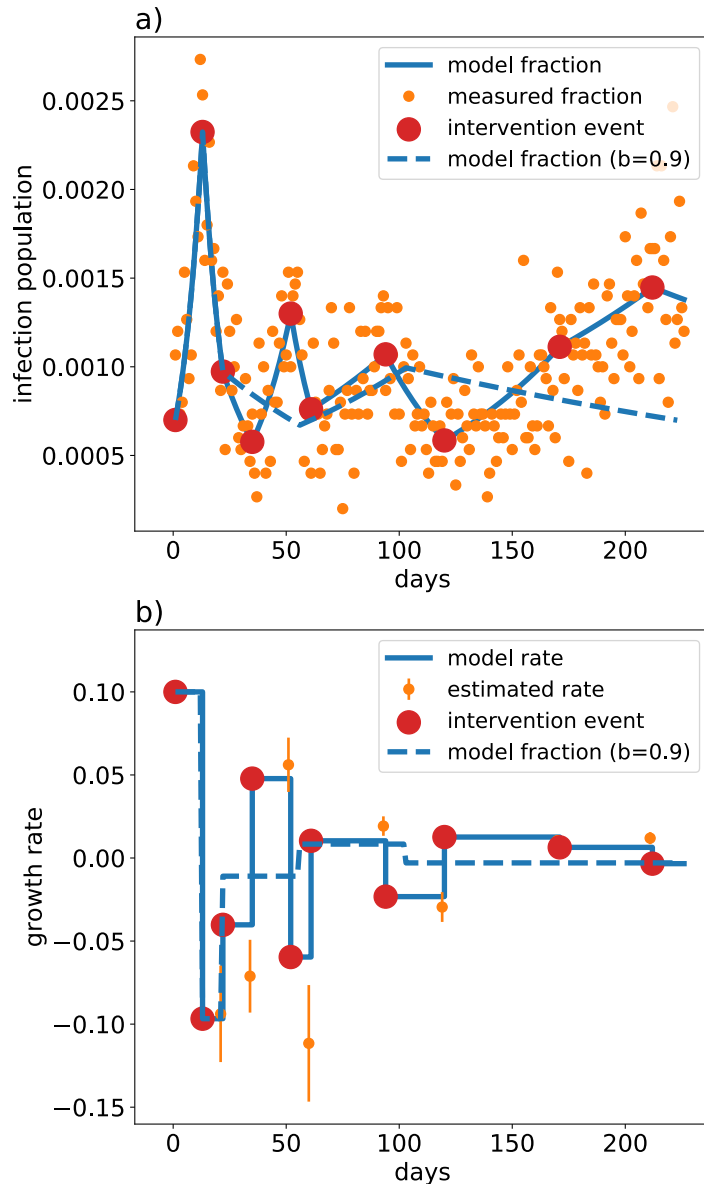


Benefit of shortend delay

1. Reduce unwanted increase of prevalence
→ damps oscillations
2. If manageable prevalence is ethically acceptable:
Allow earlier reboot



Intervention strategy to reach a steady state $k = 0$



Assume:

$k(t)$ is constant and jumps when policies change

Measure $k(t)$:

- Test r people daily
- Split time interval Δt in two
- Infections detected

$$N_1 \approx r i_0 \frac{\Delta t}{2} \quad N_2 \approx N_1 e^{k \Delta t / 2}$$

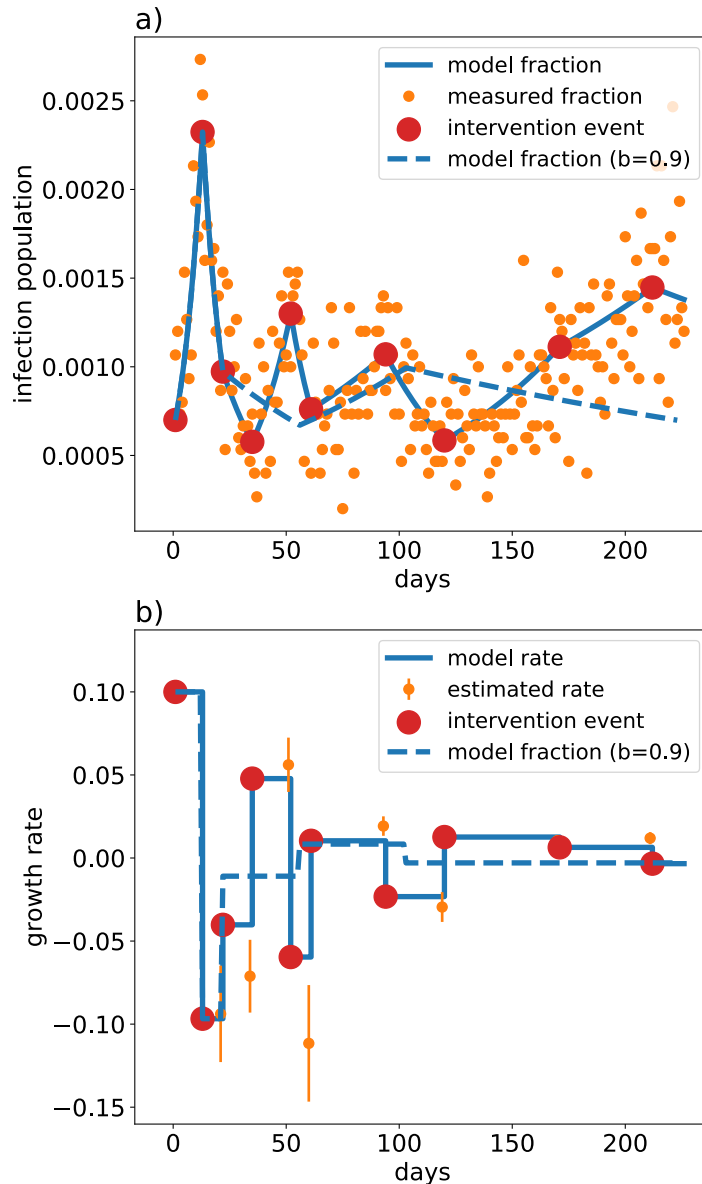
$$\rightarrow k_i^{\text{fit}}(\Delta t) = \frac{2}{\Delta t} \ln \left(\frac{N_{i,2}(\Delta t)}{N_{i,1}(\Delta t)} \right)$$

- Uncertainty:

$$\rightarrow \delta k(\Delta t) = \frac{2}{\Delta t} \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_{i,1}(\Delta t)} + \frac{1}{N_{i,2}(\Delta t)}}$$

\rightarrow Obtain quick feedback about new k

Intervention strategy to reach a steady state $k = 0$



Intervention strategy:

- If $k_{fit} > 3 \delta k$: Restrict
or $i > i_{max}$
- If $k_{fit} < -3 \delta k$: Release
or $i < i_{min}$

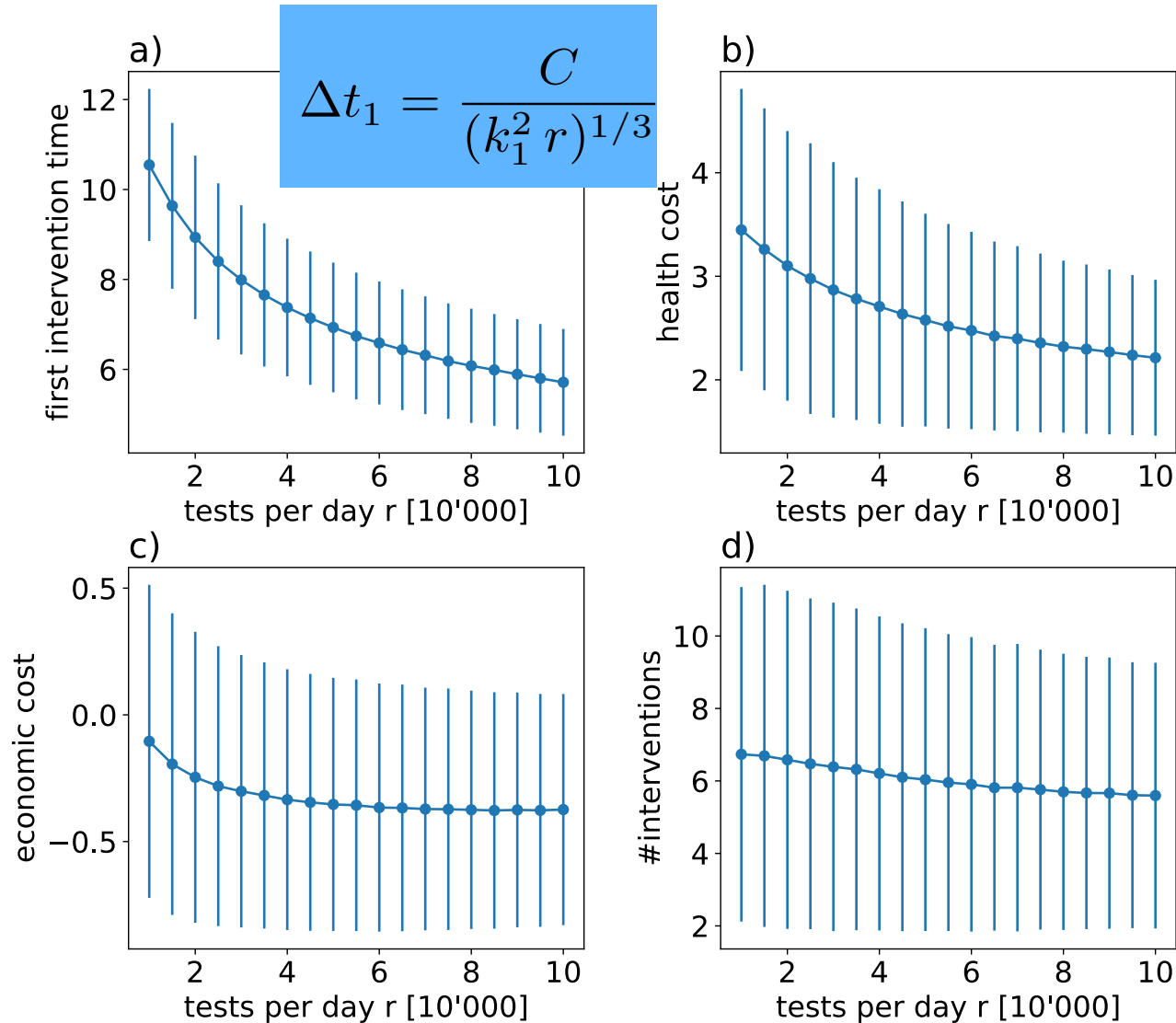
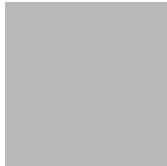
Convergence to $k = 0; R = 1$

Faster & better with more daily tests r

$$r \geq 5/i_0$$

i_0 should initially be $\sim 1/4$ of manageable threshold prevalence

More testing = better result for health, economy and politics Win-win-win situation!



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Concrete benefit of random testing

versus

prediction based on symptomatic cases?

Concrete benefit of random testing

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prediction based on symptomatic cases?

Most important benefit: Monitoring sudden release of restrictions:

Switzerland: 11th of May and 8th of June 2020

Concrete benefit of random testing

versus

postdiction based on symptomatic cases?

Most important benefit: Monitoring sudden release of restrictions:

Switzerland: 11th of May and 8th of June 2020

- Later: - Re-opening universities & high schools
- Re-opening borders,
- Allowing mass gatherings, concerts, festivals

Concrete benefit of random testing

versus

prediction based on symptomatic cases?

Further benefits:

- Precise, undelayed mapping of symptomatic/asymptomatic cases
- Data allows to fix epidemiological parameters
 - improve predictability

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Concrete benefit of random testing

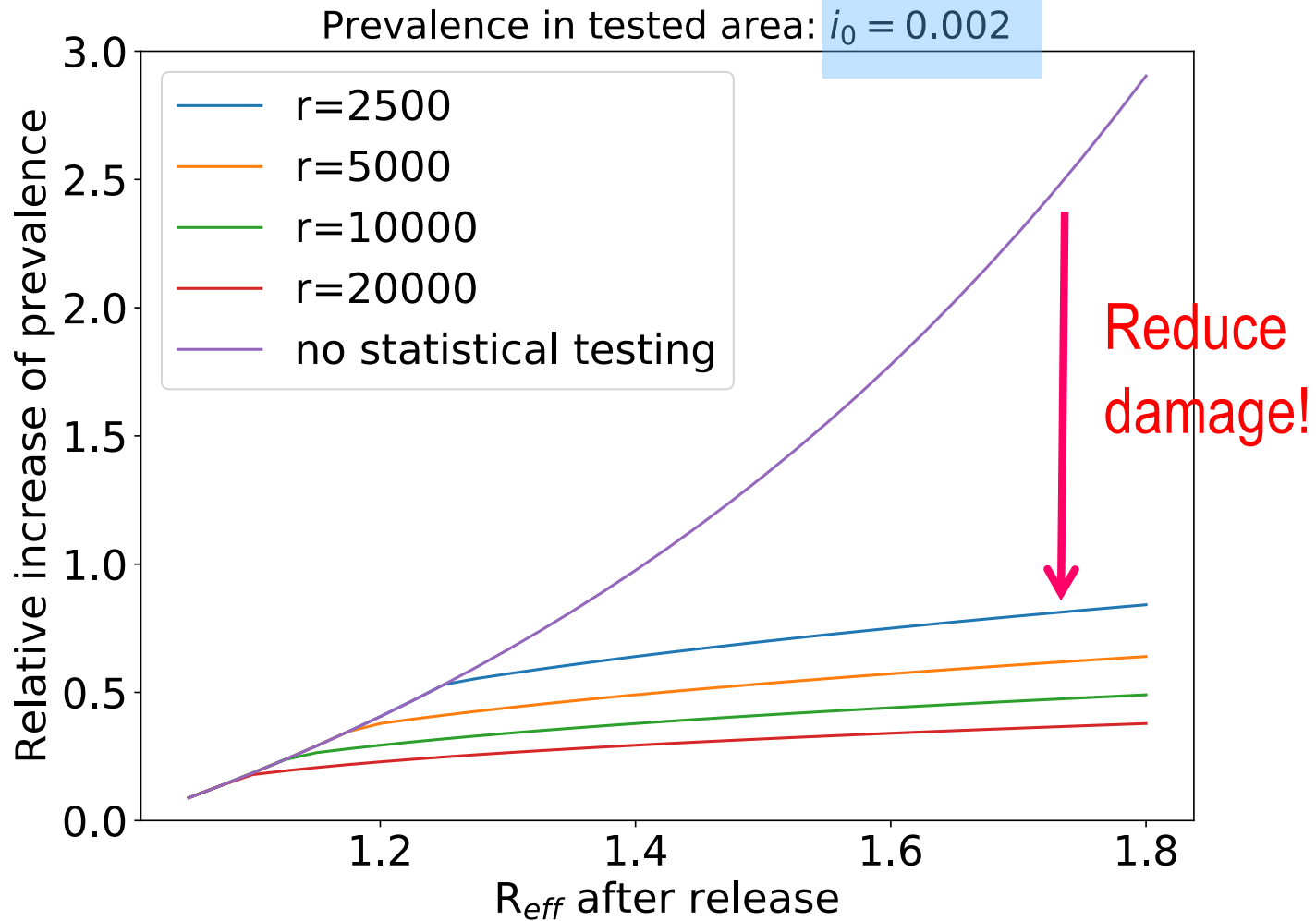
versus

prediction based on symptomatic cases?

Direct benefits when releasing restrictions:

Like upgrade from basic health insurance to private premium insurance!

Reduced increase of prevalence after policy release

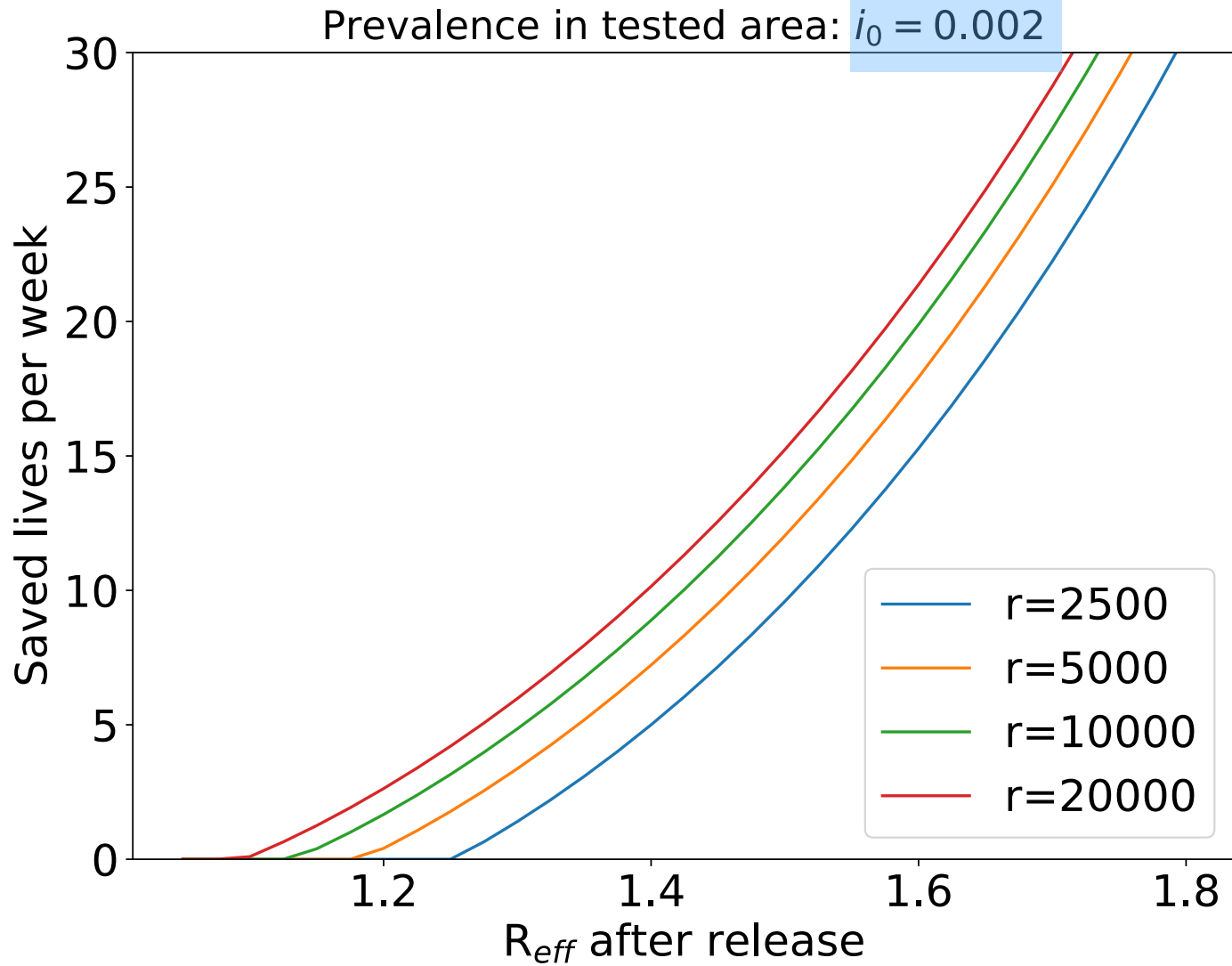


Increase of prevalence

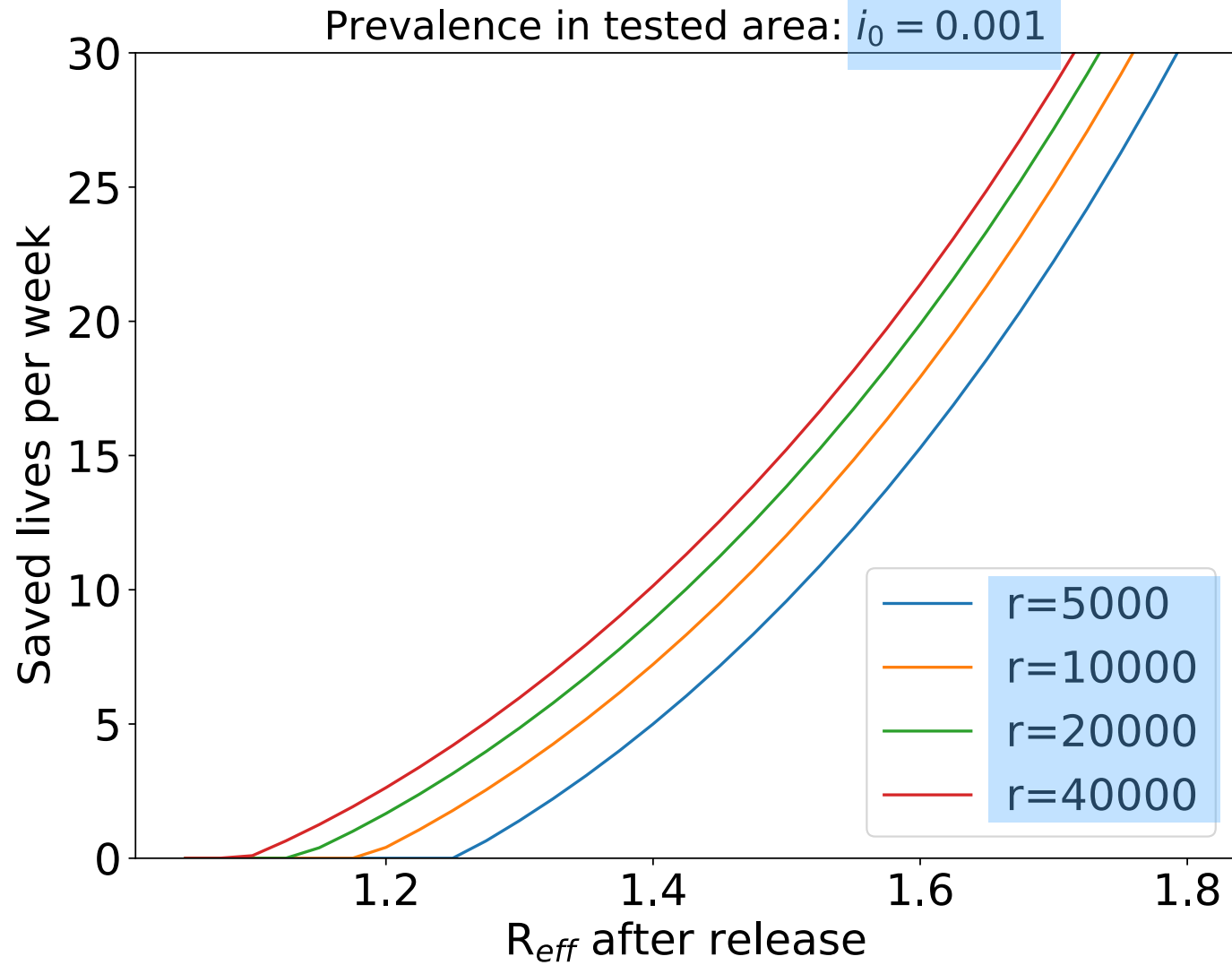


Increase of health costs, health damage
Increase of death toll

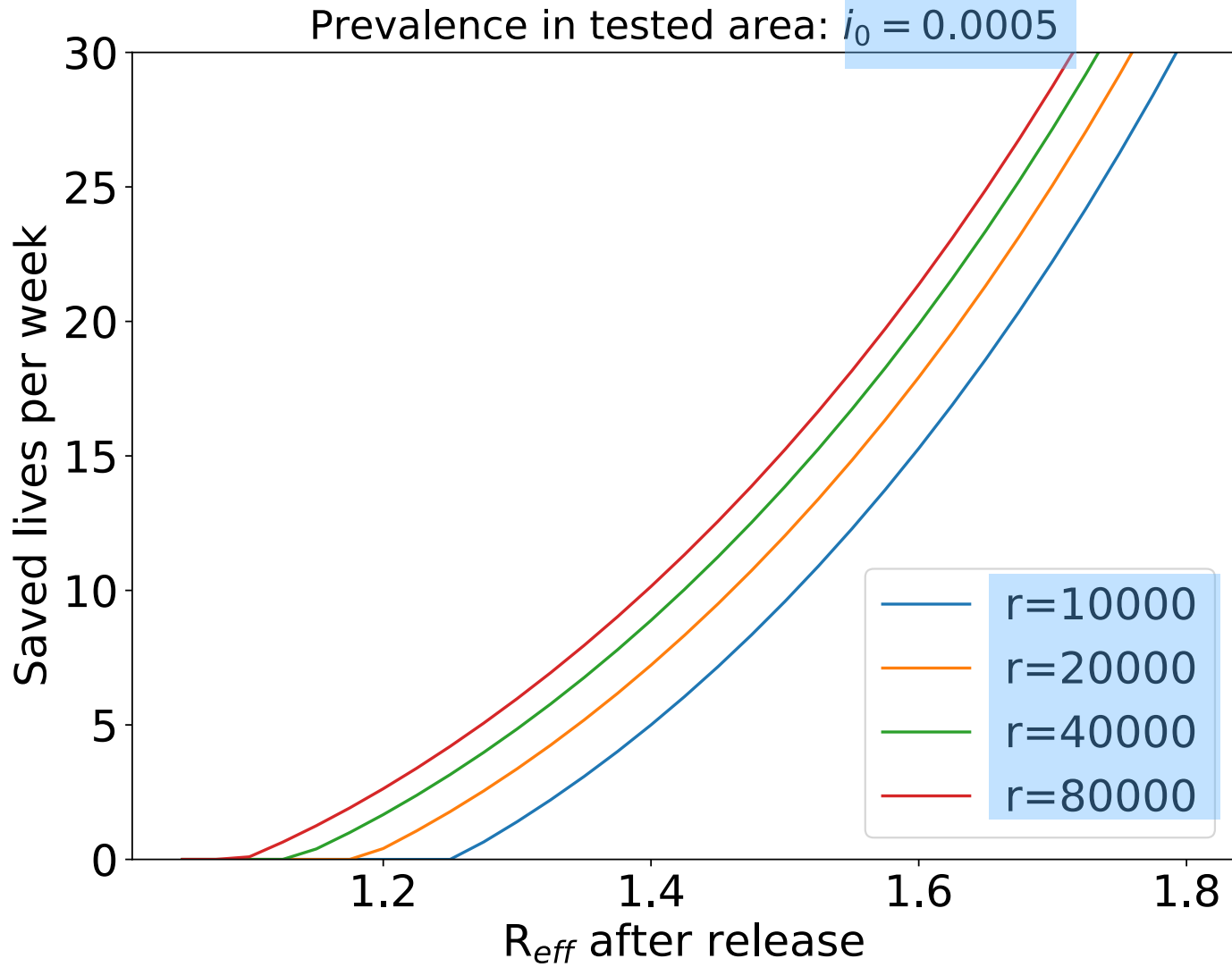
Lives saved by random testing



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What is the current prevalence?

We don't know!

But we can estimate it.

How many people were already infected some time?

Country	% of total population infected (mean [95% credible interval])	
Austria	0.82%	[0.63%-1.07%]
Belgium	9.72%	[7.25%-13.18%]
Denmark	0.99%	[0.75%-1.28%]
France	3.73%	[2.88%-4.87%]
Germany	0.88%	[0.69%-1.15%]
Greece	0.13%	[0.09%-0.17%]
Italy	4.51%	[3.58%-5.72%]
Netherlands	3.45%	[2.70%-4.41%]
Norway	0.51%	[0.38%-0.68%]
Portugal	1.13%	[0.86%-1.49%]
Spain	5.69%	[4.48%-7.26%]
Sweden	6.20%	[4.14%-9.24%]
Switzerland	1.94%	[1.52%-2.48%]
United Kingdom	5.16%	[4.00%-6.70%]

*N. Ferguson et al,
Covid19 Report No.13*

Posterior model estimates of percentage of total population infected over the course of the pandemic. Estimates as of 2020-05-02.

<https://mrc-ide.github.io/covid19estimates/#/total-infected>



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$SP \sim 5.5\%$



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$$i_{\text{peak}} \sim (0.4 - 0.6) \cdot SP \approx 2.5 - 4\%$$

Halving time after lockdown: 8-10 days



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Estimated prevalence after 50 days of lockdown:

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↔ 4-15 people in 10'000 are acutely infected



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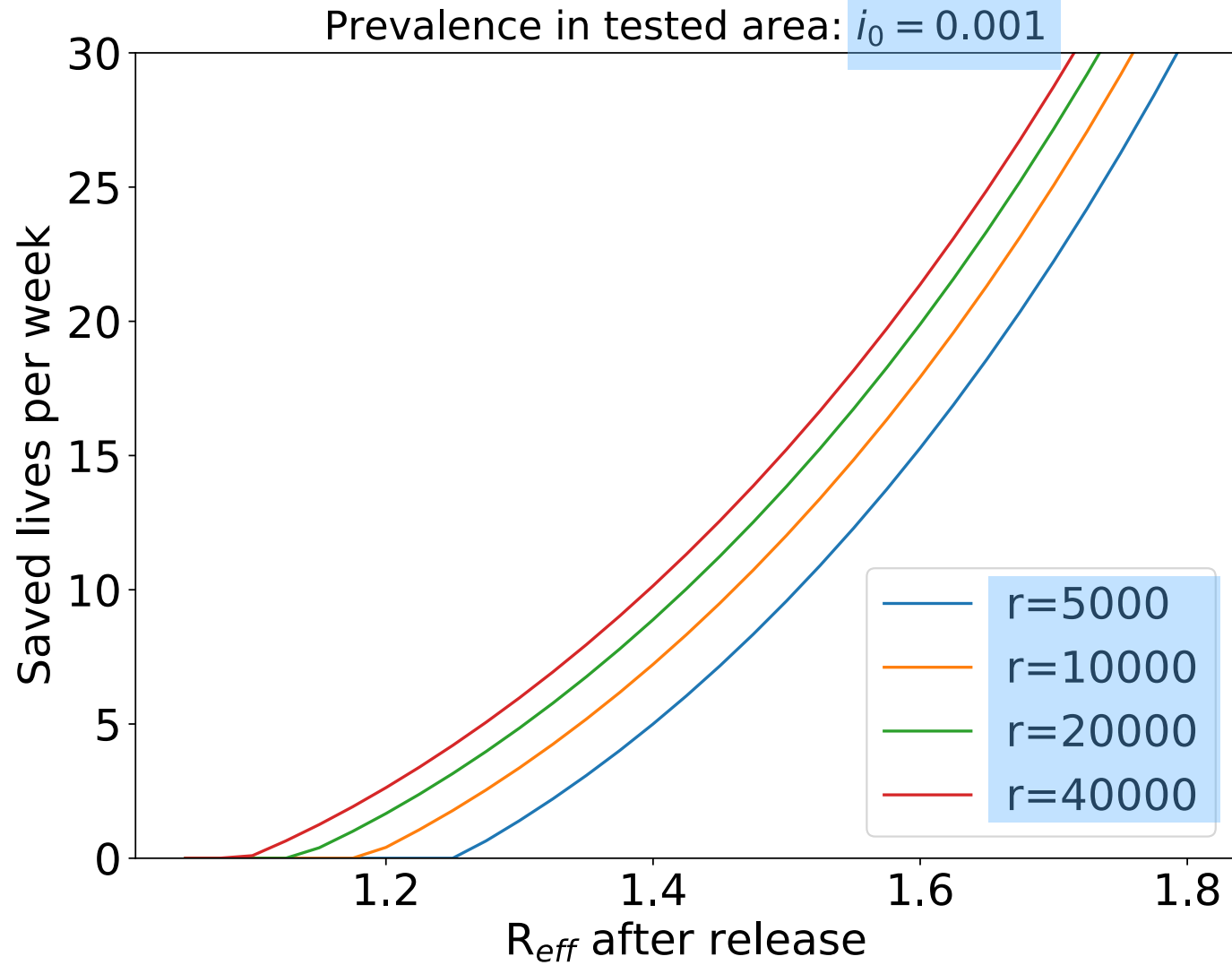
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(↔ 2 people in 10'000 tested positive over last 10 days)

Lives saved by random testing



Costs

Cost per tested person

PCR analysis ~ 20 CHF

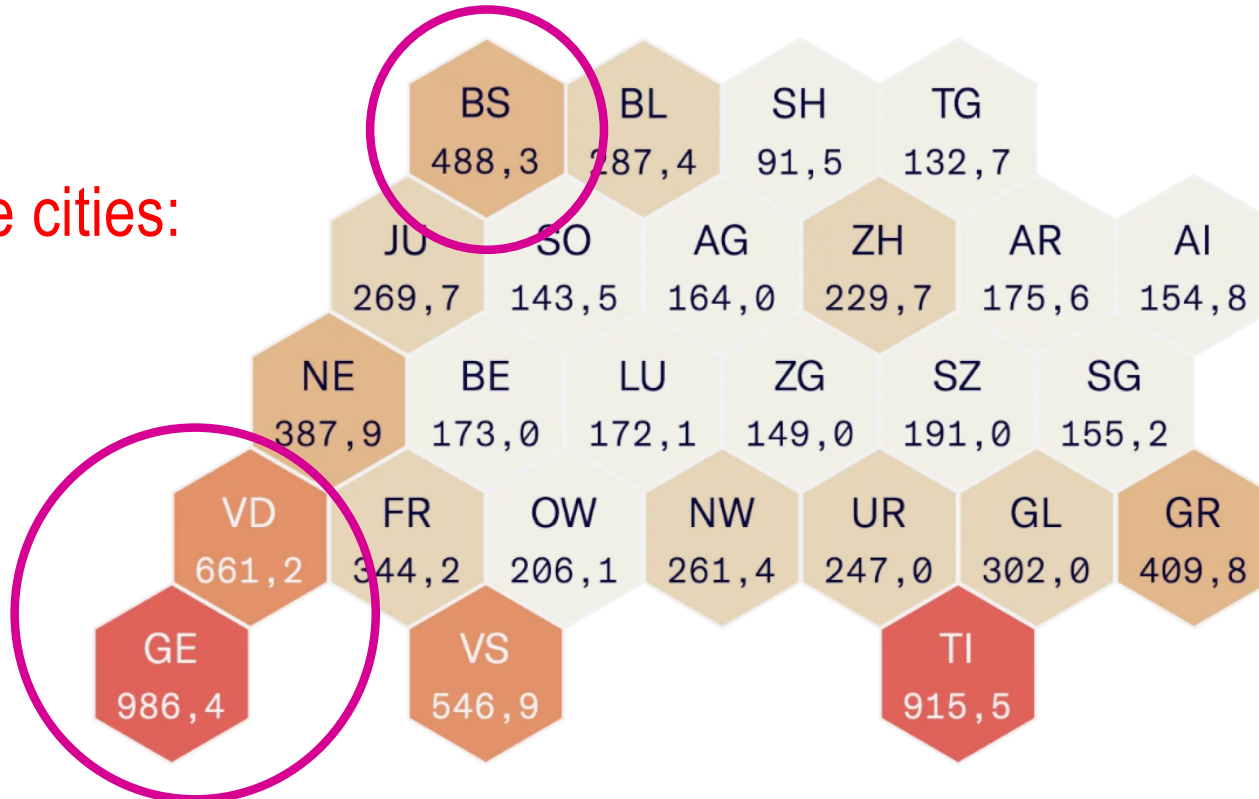
Logistics: ~ 30 CHF

- Call centers, Bureau of statistics
- Test centers, medical staff

Could be avoided
with self-tests
sent by mail
(like in the UK)
But: currently not
allowed in CH

Where to test best?

Anzahl der Coronavirus-Fälle pro 100 000 Einwohner, nach Kanton



Vulnerable cities:

Geneva
Lausanne
Basel

Die unregelmässigen Abstände in der Skala kommen durch ein statistisches Verfahren zustande, welches die Werte so in Gruppen einteilt, dass die Unterschiede zwischen den Regionen möglichst gut sichtbar werden (Jenks Natural Breaks). Stand: 4. Mai 2020, 7 Uhr

Quelle: [Kanton Zürich](#)

NZZ / brt.

Statistical sampling: Previous experience?

Earliest: Iceland (but self-selected sampling) $i_0 = 0.88\%$

First statistically random sampling in Austria (April 11) $i_0 = 0.33\%$

San Francisco Mission Bay:

50% of population sampled: $i_0 = 2.1\%$;
6% in subgroup

Just started: UK: 100'000 tested people REACT1 program

Replace randomly testing people by testing sewage
water?

Open questions about sewage screening



Ch. Ort et al., EAWAG, Switzerland

- Validation

Proportionality of sewage signal to infection numbers?

Fluctuations due to dilution by rain, insufficient mixing?

- Calibration: translating signal into # of infected people

- Delay between infection and detectability in feces

Opinion

We Need Coronavirus Tests for Everyone. This Is the Next Best Thing.

Random sampling is the quickest, most feasible and most effective means of assessing the U.S. population.

By Louis Kaplow

Mr. Kaplow is a professor of law and economics at Harvard.

April 24, 2020



Outlook

- Logistics of testing? Testing sub-groups?
- Optimal tests? (Self-applied saliva tests?)
- Sewage
- • Geographic refinements:

$$\frac{dI_m}{dt} = K_{mn}(t)I_n$$

Fit matrix K and intervene regionally

Summary

- Random testing requires **modest numbers of people** per day
- It significantly **shortens the delay** in feedback and control loop
 - **more efficient and faster**
 - **saves lives** and reduces damage
- Informs about actual infection rate
 - **input & constraints for epidemiological models**
 - **better forecasts**



How long until the crisis ends?

- until a vaccine is found

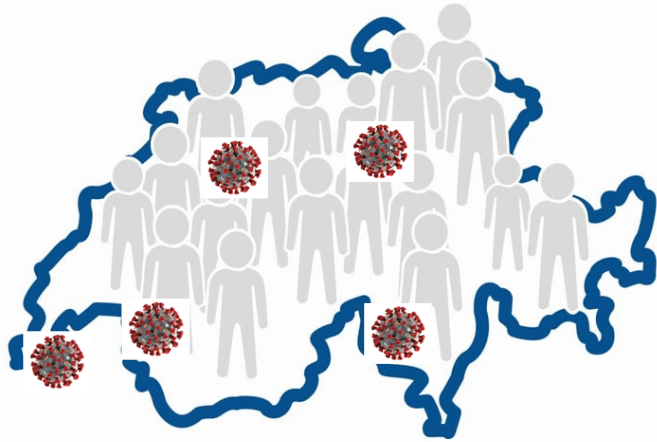
Or

- Maintaining the infection fraction at a manageable level i_0 :

$$T_{\text{imm}} = f_{\text{imm}} \frac{T_{\text{inf}}}{i_0} \sim 1 - 2 \text{ years}$$

~ 0.7 (pointing to f_{imm})
 $\sim 5-10 \text{ days}$ (pointing to T_{inf})
 $\sim 0.01 (?)$ (pointing to i_0)

Random COVID19 testing



Saved Lives
Safe Reboot
Less Damage