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Attention, Citizens! The #COVID19 Emergency Is Over!

Willis Eschenbach / 3 days ago May 13, 2020

Guest Post by Willis Eschenbach

Around the world, both state and local governments looked at wildly exaggerated computer model projections of millions of virus deaths, declared a “State Of Emergency”, and foolishly pulled the wheels off of their own economies. This has caused pain, suffering, and loss that far exceeds anything that the virus might do.

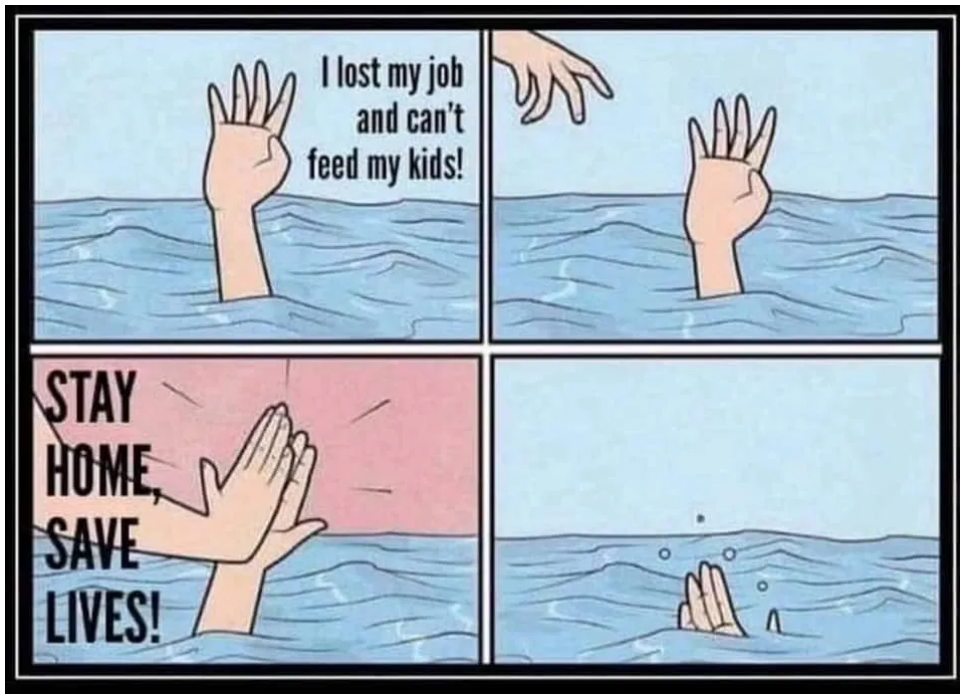
The virus hardly affects anyone—it has killed a maximum of 0.1% of the population in the very worst-hit locations. One-tenth of one measly percent.

Ah, I hear you saying, but that’s just deaths. What about hospitalizations? Glad you asked. Hospitalizations in the worst-hit areas have been about three times that, about a third of one percent of the population. Still not even one percent.

But on the other hand, more than thirty million workers in the US are unemployed. That’s about twenty percent of the number of full and part-time employees. And that job loss affects the entire household, not just the workers.

And that doesn’t count the loss of life from increased suicides and from delayed medical diagnosis and procedures. Nor does it count the fact that some 20% of the lost jobs are not expected to return. And we have calls to mental-health hotlines skyrocketing, and domestic violence through the roof. In a most ironic outcome, we have hospitals and doctors going bankrupt, and thousands of nurses being furloughed, because “non-essential” medical procedures are forbidden. Then there are the huge financial losses, both to the economy and to the government.

And in a beautifully circular process, we have trillions and trillions of dollars borrowed by the government to try to offset some of the damages that the government just caused ... these lockdowns are far, far more destructive than the virus. The virus damage is short-lived, but we and our children will be paying for decades for our stupidity in killing the economy.



It's like ... it's like ... well, about the only example I can think of which has equivalent idiocy is if a mosquito were to land on your head and you grabbed a sledgehammer to get rid of it ...

So the first lesson of the emergency is, don't kill your economy to try to delay or avoid a few deaths. It is possible to slow the spread of the virus without pulling the wheels off of the economy.

The next lesson of the emergency is, don't put much trust in computer models.

The next lesson of the emergency is, don't put doctors in charge of economic decisions. Especially Dr. Fauci. He's been wrong about most aspects of this whole process. If you want someone to run a hospital, as a general rule you shouldn't hire a doctor ...

The next lesson of the emergency is the extreme importance of the ancient medical maxim of Hippocrates, a maxim that our dear Dr. Fauci apparently never heard of — *"Primum non nocere"*, which means *"First, do no harm"*.

The next lesson of the emergency is, quarantine the sick, protect the vulnerable, but do NOT quarantine the healthy. That's madness.

Let me set aside what we've learned to return to the COVID19 emergency. The emergency everyone feared was exemplified by the reality that in some countries, the medical system was overwhelmed by the number of COVID-19 cases. The cause of this was that the cases came on too fast—the peak hospitalizations and deaths were packed into a week or two. Early on in the pandemic, this peak in the load on the medical system in Italy caused parts of the system to collapse under the weight of cases.

To prevent that peak load from crushing the medical system, it was decided in many countries to try to "flatten the curve" by slowing the spread of the virus. Note that the stated intention of flattening the curve was not to stop the virus. The declared goal was

to decrease the number of new cases per day, not to decrease the total number of new cases.

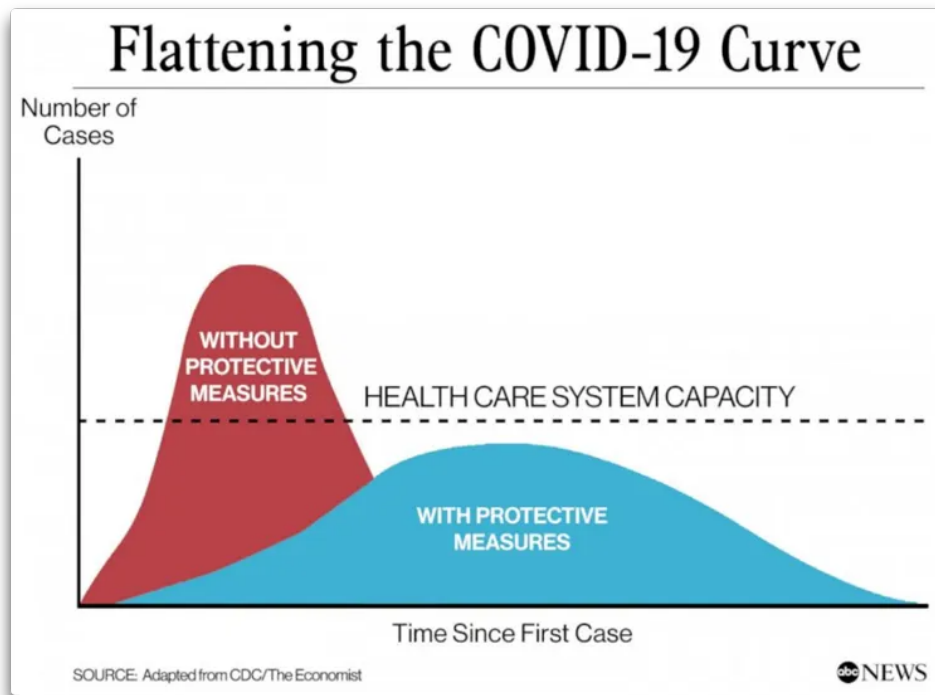


Figure 1. The theoretical effect of “flattening the curve”.

In that manner, rather than having a sharp peak in medical need, the curve would be flattened out and hopefully the medical system would not be overwhelmed.

So ... did this work? Hard to tell at this point. However, we do have one example of a modern country that did NOT shut down and kill their economy to fight the virus, which is Sweden. How are they doing? Here's the comparison:

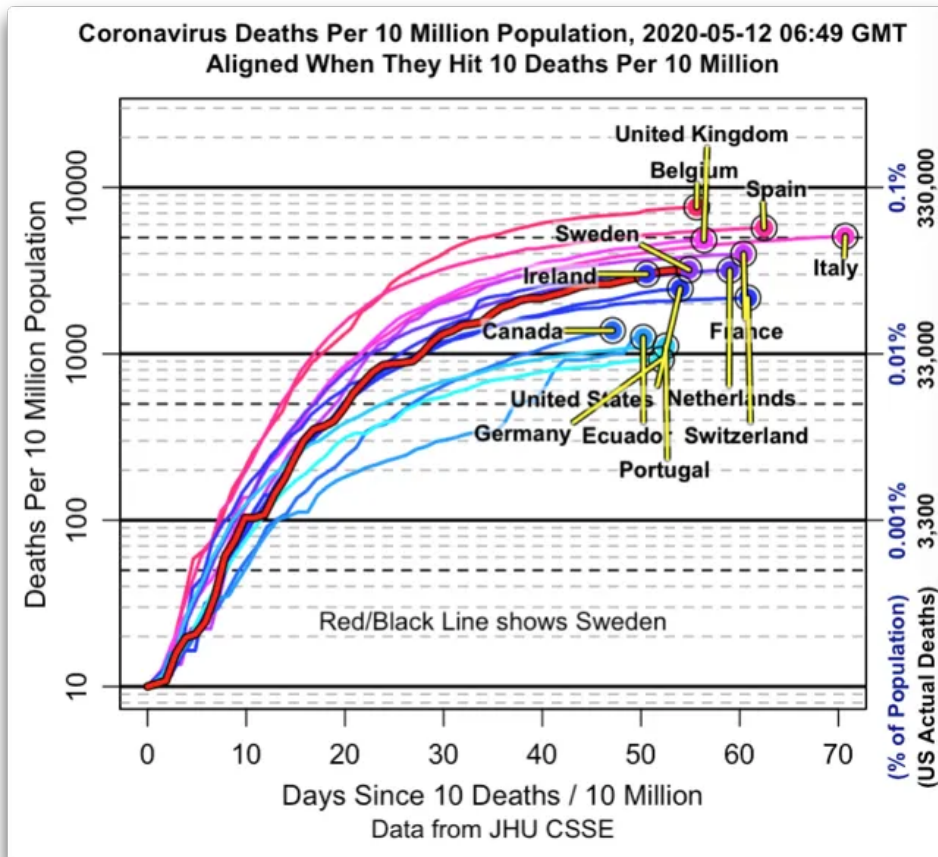


Figure 2. Deaths per ten million over time, for the hardest-hit countries.

As you can see, Sweden is in the middle of the pack—a bit better than the UK and Switzerland, same as the Netherlands and Ireland, and a bit worse than the US and France.

So if the lockdowns and the “shelter-at-home” orders are having an effect, you couldn’t tell it by looking at Sweden.

And to return to the question of lowering the peak and flattening the curve, here are the results from a number of countries. I’ll start with Sweden and the Netherlands, since per Figure 2 they are on the same path. I’m using the Complete Ensemble Empirical Mode Decomposition (CEEMD) method to remove the fluctuations due to incomplete data reporting on the weekends. See [here](#) and [here](#) for a discussion of the CEEMD method.

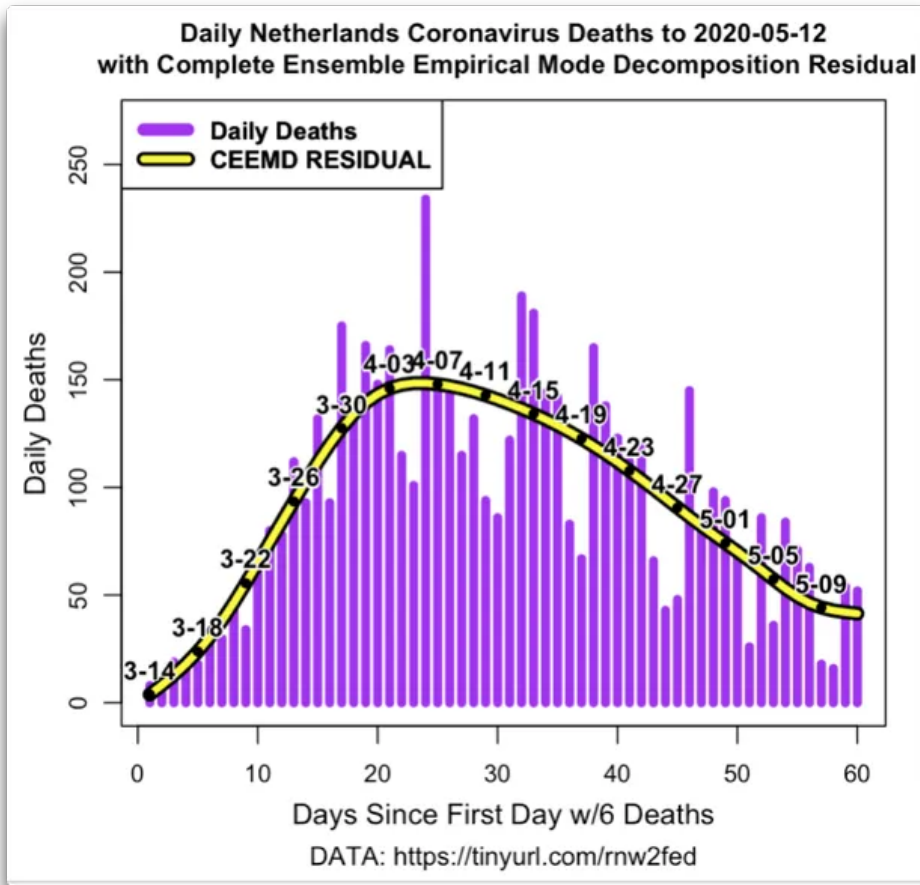


Figure 3. Daily deaths. The black/yellow line is the CEEMD “residual”, which is the value of the data with the weekly and other regular fluctuations removed.

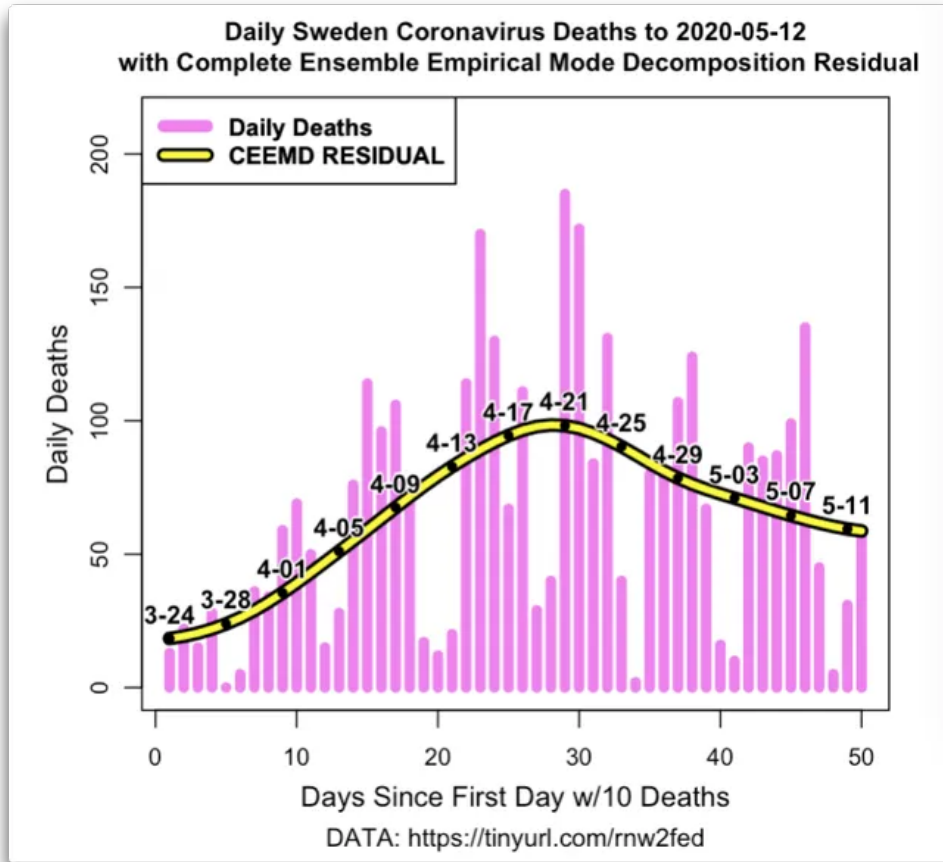
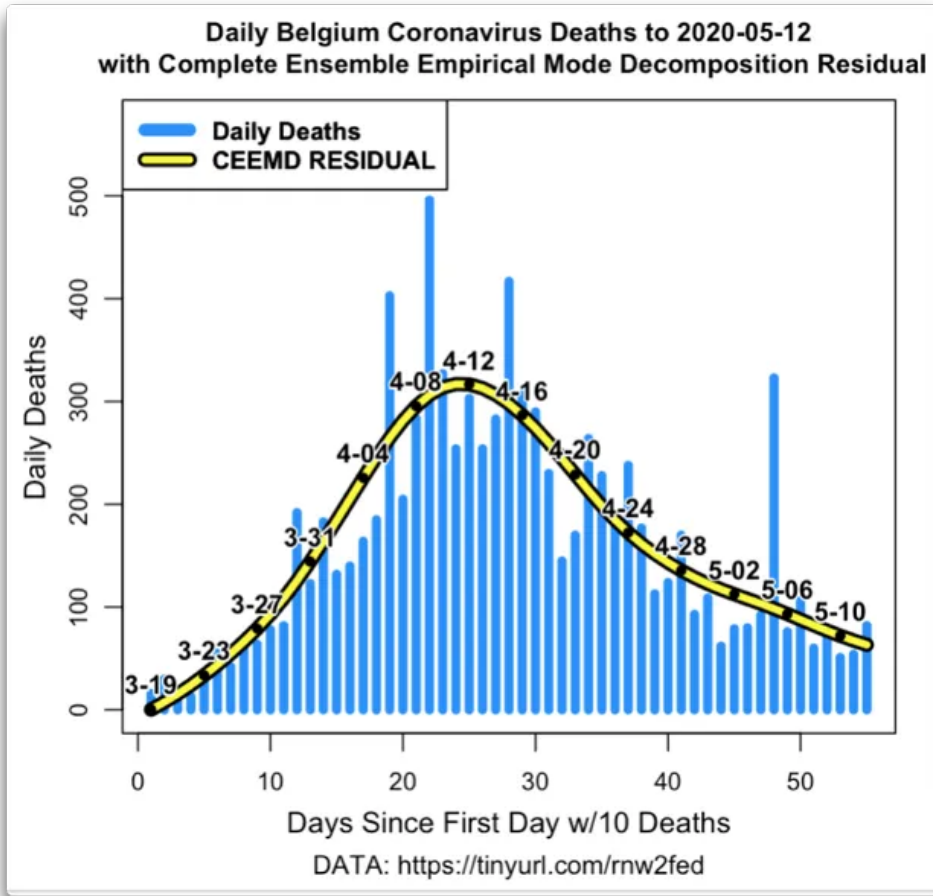
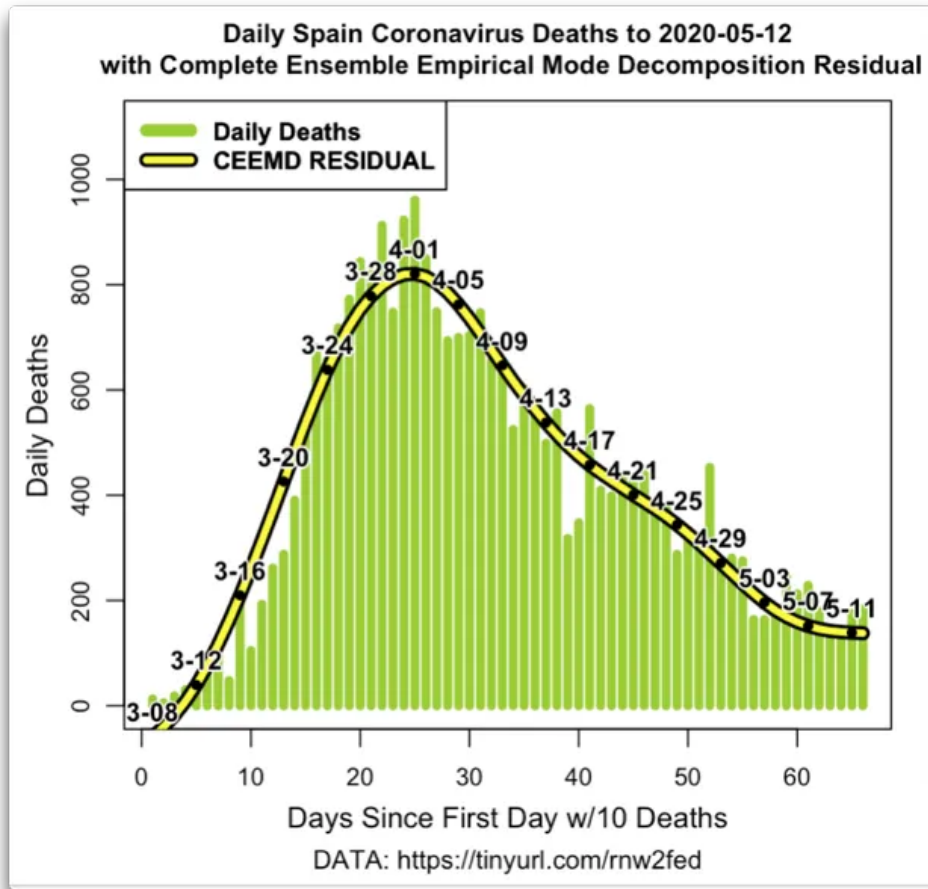


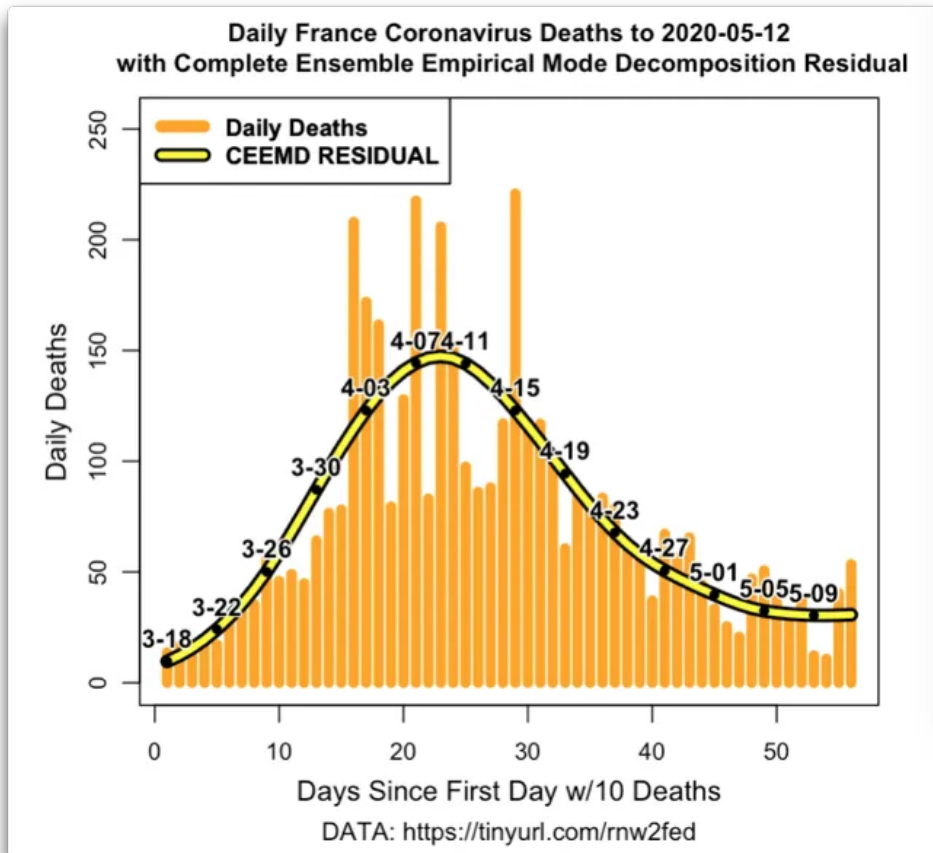
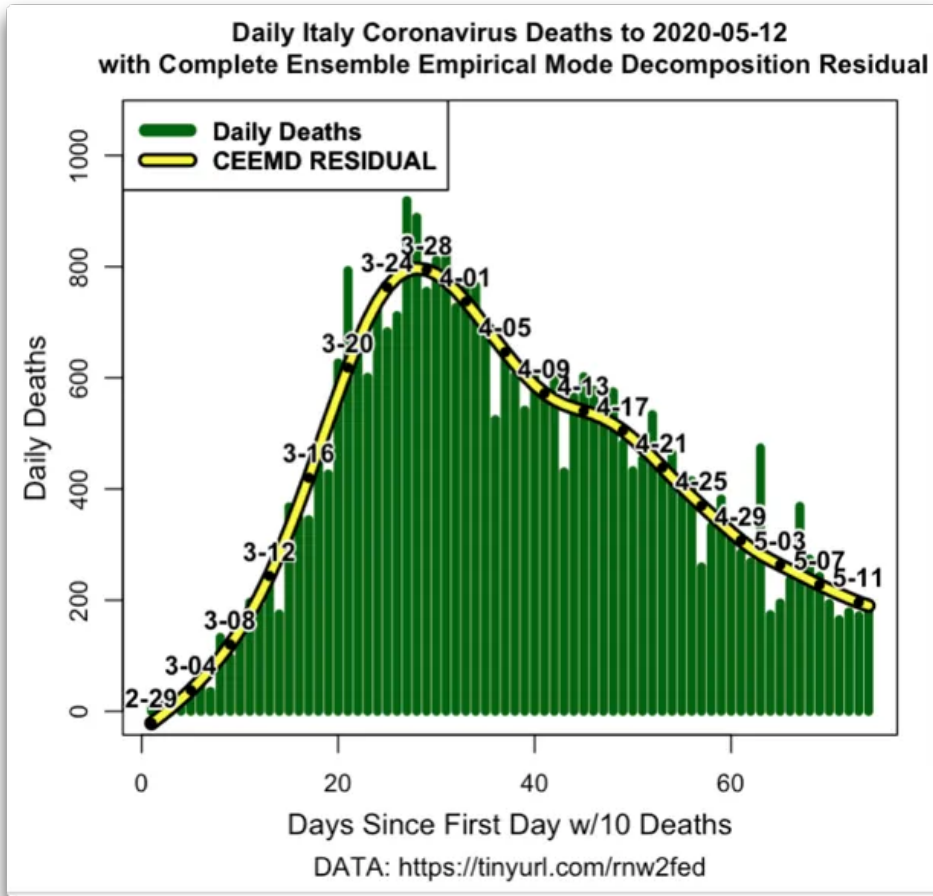
Figure 4. Daily deaths. The black/yellow line is the CEEMD “residual”, which is the value of the data with the weekly and other regular fluctuations removed.

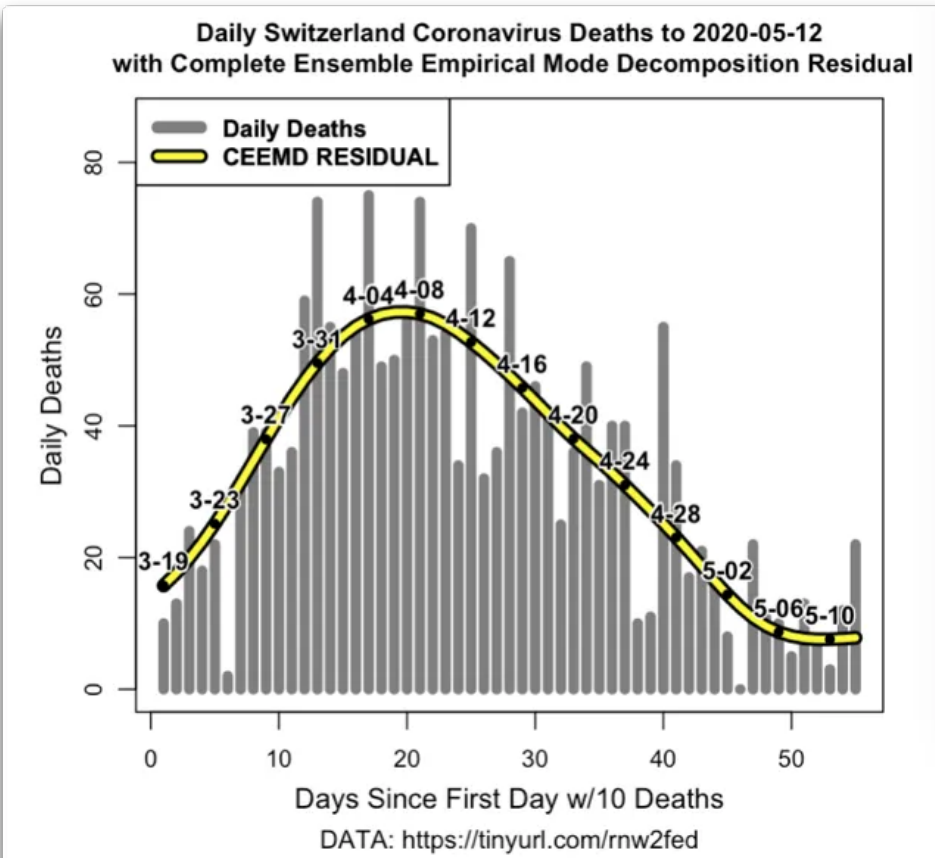
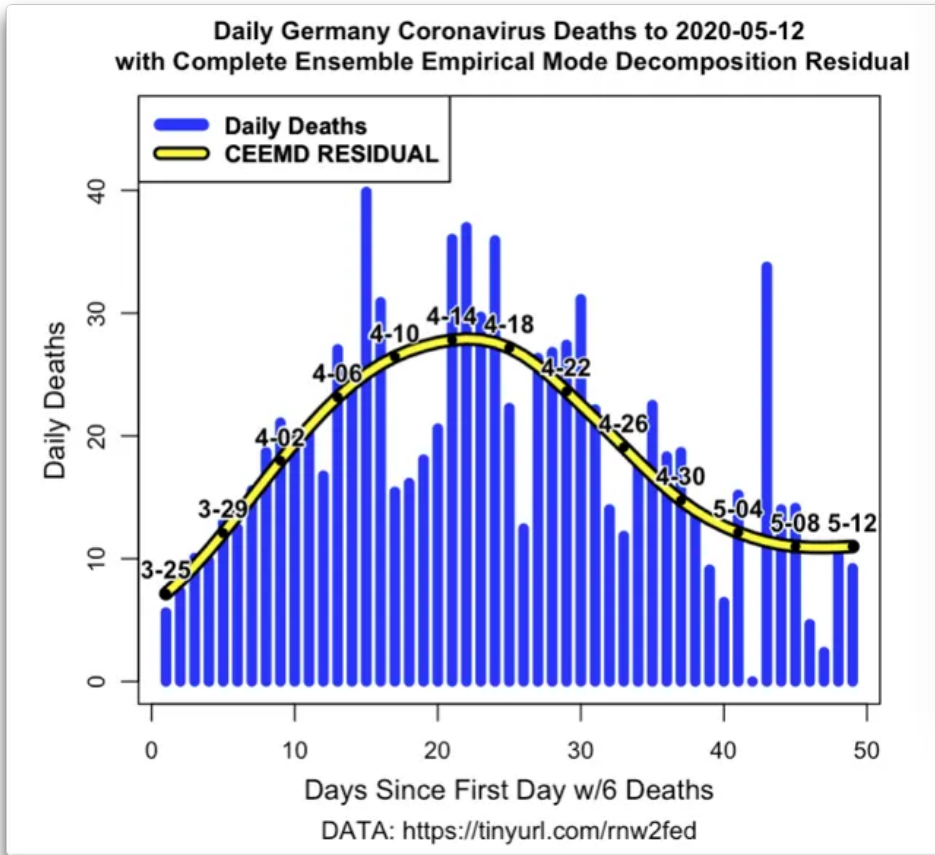
Both the Netherlands and Sweden are past the peak load on the medical system. Neither one was overwhelmed by that load. The difference is ... Sweden did not pull the wheels off of its economy and drive millions into joblessness and despair. I know which path I prefer ...

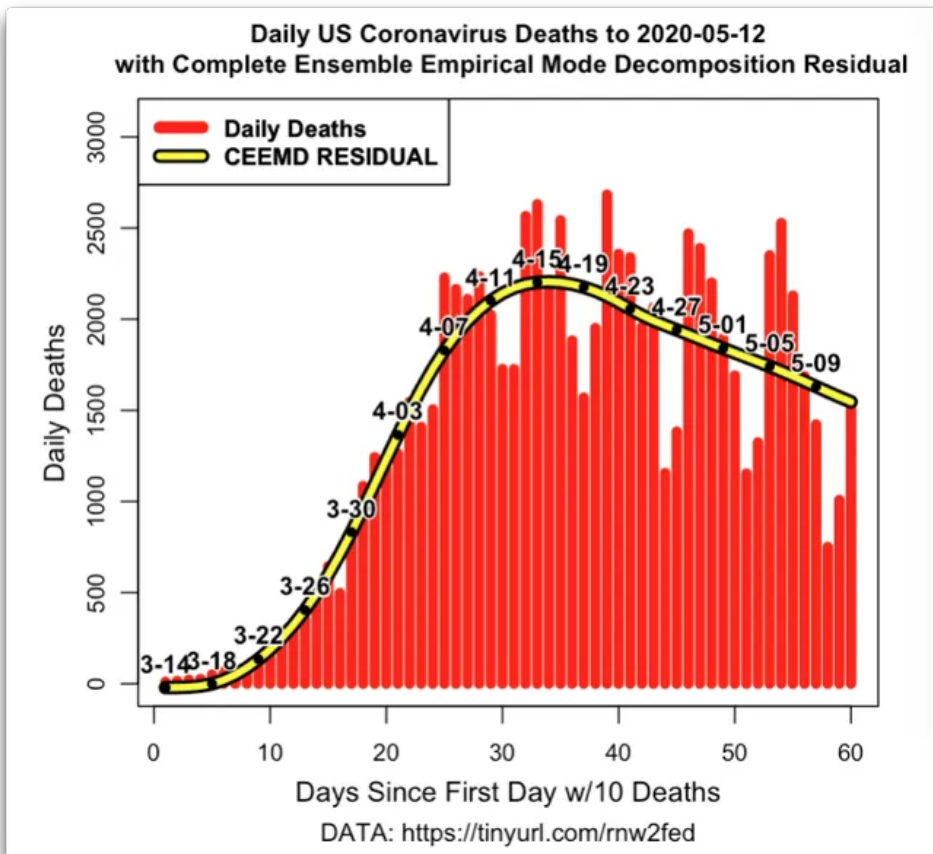
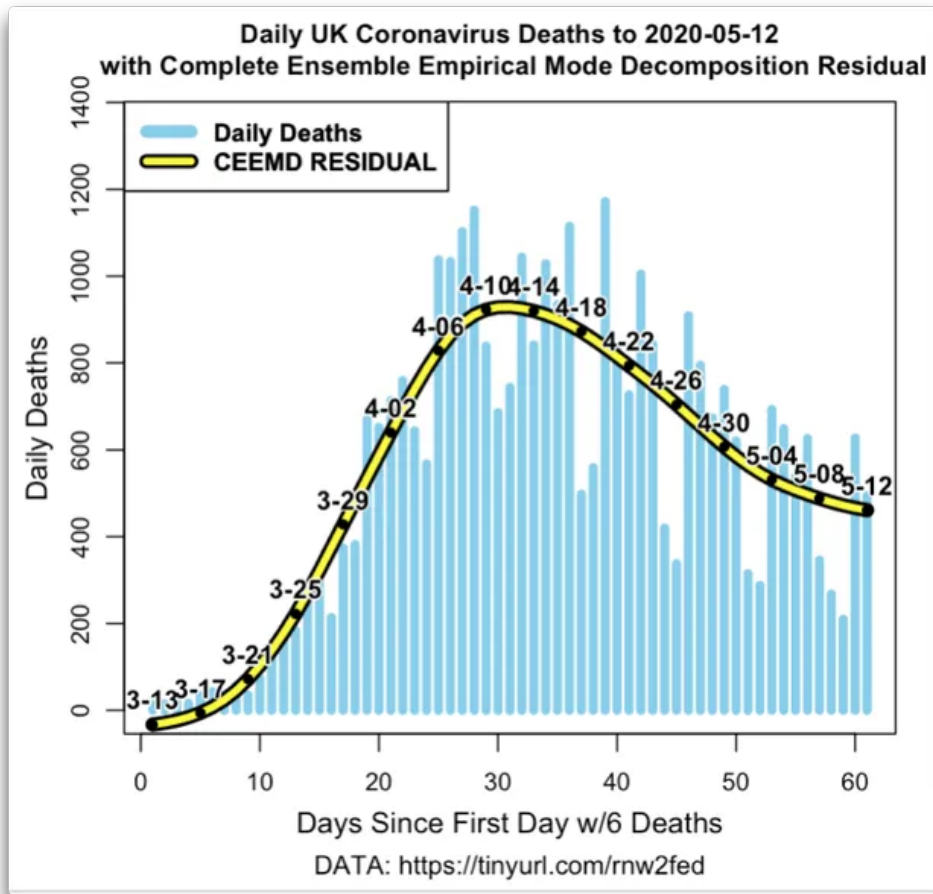
Here are the daily deaths of a number of other countries. I’ll start with Belgium, which is the hardest-hit country, and roll on down from there.



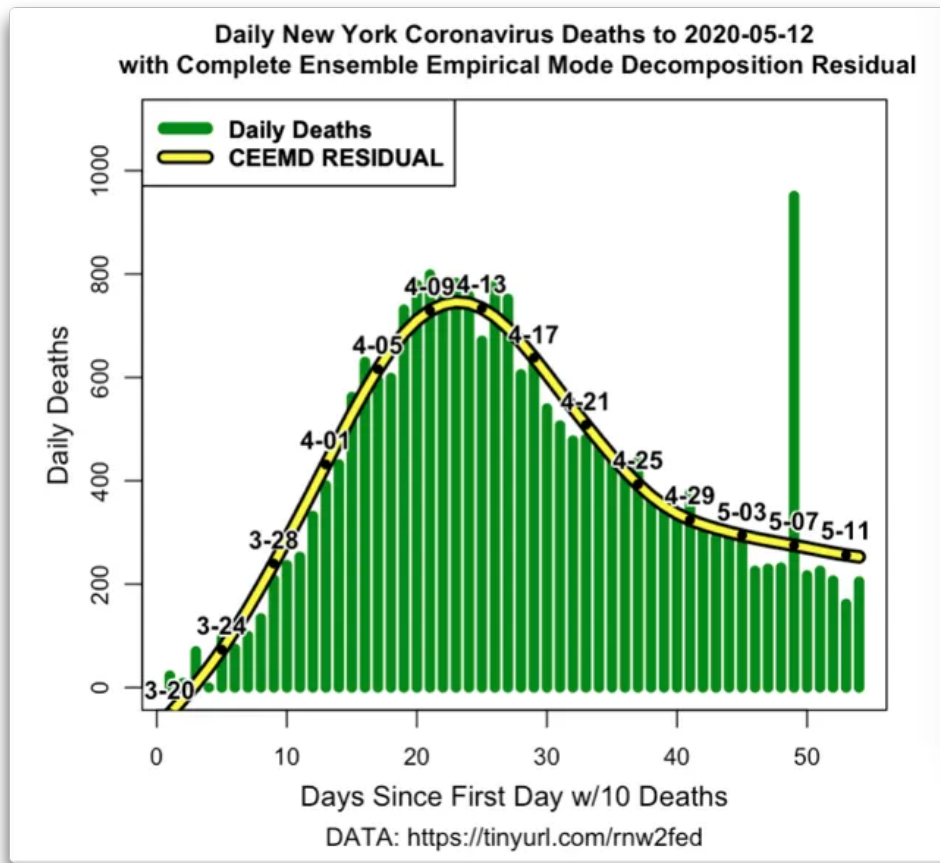






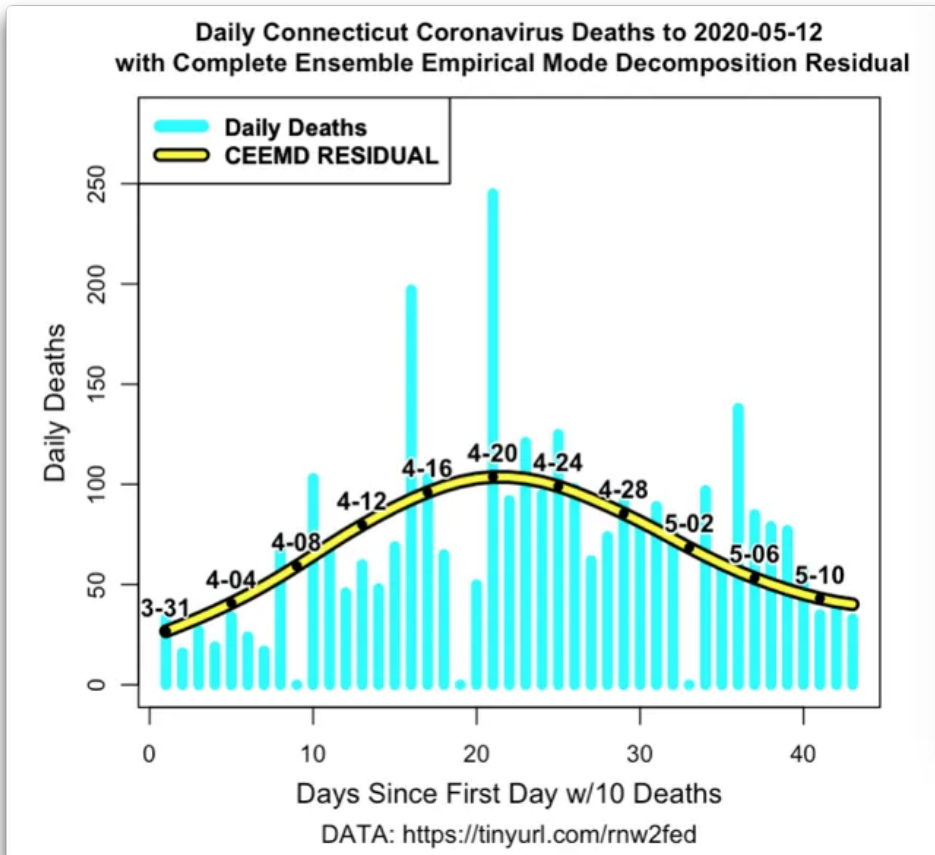
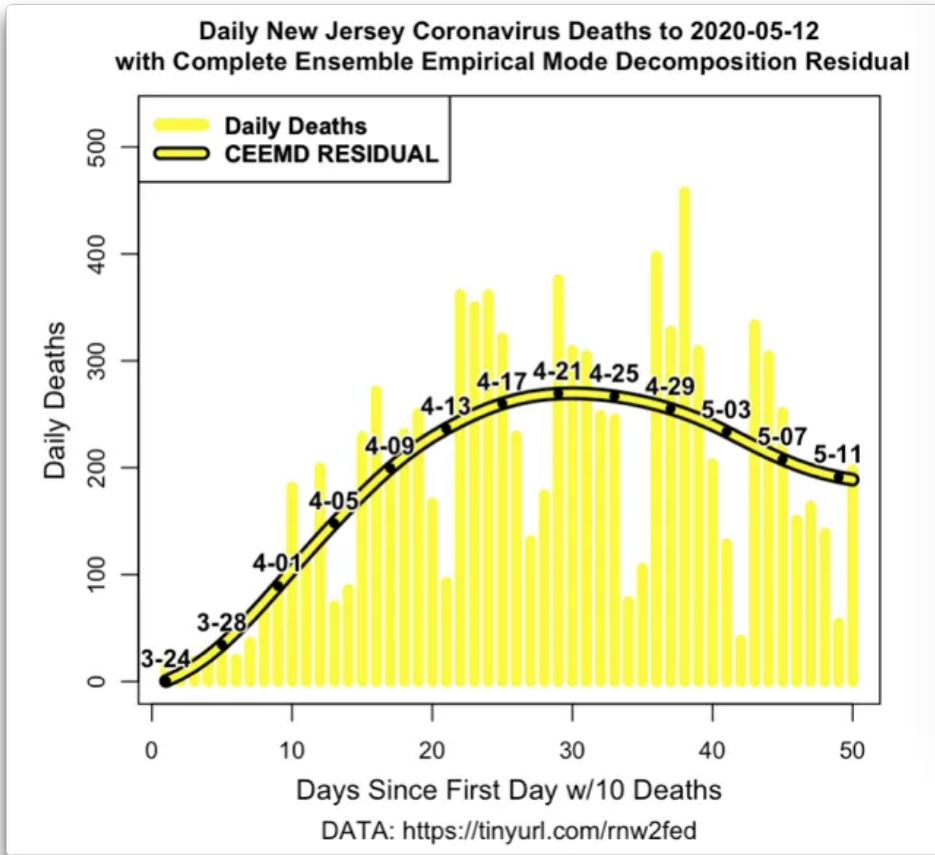


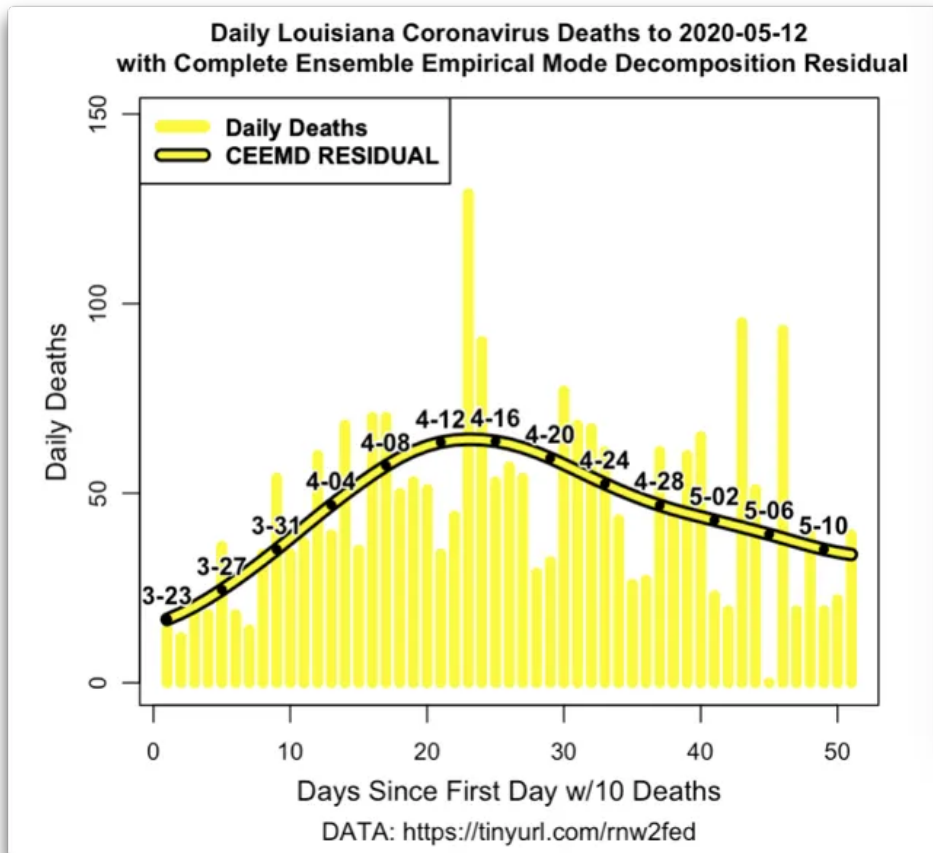
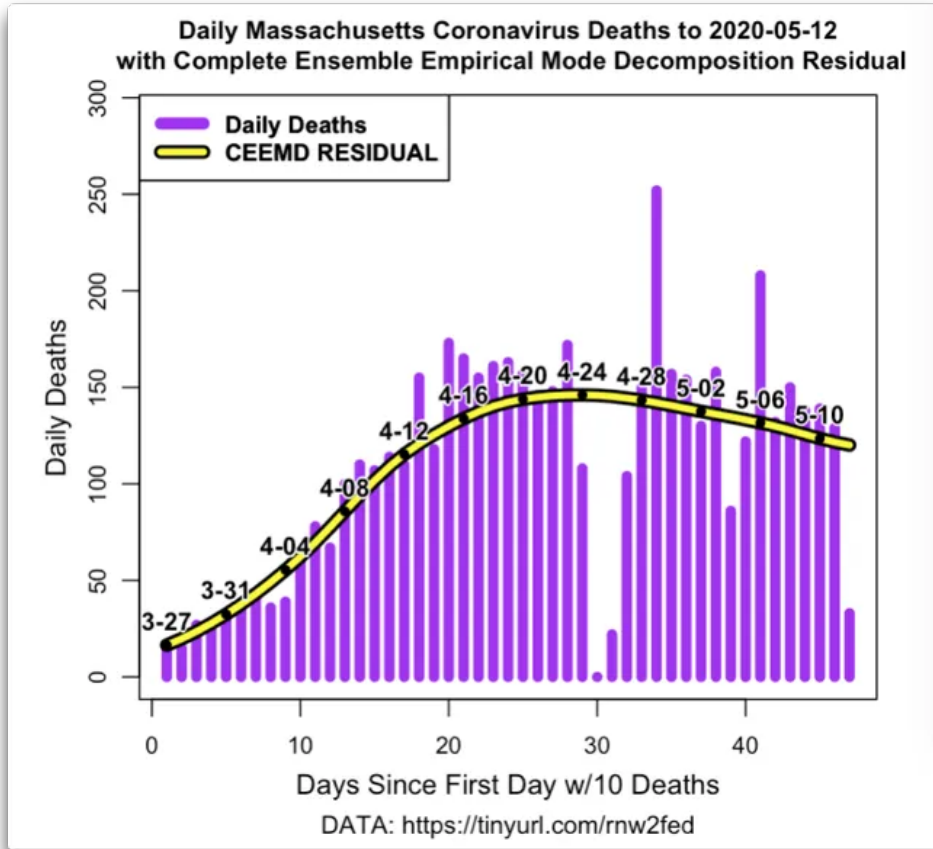
OK, so much for the countries. All are about a month past their peak. How about the US states? Here you go.

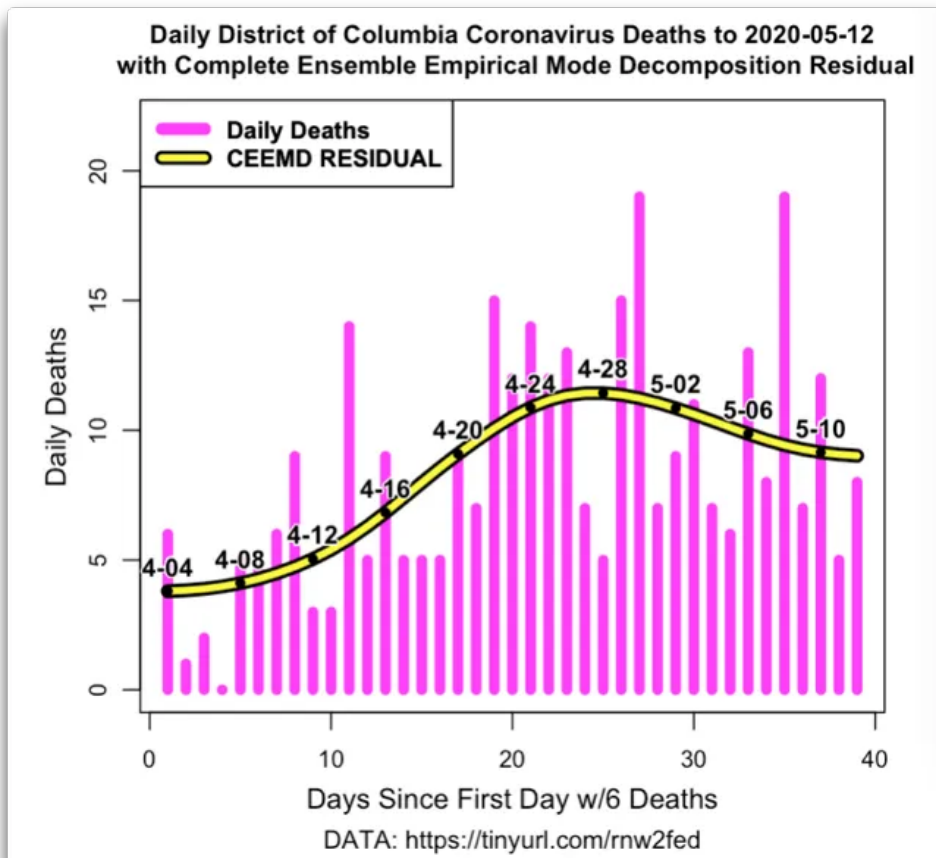
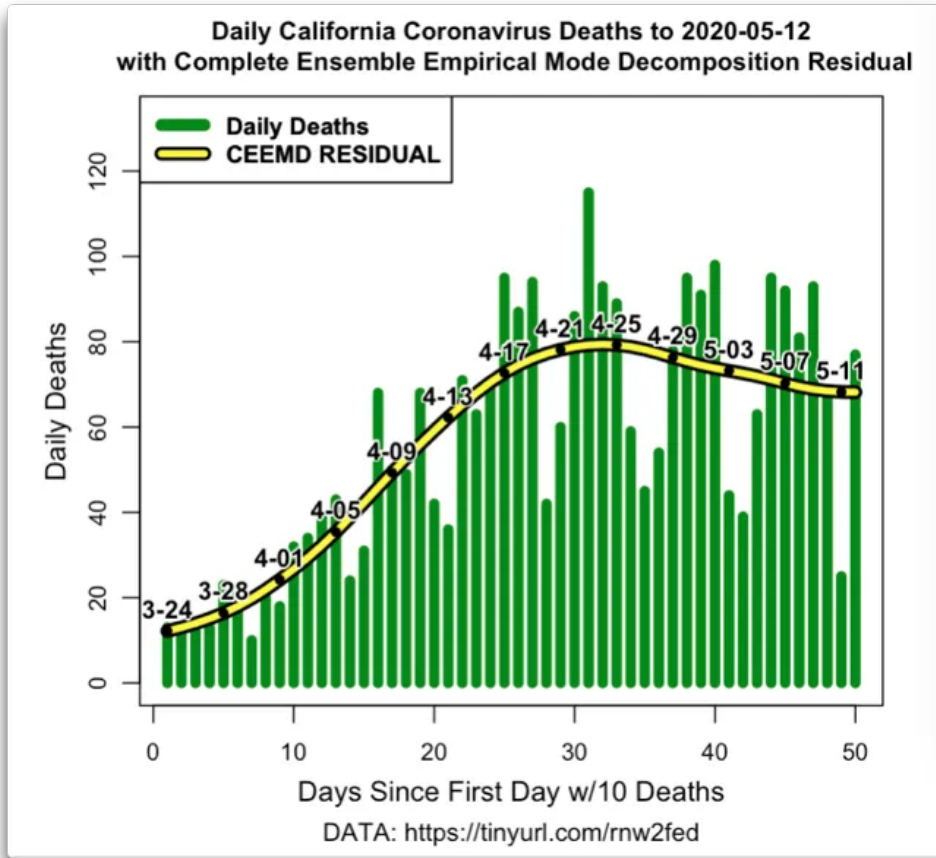


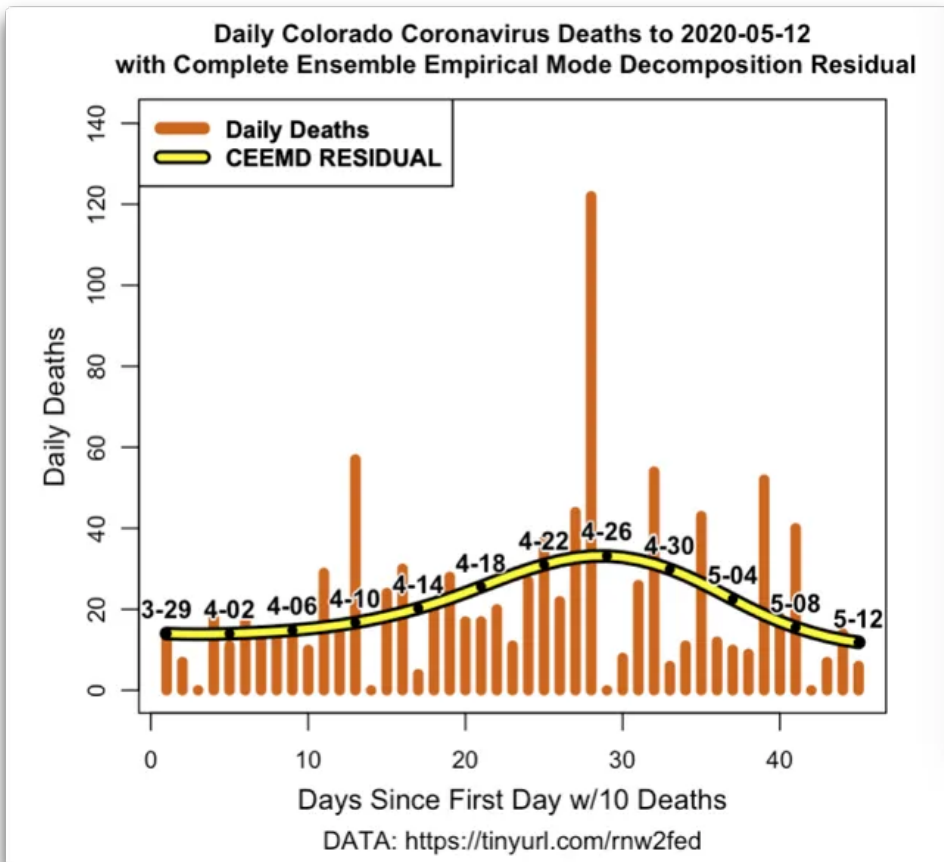
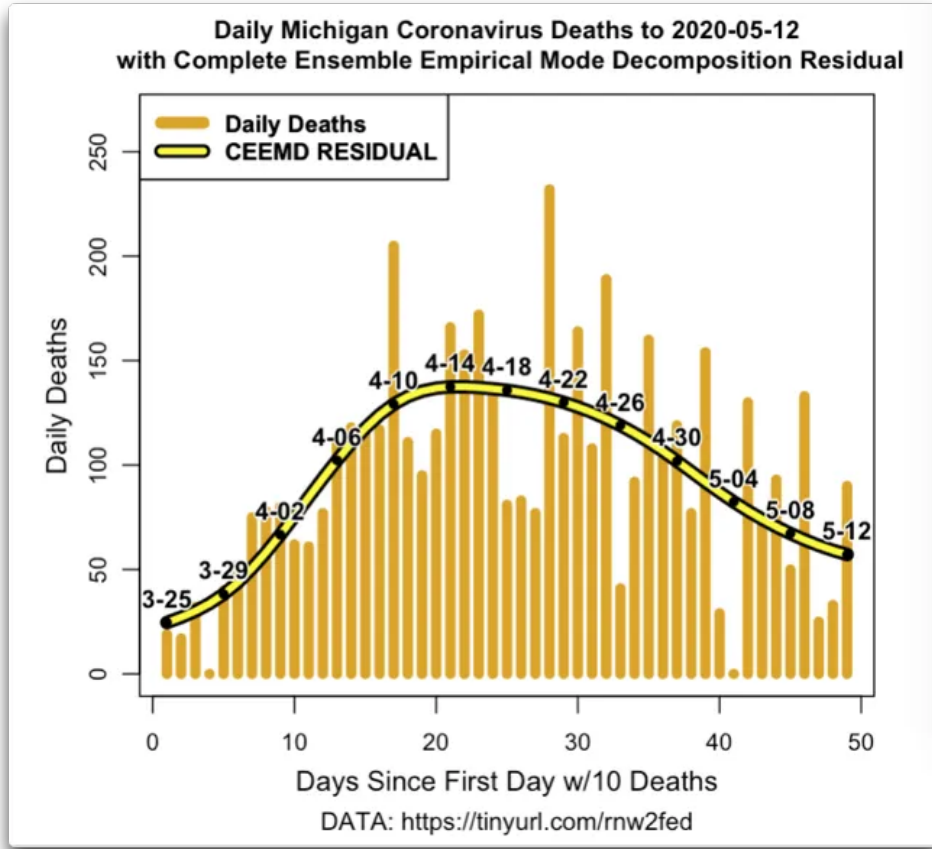
The spike in the New York data is from a single day's reporting of a bunch of "overlooked" deaths in nursing homes. Bizarrely, Governor Cuomo ordered nursing homes to accept COVID-19 patients ... so as you might imagine, the totally predictable nursing home deaths were concealed until their hand was forced.

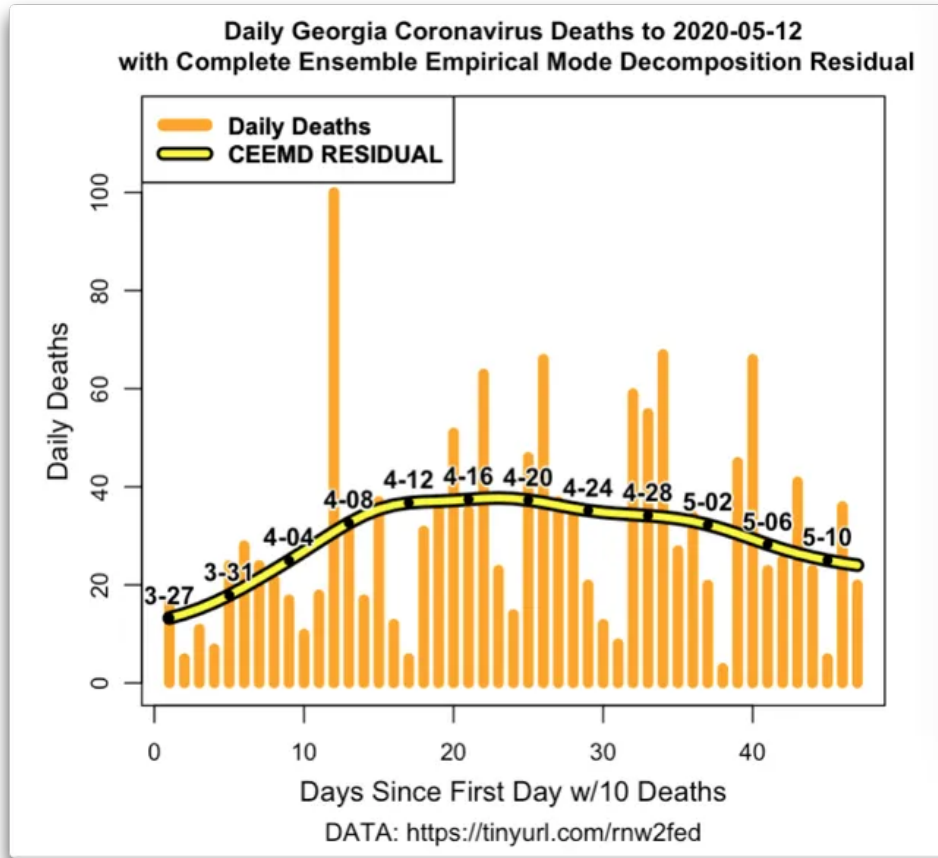
I also note how resistant the CEEMD residual is to that single outlier data point of nursing home deaths. A better-guess solution would be to spread those deaths out over the earlier time, distribute by the number of non-nursing home deaths.





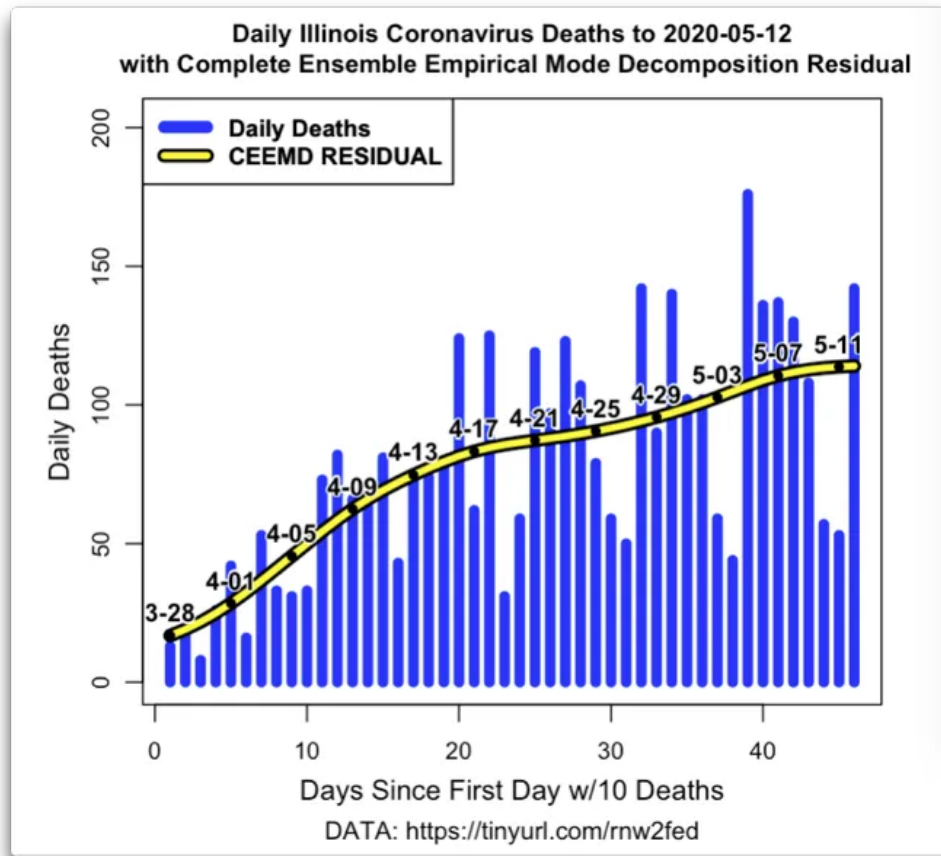
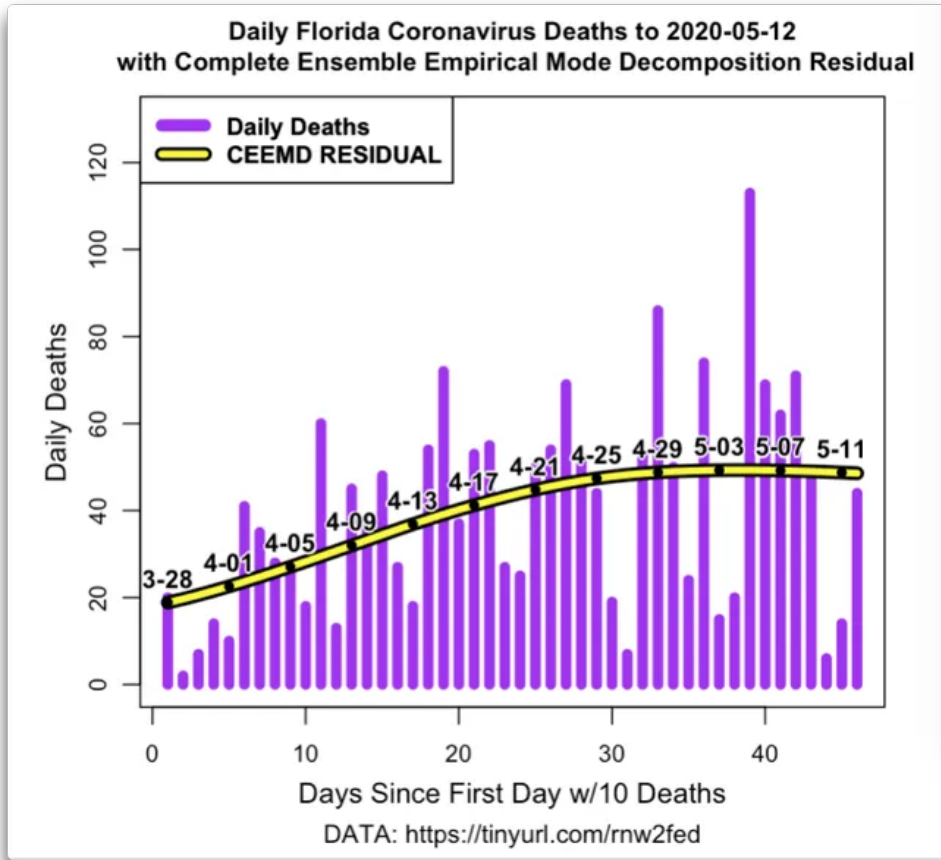




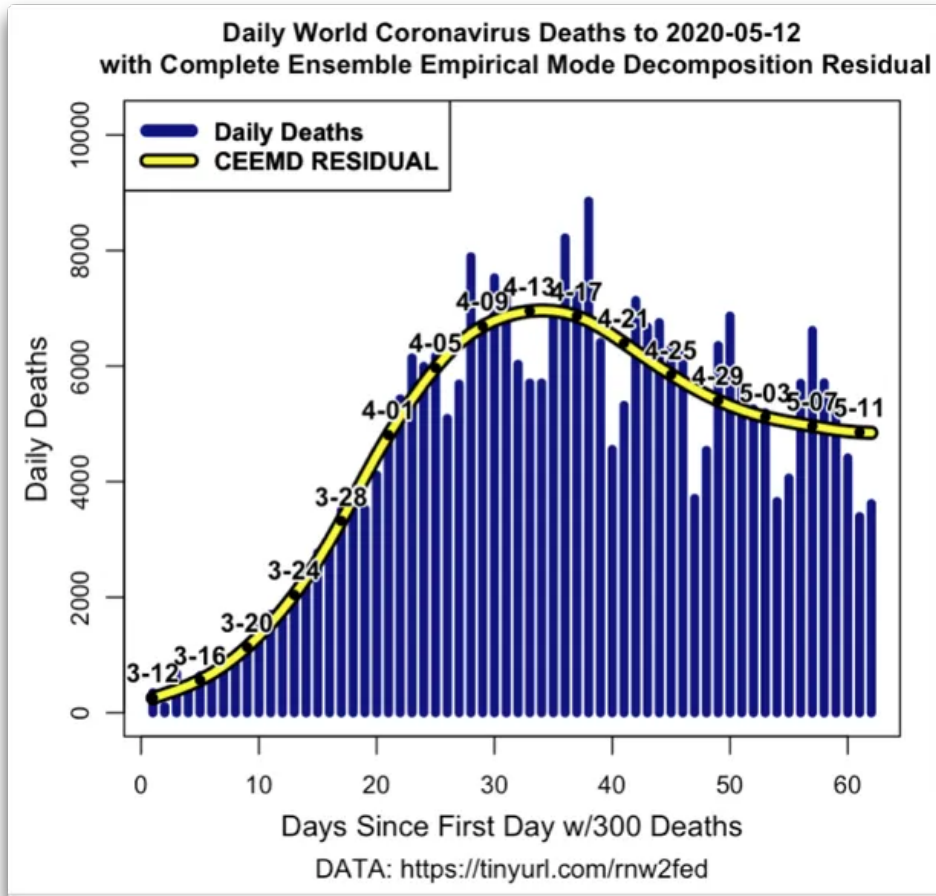


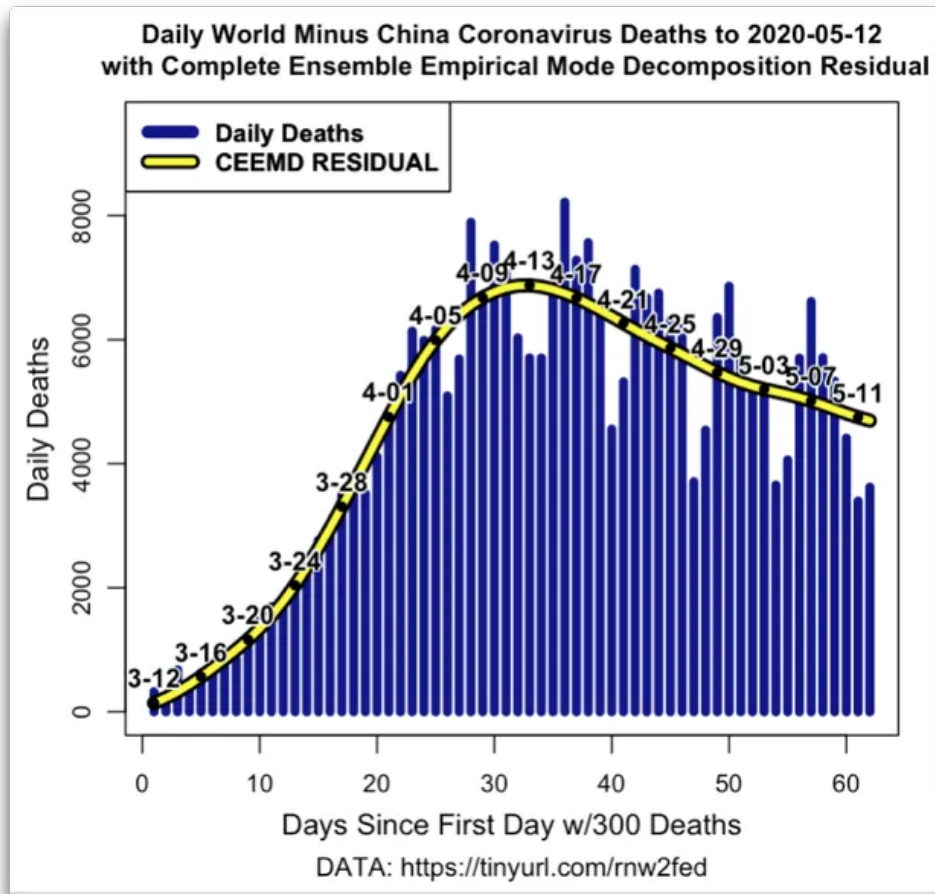
(In passing, let me note that Georgia started loosening the lockdown on April 20th, and there’s no sign of a “second peak” of deaths.)

Those are the hardest-hit states. However, not all of the hardest-hit states are past their peak. Here are the two states of the hardest-hit that are not past their peak.



Finally, to close the circle before discussing all of this, here are two views of the world deaths, one with and one without China. I left out China in one of them to see how much difference it made, because a) China's numbers are big, and b) I don't trust them one bit. Here are those two charts. It turns out that leaving out China makes very little difference.





So ... given all of that, what can we conclude?

Well, first in importance, if medical care was outpaced by the virus in some location and there was an emergency, the peak of the emergency is over now. Yes, there are some states and countries yet to pass the peak. But by and large, and in particular for the hardest-hit countries as well as for the world as a whole, the peak of the medical load from the pandemic passed about a month ago.

And that means that in those states and countries, whatever chance we had to “flatten the curve” is GONE. The opportunity has passed. For most of the world, curve flattening is history.

And since we were sold this bill of goods on the basis of “flattening the curve”, and since we’re now well past any opportunity to do that, let’s remove the restrictions. Or as I’ve said for weeks, “End The American Lockdown Now”.

Of course, the local petty tyrants who have vastly expanded powers under the “emergency” want to hold on to them. So they’re now saying that we have something new to fear, a “rebound” or a “second peak” ... me, I’ve said before that I think we will see very little in the way of any second peak, for a simple reason:

“*As Sweden has shown, the virus laughs at our pathetic western-style “shelter in place” regulations.*”

Too many people in “essential” jobs, too many deliveries, too many people coming and going from the households. Combine that with a very infectious virus, and the shelter in place will have little effect ... and since it has had little effect when it was there, I say it will have little effect when it is removed.

Now, here’s my argument. The various local instant totalitarian rulers derive their power from the State of Emergency. But the emergency is past, we can’t flatten the curve now. We’re past that, which means there is no further emergency. So them holding onto that power now that the emergency is ended is illegitimate and illegal. It’s also in some cases unconstitutional.

FOR THOSE CRYING FOR THE COUNTRY TO REMAIN SHUT DOWN, PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- 1) How many children should starve in order to make you feel safe?
- 2) How many families must go bankrupt in order to make you feel safe?
- 3) How many business owners should lose everything they've worked for in order to make you feel safe?
- 4) How many people have to lose their jobs, their health insurance, their life savings, to make you feel safe?

Come up with the number of people that you think should surrender their lives for YOUR feelings and YOUR safety.

Here’s what I’d do ...

- In those countries and states that are past the peak, declare the emergency is over and open everything back up. Acknowledge that the chance to flatten the curve is gone, and ***revoke each and every emergency order***. They are only valid for the duration of the emergency.
- Maintain some approximation of social distancing, on a voluntary basis.
- There are flareups in certain locations now, even with all of the regulations. There will be flareups after the regs are removed. Get used to it. A flareup is not a second peak.

- Maintain personal sanitation on a voluntary basis. Wear a mask, wear gloves, wash hands, and for goodness sake, if you're ordering bat soup, tell them to hold the bats ...
- Once the majority of the pandemic deaths are over, establish a testing and contact tracing process to keep track of the virus.
- Test people entering the country. As far as I know, I get tested more going in to get my blood drawn than do people entering the US.
- Keep a close watch on the numbers to see if there is some kind of "second peak" developing. If and where that might happen, then in those areas that had trouble with the first peak, push policies that don't kill the economy, and for heaven's sake, ***quarantine the sick rather than the healthy.***
- Encourage the vulnerable population (elderly with co-morbidities, immunocompromised, etc.) to self-isolate to some comfortable extent, to be extra vigilant in avoiding crowds, and to maintain a high level of personal sanitation.

Folks, the ugly reality is that every day we keep the now-useless lockdowns in place is another day of misery for a large chunk of the population. COVID-19 is now a part of the virus landscape. Let's reclaim the power from the Federal, state, county, and city megalomaniacs who are issuing diktats and expecting everyone to obey.

END THE AMERICAN LOCKDOWN NOW!

Here, the unusual late rains have returned. We didn't get one drop in February, which is usually wet, so these late rains are most wonderful.

Best to all, stay well,

W.

AFTERWORD: I note today that Matt Briggs, Statistician To The Stars, has a new post up entitled "[There Is No Evidence Lockdowns Saved Lives. It Is Indisputable They Caused Great Harm](#)". His posts are always worth reading, and he actually is a statistician to the stars.

PS—When you comment, please quote the exact words you're referring to. This prevents much misunderstanding and useless argumentation.

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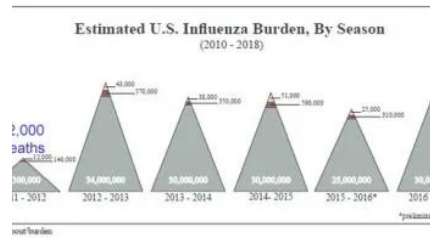
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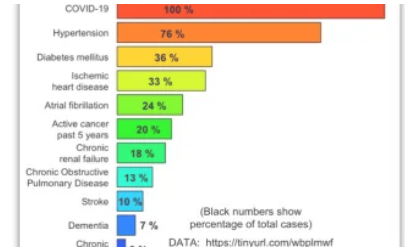
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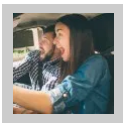
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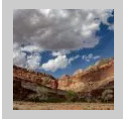
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575 thoughts on "Attention, Citizens! The #COVID19 Emergency Is Over!"

Eric Lerner May 13, 2020 at 10:29 pm

In New York City this epidemic that you consider so trivial has killed 25,000 people – one in 300. What magic will prevent the virus from doing the same in the rest of the world? That's 20 million dead–trivial, right? The virus will not tucker out as you so fondly dream. It is growing exponentially in Russia, India, Brazil , Peru and will certainly grow in the US, where a very partial lockdown has only caused the cases to plateau, not decline. Only spending the money to have universal testing, contact tracking and government-financed and supported isolation can suppress the infection, as S. Korea and Taiwan have shown. The solution to people running out of money for food is for the government to pay them the money they need, not shovel trillions into bailouts of billionaires, as they are now doing.

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