



# Public perceptions and behavioural responses to the COVID-19 emergency in Italy: Results from the wave 1 of the iCARE study

Stojanovic J, Ribeiro P AB, Lavoie KL, Bacon SL

*for the iCARE Study Team\**

[\\*www.mbmc-cmcm.ca/covid19/](http://www.mbmc-cmcm.ca/covid19/)

**iCARE**  
STUDY

International COVID-19 Awareness  
and Responses Evaluation Study





# The iCARE study

- ongoing, multi-wave Canadian-led international survey on public awareness, attitudes, concerns and behavioural responses to COVID-19 public health policies
- **150 international researchers from 40 countries**
- the survey is available in **36 languages**

## iCARE Primary Investigators



Simon L. Bacon, PhD  
Professor  
Concordia University,  
Canada  
MBMC Co-director



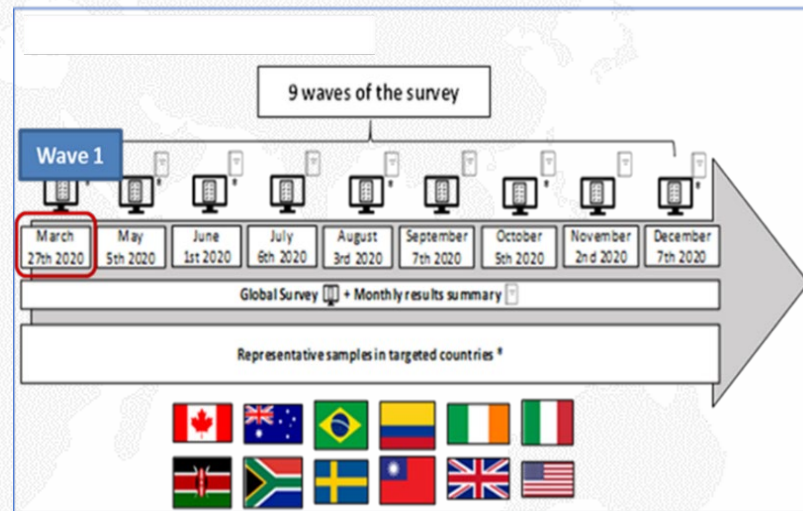
Kim L. Lavoie, PhD  
Professor  
UQAM, Canada  
MBMC Co-director





# The iCARE study

- Launched March 27<sup>th</sup> 2020
- Monthly waves from May-Dec 2020
- Wave 1: March 27<sup>th</sup> to- May 5<sup>th</sup>
- Mainly convenience sampling and parallel representative sampling in targeted countries
- Parallel data capture and linking with the Oxford Government Policy Tracker data, Google Mobility data, and Johns Hopkins case/death/recovery data





# Wave 1 iCARE Questionnaire

6 sections with 54 questions



- socio-demographics, health and COVID-19 status
- health behaviours
- **sources** of COVID-19 information
- public **awareness and attitudes** towards local COVID-19 public health policies
- public **behaviours** (adoption of the local COVID-19 public health policies):
  - hygiene measures; social distancing measures; self-quarantining; avoiding travel
- perceived COVID-19 related **concerns**:
  - individual level concerns; economic concerns; concerns related to other people; country-level concerns

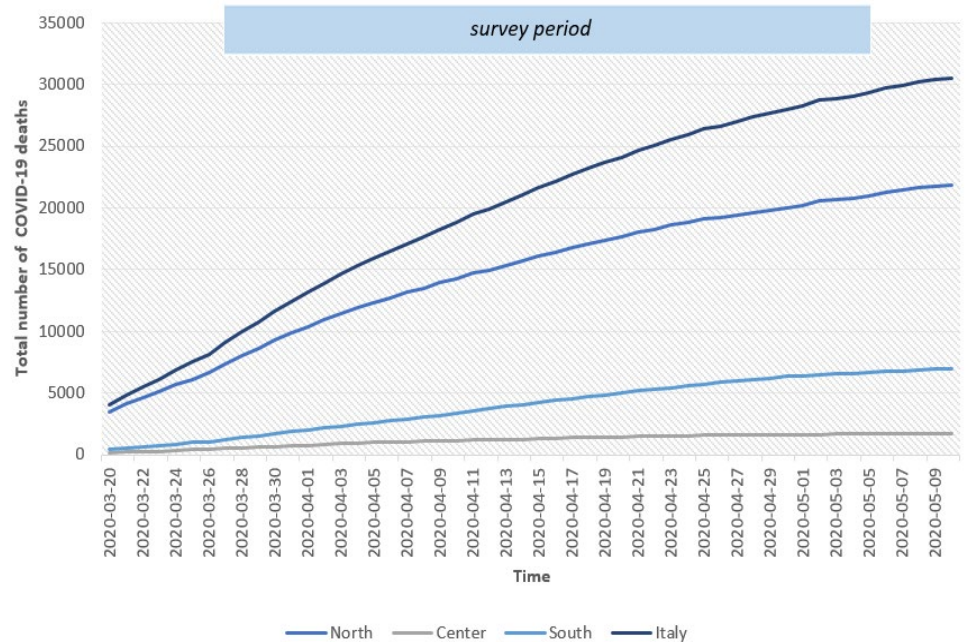




# COVID-19 in Italy

- On January 30, first 2 cases of COVID-19 infection in Italy were confirmed
- On February 21, the first autochthonous case in Italy was confirmed
- As of July 17<sup>th</sup>:
  - 243.629 confirmed cases
    - Median age of cases: 61
    - 54.1 % cases female
  - 34.097 deaths (14%)

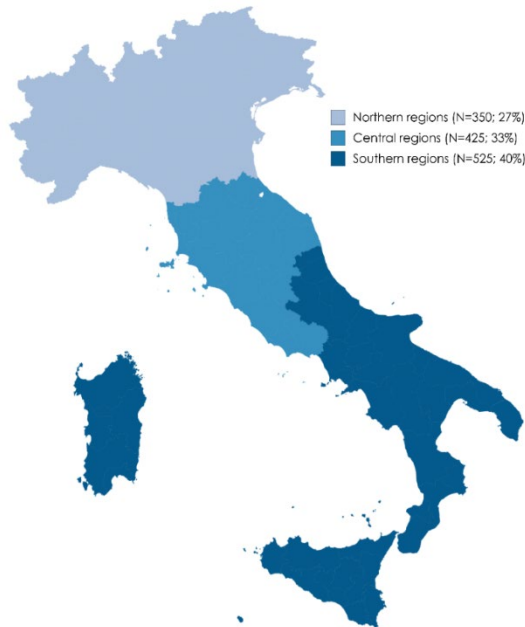
Number of COVID-19 **deaths** overall and across different geographical regions across the iCARE study period (wave 1)







## Results – study population (N=1332)



### Sociodemographic characteristics:

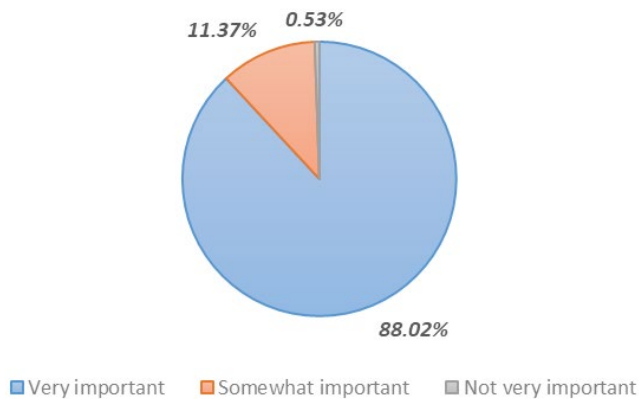
- 68.1% women
- 57% : less than 25 years
- 33.3% : from 26 to 50 years
- 9.7% : over 51 years
- 66.5% high school or lower level of education
- 63.7 % urban or suburban area



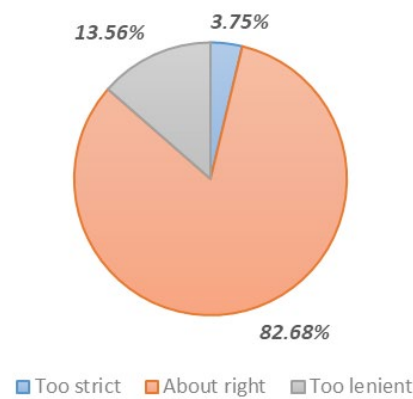


# Perceptions and importance of policy measures

Importance of governmental or local health authority measures

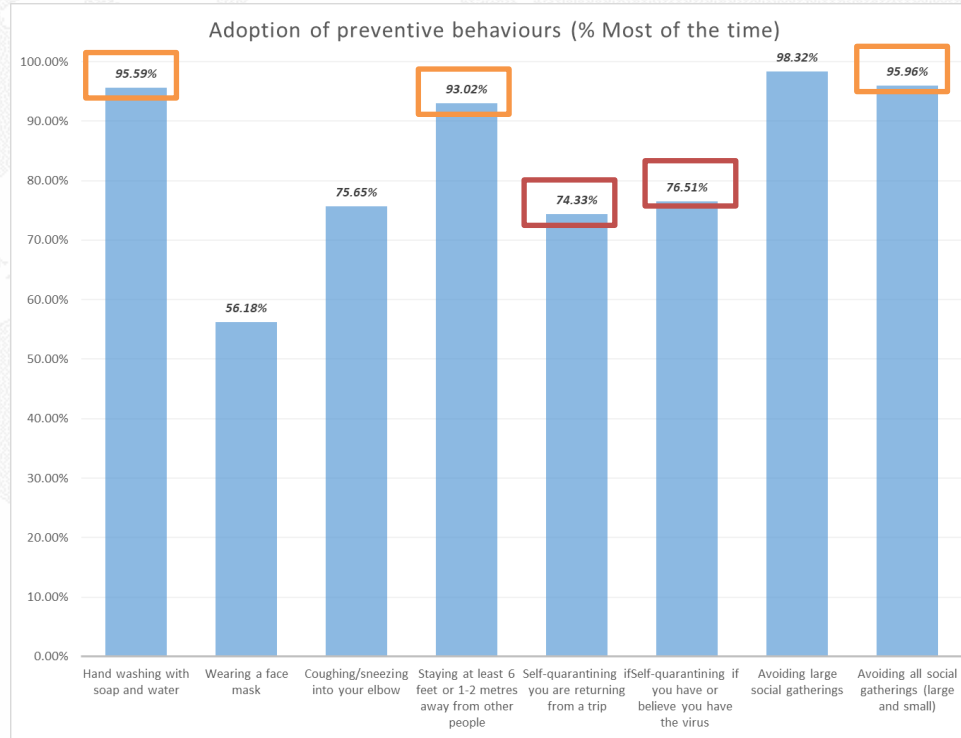


Perceptions of governmental or local health authority measures





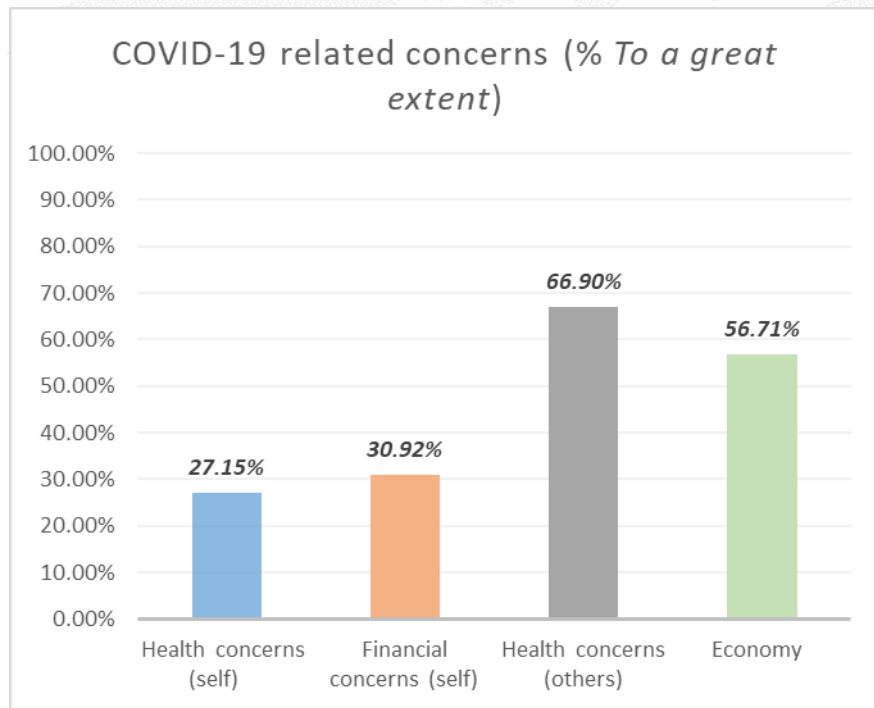
# Behaviours







# COVID-19 related concerns



- **Health concerns (self):**
  - being infected myself
  - the impact of being infected on my health, including dying
- **Financial concerns (self):**
  - losing my job / family income
  - losing my / family savings
  - not having enough money for food and/or rent
- **Health concerns (others):**
  - infecting other people I live with
  - a person with whom I live with being infected
  - a family member with whom I do not share my home being infected
  - a friend with whom I do not share my home being infected
  - infecting other people in the community
- **Economy concerns**
  - being isolated from other people
  - my country going into an economic recession/depression
  - how long it will take for things to go back to normal

\* Composite concern variables created based on principal component analysis performed on the entire set of concern variables for the Italian sample; For the purposes of this graphical presentation, proportions of individual concern variables were averaged across clusters





# Limitations

- Cross-sectional design and self-reported data
- Snowball sampling and limited sample representativeness
- On-line implemented survey: inability to reach individuals with limited access to internet, such as older adults





# Conclusions

Data from the initial stages of the COVID-19 epidemic in Italy suggest that:

- Citizens **acknowledge the importance** of COVID-19 policy measures
- Citizens **believe that the implemented policy measures are optimal** for prevention and reduction of COVID-19 spread
- There was a **good level of overall adherence** to major preventive behaviours (**hand washing, social distancing and avoiding social gatherings**)
- There was a **lower level of overall adherence to self-quarantining behaviour** (if returning from a trip, or have/believe to have COVID-19)
- There was a **greater level of concern** experienced by the Italian population, especially regarding **health of other individuals** and **economic situation of the country**





# Add your voice to the iCARE study - complete and share!

- Take the survey: [mbmc-cmcm.ca/covid19](https://mbmc-cmcm.ca/covid19)
- Keep updated: [@mbmc\\_cmcm](https://twitter.com/mbmc_cmcm)
- Contact us: [covid19study@mbmc-cmcm.ca](mailto:covid19study@mbmc-cmcm.ca)

