

## **The Corona Virus knows no bounds. Really?**

A commentary by John James for bachheimer.com 29. 03.2020

The fact that the mortality rates in Italy and Austria are so different continues to occupy my thoughts. How can the virus have such different effects in different places? Tyroleans in Bolzano and Tyroleans in Innsbruck are no different.

Yesterday I took a closer look at this question aided by the newspaper "Tiroler Tageszeitung" and the website [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com) yesterday.

We are told that the virus will not respect national borders. In fact the statistics clearly refute this assumption.

### **A comparison of the Covid 19 epidemic in North and South Tyrol**

According to the Tyrol provincial government, 14 000 tests had been carried out in Tyrol up to and including the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2020.

Of these 1890 were positive, that is 13.5% of those tested.

In North and East Tyrol 10 people have died so far. That is 0.5% of those who tested positive.

In the provinces of Bolzano and Trentino 14 500 tests had been carried out up to and including the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2020.

Of these 2600 were positive, that is 18% of those tested

Of these, 180 died, that is 7% of those who tested positive.

In other words, the probability of dying from a Covid-19 infection is more than 10 times higher in South Tyrol than it is in North Tyrol.

One might argue that this is a consequence of the decision to close the border between Italy and Tyrol and of the strict quarantine rules that have been imposed in the Austrian Tyrol.

This may well have slowed down the spread of the virus infection, but it cannot explain the striking difference in the mortality rate among those who have been infected.

This explanation must lie in Italy. It cannot be due to the virus or to Tyrolean genetics. These two things are identical in both countries.

Not only in Austria, but in two other countries bordering Italy, Slovenia and Croatia, the corona epidemic has also been rather mild, with 9 deaths in Slovenia and only 5 in Croatia.

### **Possible explanations**

Northern Italy is a rich, highly developed region. The performance of the health service in Austria or Croatia is certainly not 10 times better than that of the Italian health service.

A number of possible reasons have been given to explain this disparity:

the high number (many thousands) of Chinese guest workers in Northern Italy (aren't there also Chinese guest workers in Central and Southern Italy?),

a mass vaccination campaign in Northern Italy earlier this year,

the advanced development of 5G (can it be true that Italy is a pioneer in this area? ),

the high average age of the region (the oldest in Europe),

a biological weapon, the poor air quality,

the austerity measures that have been affecting Italy since the financial crisis and

the highly infectious conditions that exist in Italian hospitals.

With the exception of the last point, these explanations seem rather unconvincing.

### **The strange borders of the Covid 19 virus**

It would not seem that borders can stop the internal spread of the disease. The curfews and inner-Italian border closures have not been able to slow down the epidemic domestically.

And strangely enough, the country most affected after Italy - Spain - has no land border with Italy. Spain has 74 000 infected and 6 000 dead. How is it possible that Italy could infect Spain so badly, but not Slovenia and Croatia?

In the other two so-called PIGS countries the situation is considerably better. Greece has only 1000 infected, 60 dead, Portugal 5000 infected, 100 dead.

Central Asia presents a similarly strange picture in. The most affected country is Iran, in which 35 000 people are currently infected and 2 500 people have died.

No one can tell me that the governments in this region are capable of hermetically sealing off their national borders. And as in Tyrol and Italy, ethnic identity in the border regions of Iran is cross-border.

However, the figures for neighbouring countries are as follows:

Afghanistan 110 infected 4 died.

Iraq 500 infected 40 died.

Kyrgyzstan 84 infected, no information

Kazakhstan 251 infected, 1 died

### **A remarkable concentration in a few clusters**

Covid 19 demonstrates a remarkable concentration of cases in a few clusters for a disease deemed to be a pandemic, that is to say an epidemic covering the globe.

Of the 31 700 deaths that the world has suffered so far, 28 000 have occurred in the following seven countries: Italy, Spain, China, France, Iran, USA and the UK.

5500 of these deaths have occurred in the USA and China. Compared to the size of the population, the death toll for the USA and China is relatively low not of great statistical significance. On the other hand two other European countries, Belgium and Switzerland, have been affected comparatively seriously, when their losses are measured in terms of the size of the population.

23 000 of Covid 19 deaths have occurred in Italy, Spain, Belgium, France, Iran, Switzerland and the UK. That is 70% of all deaths.

What makes these countries so attractive to the Covid 19 virus?

What does Italy have that Austria doesn't?

I have no idea. But it seems to me, we should have an answer to these questions.