

COVID-19 IN THE ARCTIC

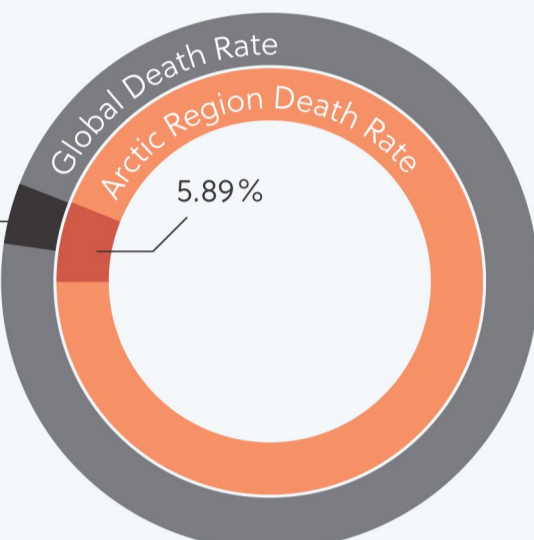
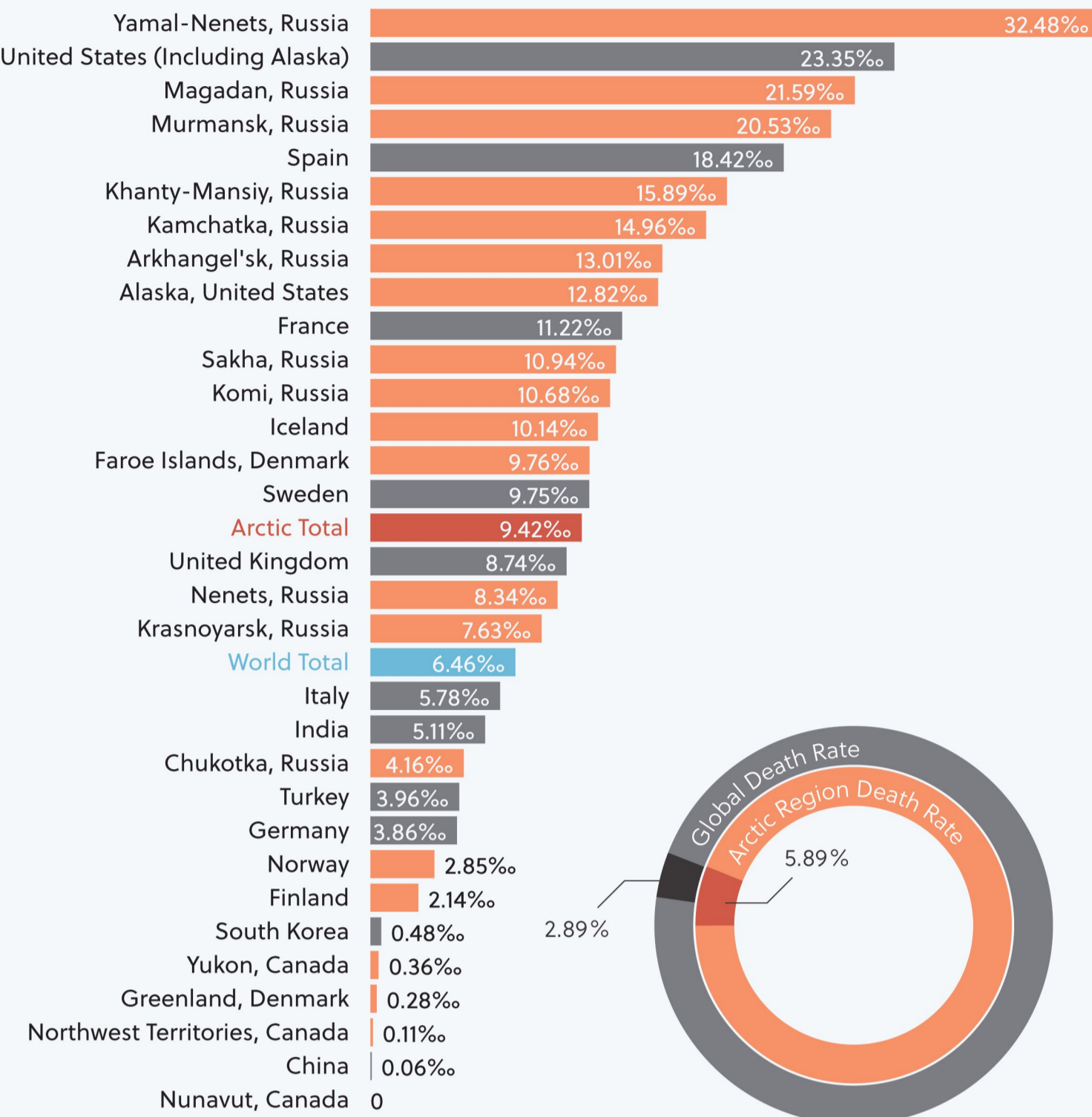
SUCCESSSES AND LESSONS FROM THE FIRST SIX MONTHS

After originating in Wuhan, China, in late 2019, the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) - a particularly virulent strain of coronavirus - became a worldwide pandemic. Cases quickly spread to Arctic nations and containment measures were enacted by both small communities and state governments. Some of the responses in the Arctic can be considered examples of best practices and helped to limit the spread from the beginning, which is reflected in this region's low death rate. These effective preventative measures were especially critical for remote Arctic communities with limited access to healthcare and other necessary resources, but they remain highly vulnerable to the pandemic's secondary effects.

NUMBER OF CASES

COVID-19 Infection Rates: The Arctic in Global Comparison

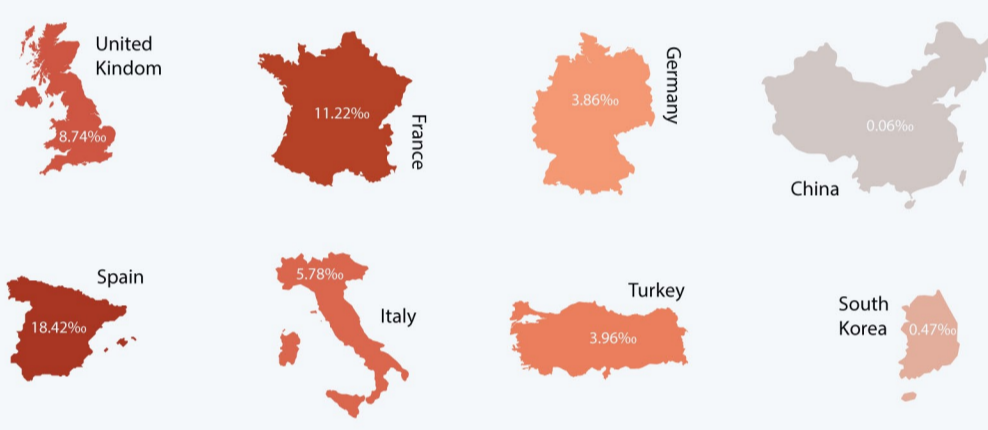
Data updated until Oct 10, 2020



- The Arctic region's infection rate (9.42%) is higher than the world total (6.46%).
- The Arctic region also has a considerably higher death rate (5.89% compared to 2.89%).
- In some countries/territories such as Sweden, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands, the situation is more severe and the infection rate is higher than the global rate.

COVID-19 Infection Rate Map

Data updated until Oct 10, 2020



90% of international Arctic projects funded by the United States' National Science Foundation Section for Arctic Sciences have cancelled their 2020 spring and summer field research expeditions.

Losing the 2020 season would cost Greenlandic tourism businesses **\$67,000,000** (450 million Danish Kroner) - Jun 2, 2020

DEVELOPMENT OF COVID-19 IN THE ARCTIC REGION

COVID-19 Weekly New Cases in the Arctic Area



Jan 26: First COVID-19 case confirmed in Finland, which is the earliest in the Arctic.

Jan 30 | WHO

WHO declared COVID-19 a "public health emergency of international concern"

About 2000 athletes from around the world change plans to attend the Arctic Winter Games in Yukon, Canada, which were canceled due to the pandemic.

Mar 11 | WHO

WHO declares COVID-19 a global pandemic

Mar 16: Finland declares state of emergency

Mar 22: Some remote villages in Alaska attempt to isolate themselves

Mar 31 | Russia

Record case rise forces tough lockdown sanctions

2/3 companies in the Norwegian Hospitality Association are on the brink of bankruptcy. - Mar 31, 2020

Apr 22 | Finland

Finland adopts hybrid strategy to contain coronavirus: containing outbreak while moving towards normal life

May 5 | Russia

Over 20,000 new cases in 48 hours

48% of tourism companies in Lapland, Finland fear they cannot survive more than 5 months, and a quarter up to 10 months. - May 8, 2020

Canada's restrictions on shipping and cruises will cost communities in eastern Arctic territory of Nunavut almost **\$1,000,000** - Jun 1, 2020

June 15, Finland opens border to Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and Estonia

Jun 18 | WHO

WHO releases Global Allocation Framework for COVID-19 treatments and vaccines, identifying priority populations

- COVID spread reaches its peak by June in the Arctic region.
- On June 24th, a total of 1727 cases were reported from the Arctic region.

Aug 11 | Russia

President Putin announces approval for a COVID vaccine, named Sputnik-V. Russia becomes the first country in the world to do so, but international experts raise concern that the approval process was rushed.

EXAMPLES & BEST PRACTICE IN THE ARCTIC REGION

While these concerns and risk factors are taking their toll on some Indigenous communities across the globe, such as in Brazil and within the Navajo nation in the U.S., some Indigenous Arctic communities used effective strategies to minimize the impact of COVID-19:



Nunavut, Canada

- Implemented strict travel restrictions not allowing anyone other than Nunavut residents and critical workers into the community.
- Mandatory two-week isolation of Nunavut residents returning from outside of Nunavut in isolation sites such as in Ottawa or Winnipeg.
- COVID-19 in Nunavut was of particular concern because the Nunavut community experiences respiratory-disease and related deaths at much higher rates than the surrounding Canadian average.
- In a population of 38,780 people, there are no current confirmed cases in the community.



Alaska, United States

- Remote Alaskan Arctic villages have also completely isolated themselves from the remainder of the world to prevent even one single case of COVID-19 in their communities



Greenland, Denmark

- On March 13th, Greenland completely closed itself off to the rest of the world to prevent cases of COVID-19.
- These attempts have been successful. Only 14 known cases (as of September 6th) have been reported and all have recovered.

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 IN THE ARCTIC

- Serious financial impact, affecting tourism, fisheries and other industries.
- Substantial consequences for science and education, as well as cultural events and social life within communities.
- Some Indigenous communities / territories have successfully isolated themselves and are focusing on previous generations' knowledge on how to keep safe and survive off the land.



A PERFECT STORM

Concerns for Indigenous communities regarding COVID-19:

- Limited infrastructure: access to healthcare, sanitation, clean water and preventative materials.
- Multi-generational housing, food insecurity, reliance on oil, fishing, and tourism make communities even more vulnerable.
- Pre-existing high rates of mental health decline, suicide, depression, and anxiety can be worsened under the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preparations for a second wave or future pandemics:

- The Arctic Council recently published a report regarding the current state of affairs for COVID-19 in Arctic communities. The report identifies knowledge gaps and recommendations of what's needed to reduce impacts of a second wave or future pandemics.
- More data and research and harmonization thereof needed to inform policy.
- Coordinate efforts by various Arctic governance actors.

- Reassess and strengthen the healthcare and emergency capacity in Arctic areas.
- Provide various ways to communicate information to Arctic populations, taking into consideration potential lack of access to certain modes of communication.
- Document Traditional Knowledge from communities about how the communities have responded to historical pandemics.

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