

COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion

I have previously addressed the COVID-19 situation as it relates to the use of Computer Modeling (Computer Reliability, OPSS-5). Like the “Climate Change” situation, computer projections are only as good as the programming inputs. Both have failed miserably. And like “Climate Change”, the data is important!!

This is my quick look at the data and my opinions on that data.

2020 has been quite the year! The Chinese dumped a serious virus (COVID-19, a corona virus) on the world’s population. Based on some very suspect computer modeling, most of the governments of the world decided to impose severe restrictions (self isolation, social distancing, etc.) on their populations to “flatten the curve”. A full economic shutdown to prevent our hospitals from being overwhelmed by the supposedly catastrophic infection rates associated with COVID-19. That shutdown was supposed to last 14 days beginning around the middle of March. That 14 days has turned into 6 months for many countries. Some of the restrictions have been lifted but the restrictions that remain in place are still inhibiting economic growth. That initial 14-day shutdown may have been justified based on the information available at the time, but the continued draconian restrictions are not nearly as justified (in my opinion).

The advantage we have now is that we have data to work with and not computer model projections. Granted there are some potential question marks (shown to the right)) on the validity of those numbers. But for the purposes of this discussion all the currently recognized COVID-19 deaths will be used.

There is no shortage of controversy when this subject is discussed. Most of the world went into lockdown. A few countries/territories (shown to the left) choose not to. There are questions about how effective those lockdowns really were. Masks are another area that has been controversial.

The results are interesting. I will present the basic data for a variety of countries and then summarize that data at the end. Like the Climate Change discussion, everyone should look at the data and make up their own minds. Everyone has an agenda, and the data can be presented in different ways to promote different perspectives.

Do I have an agenda? Yes, I would like to see us get the younger population get back to work and get our lives back to normal. COVID-19 was nowhere near as dangerous as the original projections were speculating. Recently, the media focus has been on rising case numbers and ignoring the declining death numbers. In my opinion, isolating healthy people and driving our economies into the ground was a serious mistake.

Countries and territories without lockdowns [hide]	
Countries and territories	Ref
Belarus	[302]
Iceland	
Japan	[296]
Latvia	
Malawi	[299]
Tanzania	
Nicaragua	[298]
South Korea	[297]
Sweden	[294]
Taiwan	[303]
Timor-Leste	
United States	Arkansas
	Iowa
	Nebraska
	North Dakota
	South Dakota
	Wyoming
Brazil	Roraima
	Rondonia
Uruguay	[306]

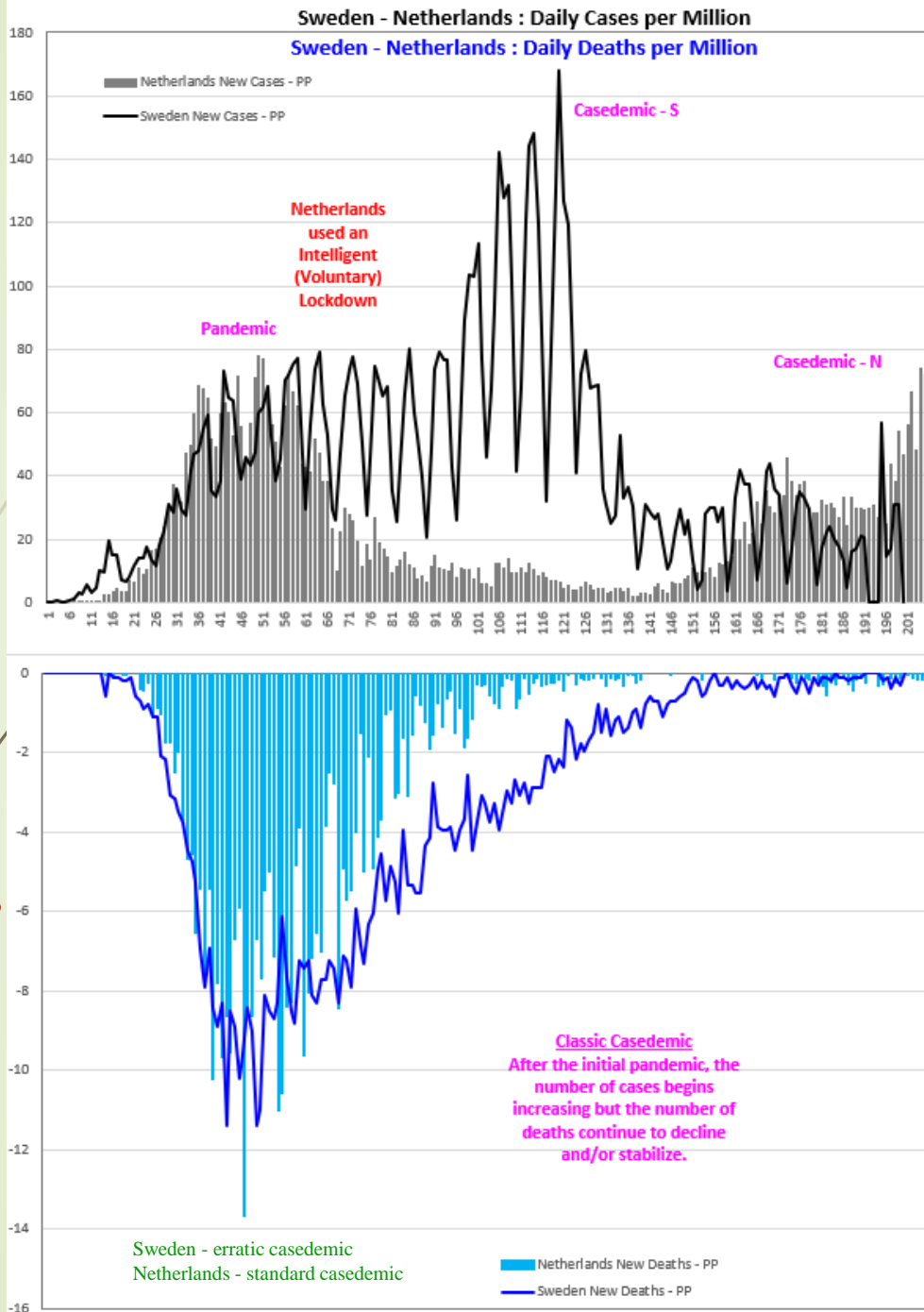
1. The CDC just confirmed that only 6% of the US deaths were classified solely as COVID-19 deaths. And of the remaining 94%, there was (on average) 2.6 comorbidities (Respiratory disease (influenza, pneumonia, etc.) Circulatory diseases (cardiac arrest, heart failure, etc.), etc.). So did COVID-19 really kill all of those unfortunate people? Very Likely Not.
2. The New York Times recently published an article raising questions about COVID-19 testing. This quote is from the NY Times directly (“up to 90 percent of people testing positive carried barely any virus”). This quote is from the RedState article linked below (“According to the experts they consulted, procedures universally applied caused 90% of the positive diagnoses in one randomly selected set of tests to be bogus.”) If 90% of the COVID-19 tests are false positives, that would indicate that there is a testing problem.
3. There have been many stories about accidental deaths being coded as COVID-19 deaths because they tested positive, deaths coded as COVID-19 without positive tests, financial incentives (for doctors/hospitals) to code deaths as COVID-19, government pressure to code deaths as COVID-19. For the purposes of this discussion, I will assume that all the reported cases are valid.

PSS-1b

Sweden was chosen for the comparison because they were the most visible country that chose to not lockdown.

In general, the number of cases are not directly comparable between countries since they tend to have different testing strategies.

As such, the discussion will focus on the number of deaths.



COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion

Sweden – Netherlands Comparison

The general format of the plots will compare Sweden to a number of other countries. The upper plot compares the number of Daily New Cases (per million) for each country. The lower plot compares the number of Daily New Deaths (per million) for each country. Sweden's numbers are always represented by the black and blue lines in this plot format. Generally, the countries go through two phases (the pandemic and the casedemic). The pandemic is characterized by rising cases and rising deaths followed by declining cases and deaths. A classic casedemic has rising cases with a low, stabilized death rate, an indication that the population has achieved or is approaching herd immunity.

The Netherlands was chosen as the first comparison. They were a bit unique since they choose to implement an "Intelligent Lockdown". Essentially this tactic was similar to Sweden (i.e.: voluntary). The Netherlands appears to have a similar death profile as Sweden but at a reduced rate. The Netherlands ended up with a fairly standard Pandemic scenario followed by a fairly standard Casedemic scenario. The death rates were up slightly during the Casedemic but at very low rates.

Very early on I have maintained I was in the Sweden camp (no mandatory lockdowns/masks). Given this comparison I might have to change that to the Netherlands camp. Or give them both credit!

More information?
climatechangeandmusic.com

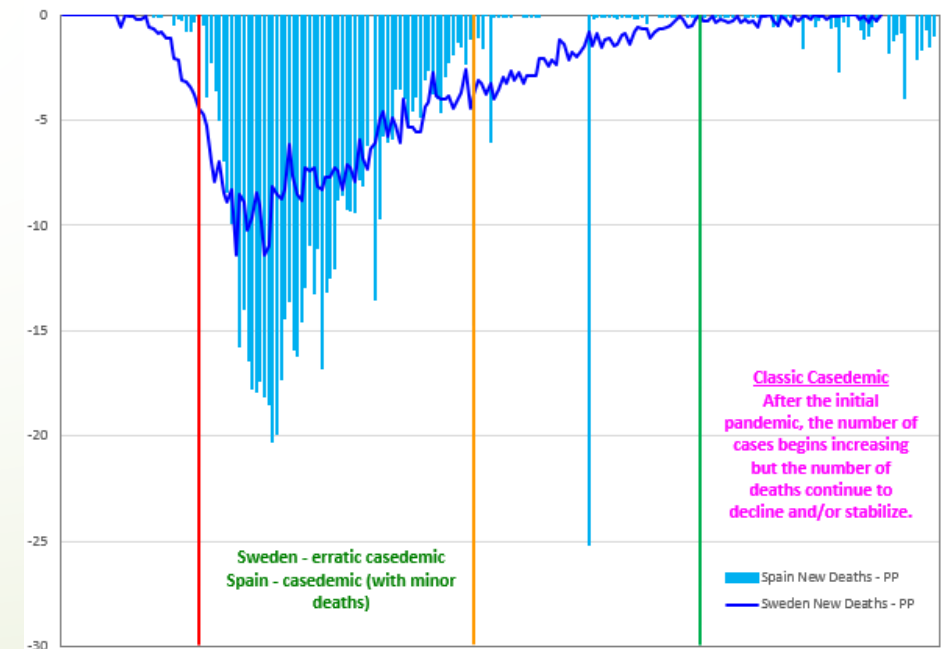
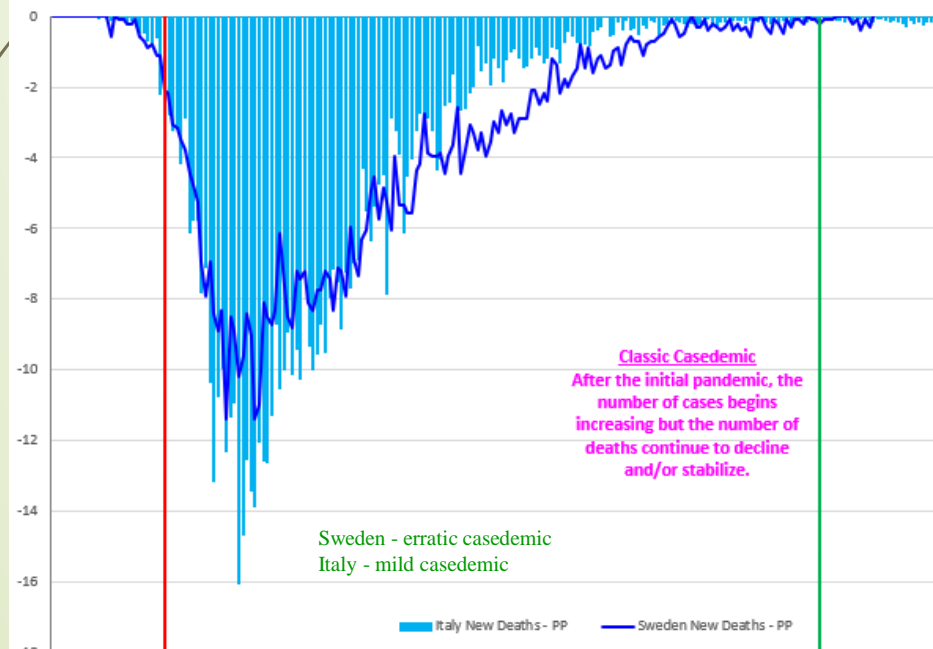
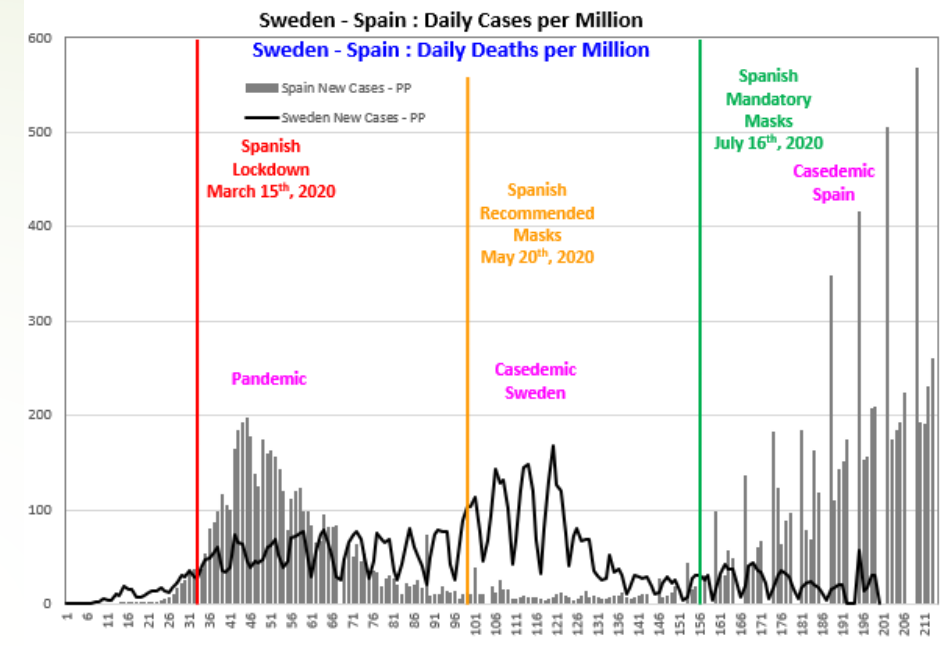
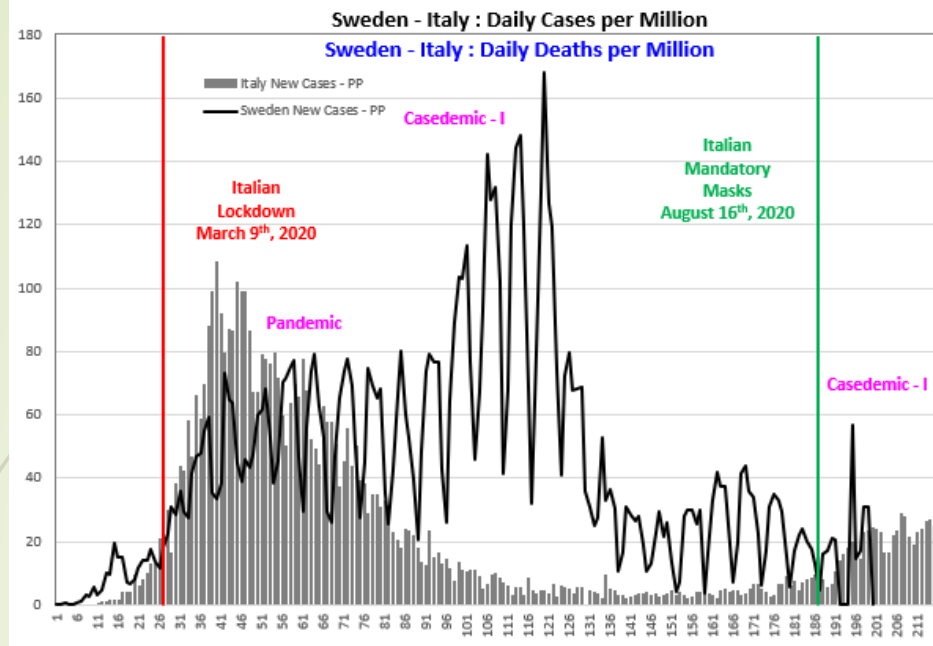
Data Source

<https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/sweden?country=~SWE>

09-2020
Sweden-
Netherlands

COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Sweden – Italy/Spain Comparison

Italy was next up for comparison because they appeared to be hit hard and early. China has a lot of manufacturing capacity in Italy and a lot of travel between the two countries occurred prior to the lockdown. Spain seemed to be hit hard when compared to both Sweden and Italy.



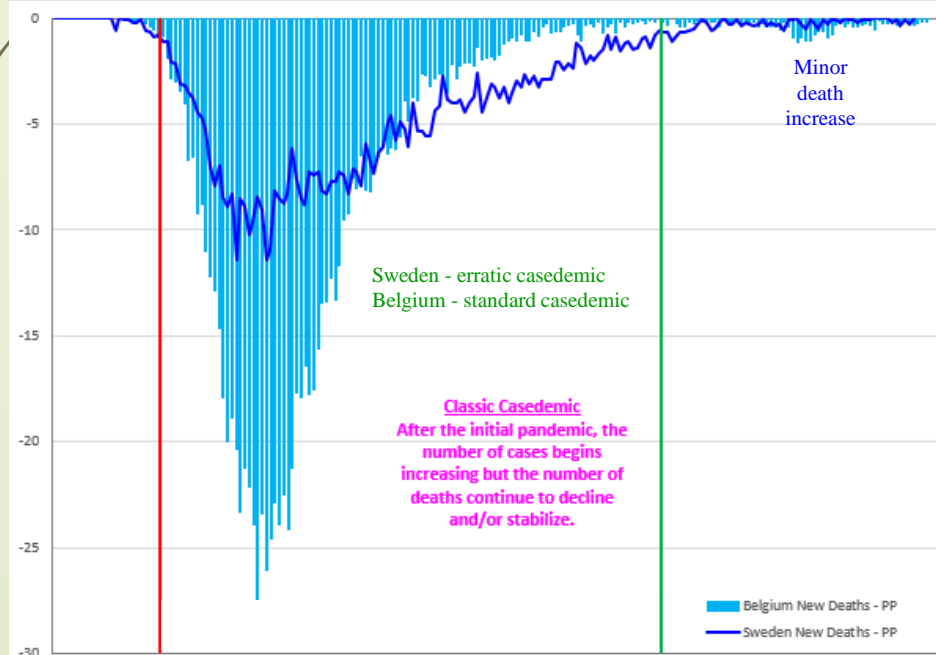
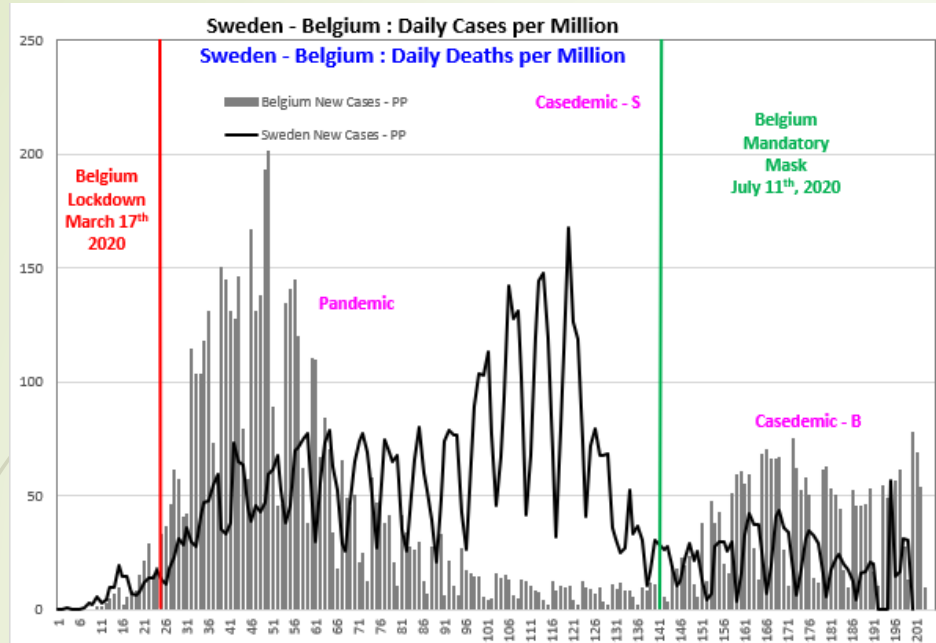
The pandemic hit a bit harder in Italy and quite a bit harder in Spain. Italy transitioned to a mild casedemic, Spain has a standard casedemic with a minor death response.

Both countries implemented a mandatory mask policy. Neither of which appeared to change the trajectory of the cases. Cases continued to increase despite the mandatory mask declaration.

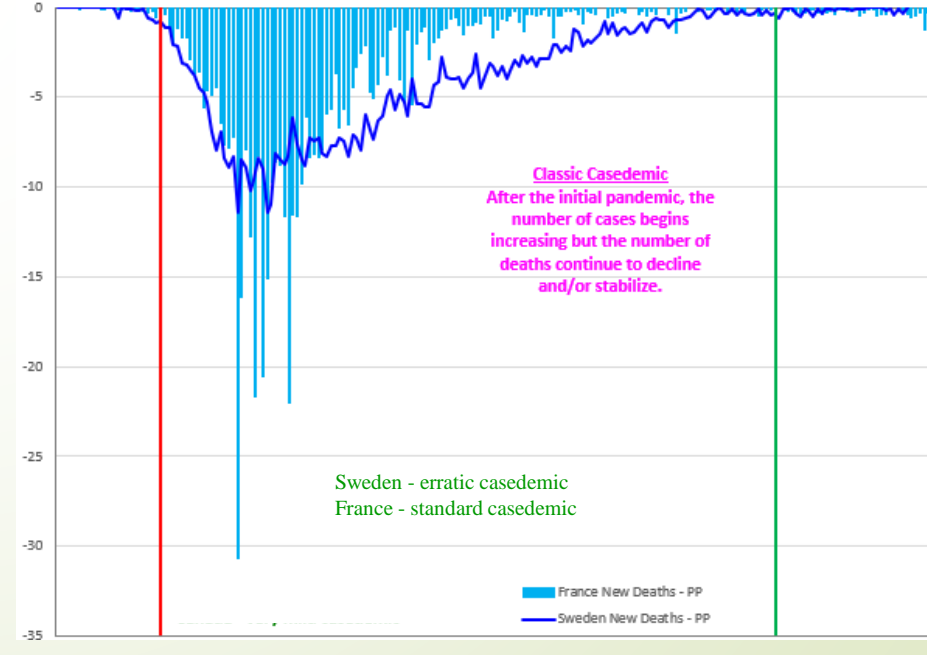
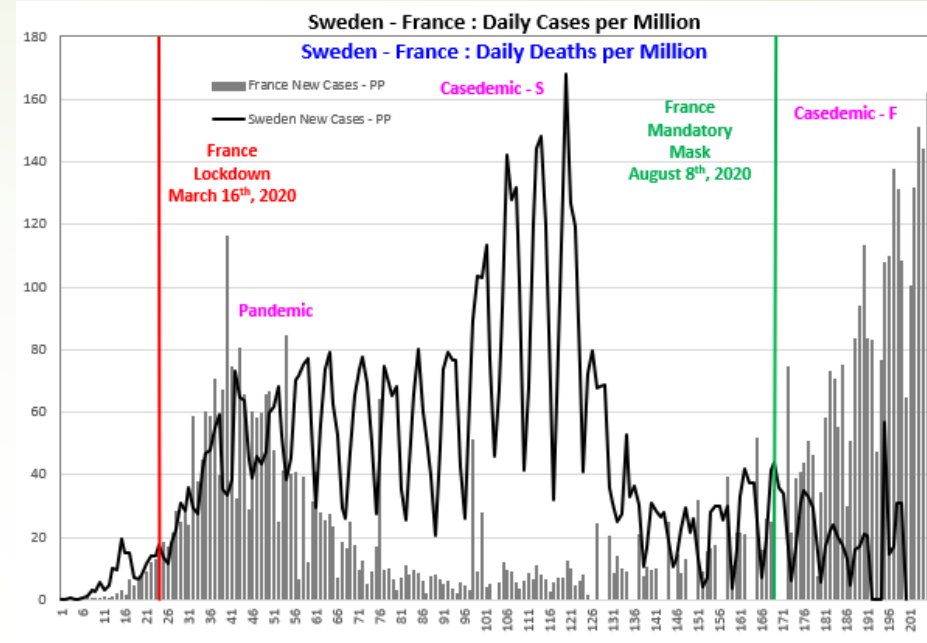
09-2020
Sweden-Italy/Spain

COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Sweden – Belgium/France Comparison

Belgium and France provide a couple more European cases (just for reference). Most European countries had similar profiles. Some were more successful than others.



More information? climatechangeandmusic.com



Data Source : <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/sweden?country=~SWE>

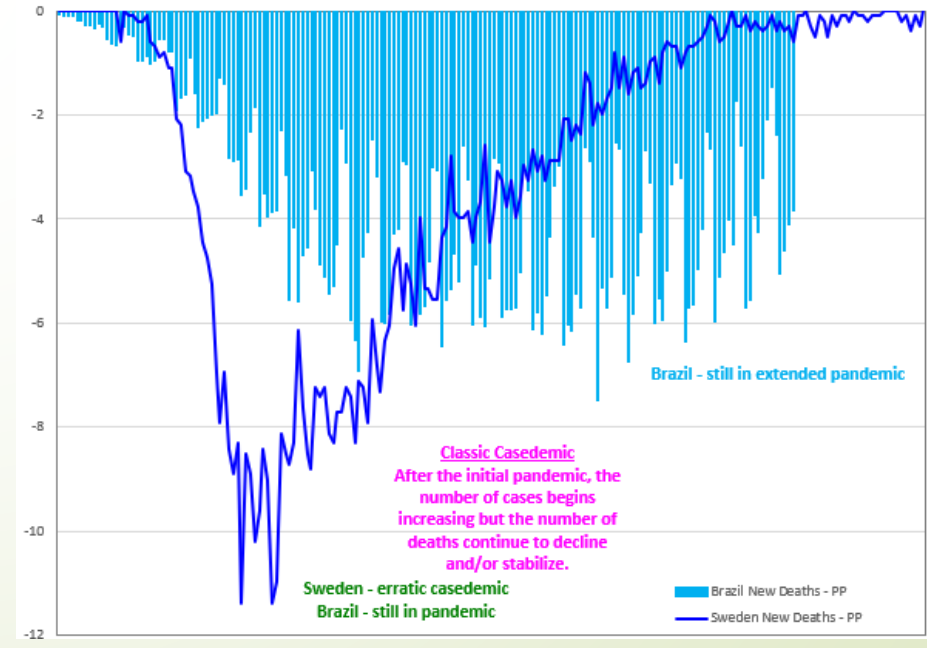
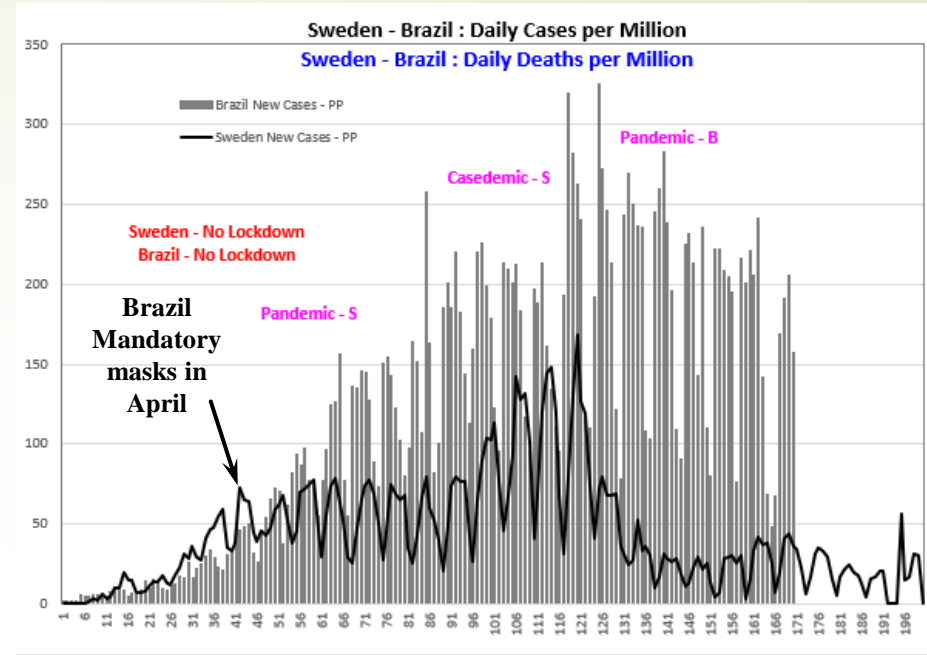
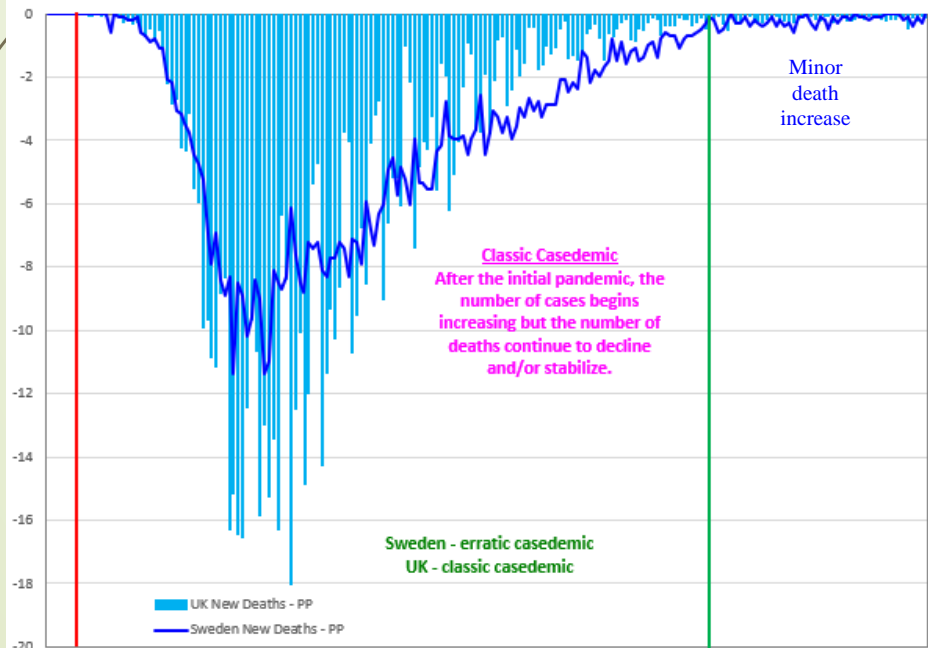
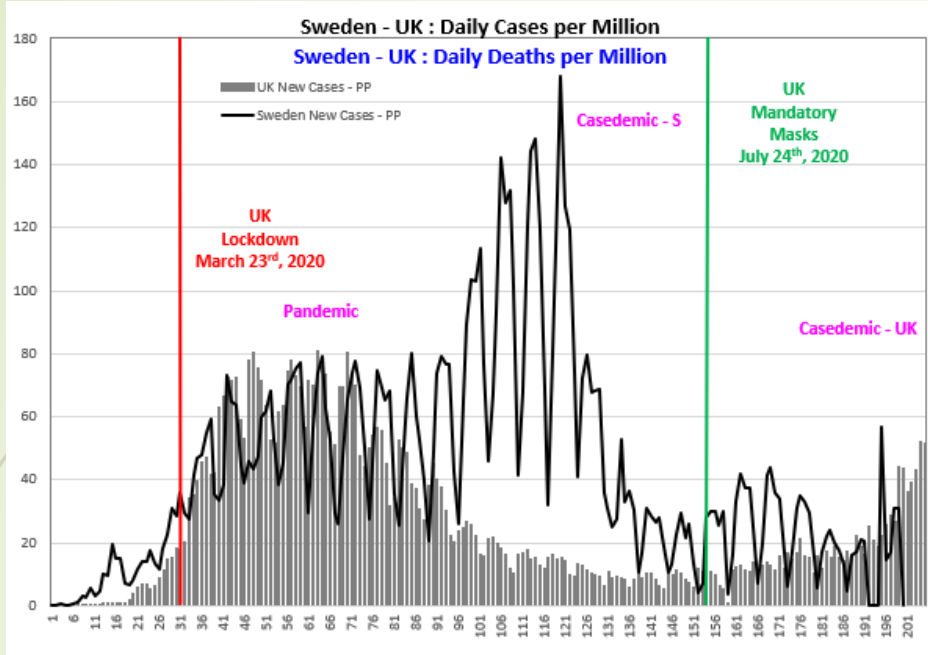
The pandemic hit significantly harder in Belgium and was a bit milder in France. Both Belgium and France transitioned to standard casedemics.

Both countries implemented a mandatory mask policy. Neither of which appeared to change the trajectory of the cases. Cases continued to increase despite the mandatory mask declaration.

09-2020
Sweden-
Belgium/France

COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Sweden – UK/Brazil Comparison

Despite being an island outside of Europe, the UK had a very similar death response as Sweden. Brazil on the other hand, has had a unique response, being one of the few countries still experiencing the pandemic. Brazil choose to not lockdown, but there has to be more to the story.



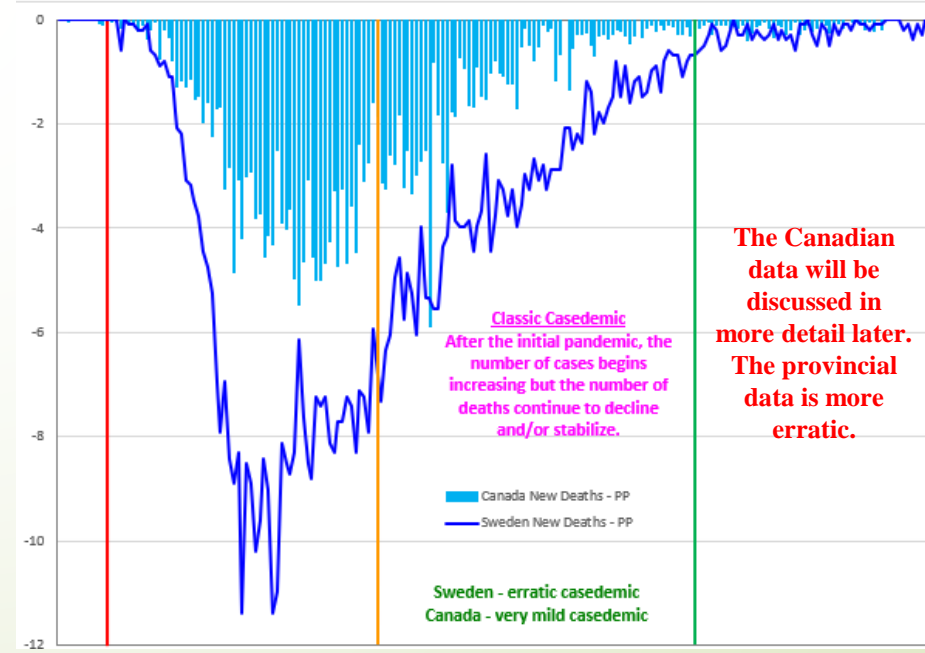
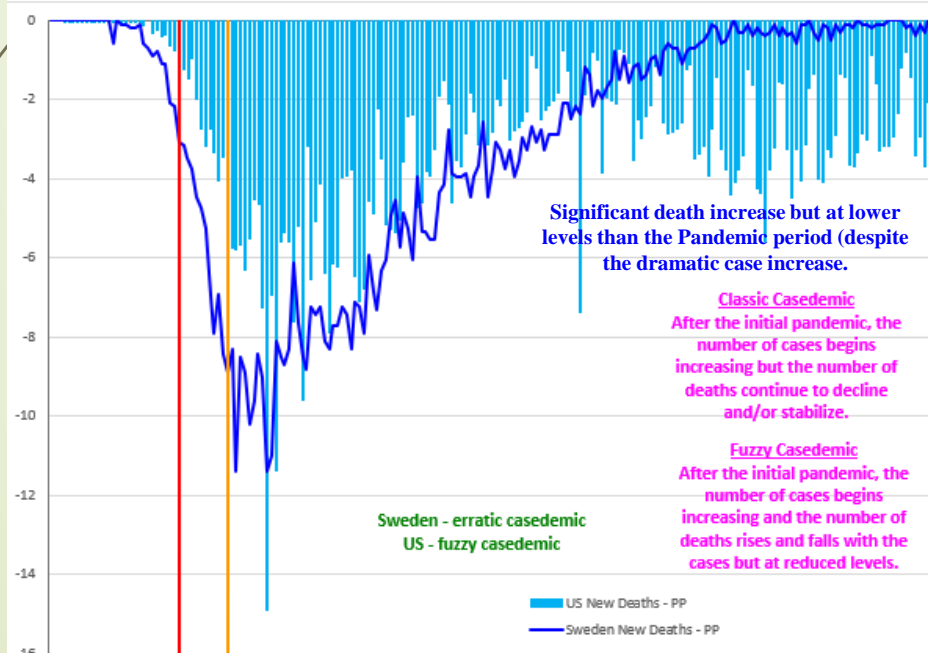
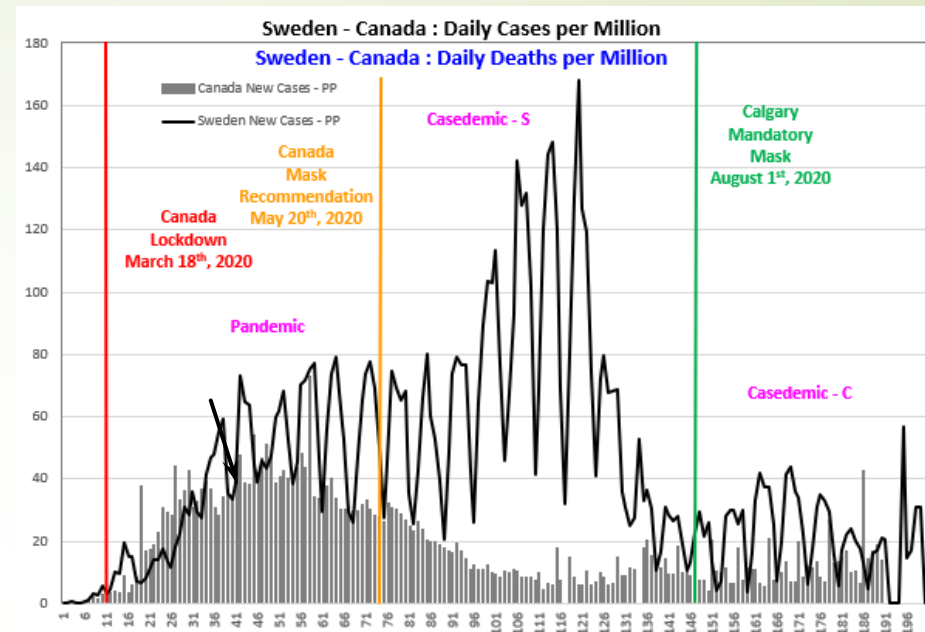
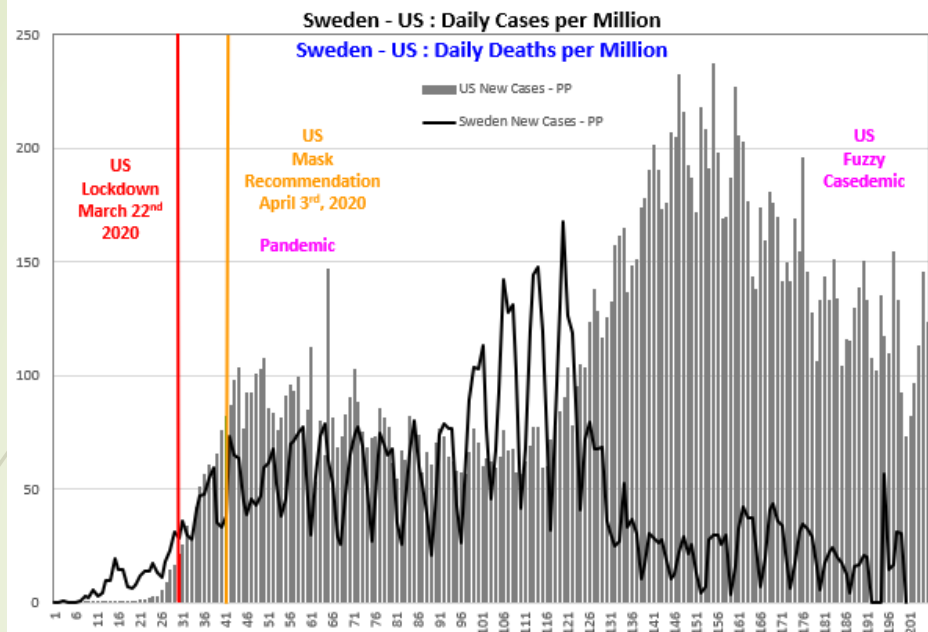
The pandemic was similar in the UK but hit significantly harder and longer in Brazil. The UK transitioned to a standard casedemic. Brazil was not as fortunate and appears to still be in a drawn out pandemic.

Both countries implemented a mandatory mask policy. Neither of which appeared to change the trajectory of the cases. Cases continued to increase despite the mandatory mask declaration.

09-2020
 Sweden-UK/Brazil

COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Sweden – US/Canada Comparison

These two plots bring the focus back to North America. The US has a unique case and death profile. I am not sure of the reasons for that, but it is probably related to the independent position that each state takes (some locked down, some did not) and the southern states seemed to respond to COVID-19 later than the northern states,



The initial pandemic was milder in both the US and Canada (noticeably). Canada transitioned to a mild casedemic. The US had what I'll call a fuzzy casedemic (cases (much higher) and deaths (lower) rose and fell together).

Both countries had variable mandatory mask policies. Each state/province set their own guidelines so the mask effectiveness can not be determined on a country basis.

09-2020
 Sweden-
 US/Canada

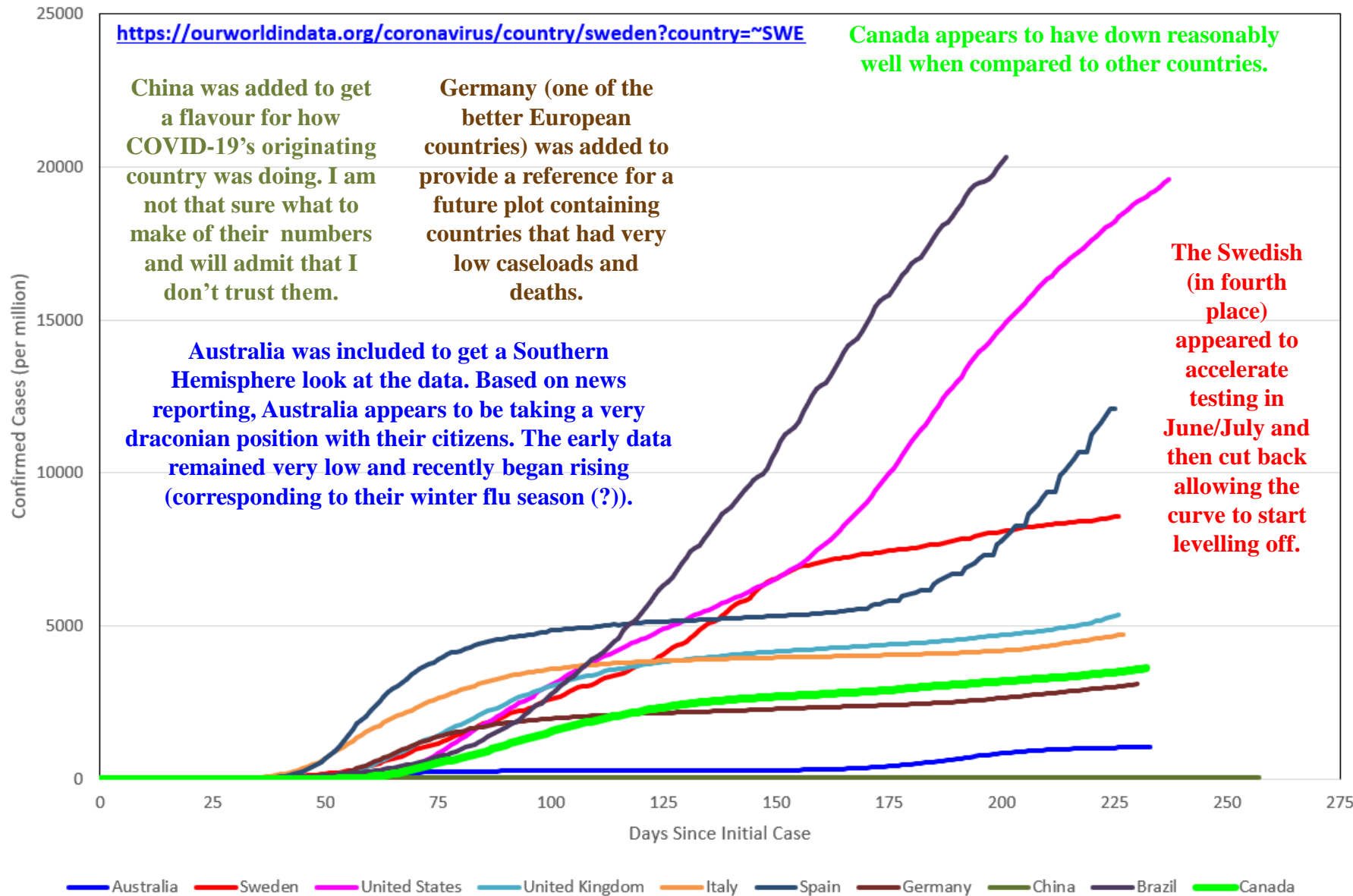
The next four plots provide a comparison between many of the countries addressed in the previous plots (adding in Australia, China and Germany). This plot compares the Cumulative Cases (per million) for each of these countries.

09-2020
Country
Cum Cases-PP

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Total Confirmed Cases
Country Comparison

Note: The positions mentioned here are just relative to one another.



Brazil is topping the charts here. As shown earlier they are still in the pandemic stage (they've just started down the backside of the pandemic curve).

The United States holds down second place in cumulative cases. The US has chosen to get aggressive on testing and that could be contributing to their rising case numbers

Spain recently moved into third place in cumulative cases. They had moved past the pandemic stage (cases had levelled out), and I suspect with an aggressive testing program the number of cases began climbing quickly again.

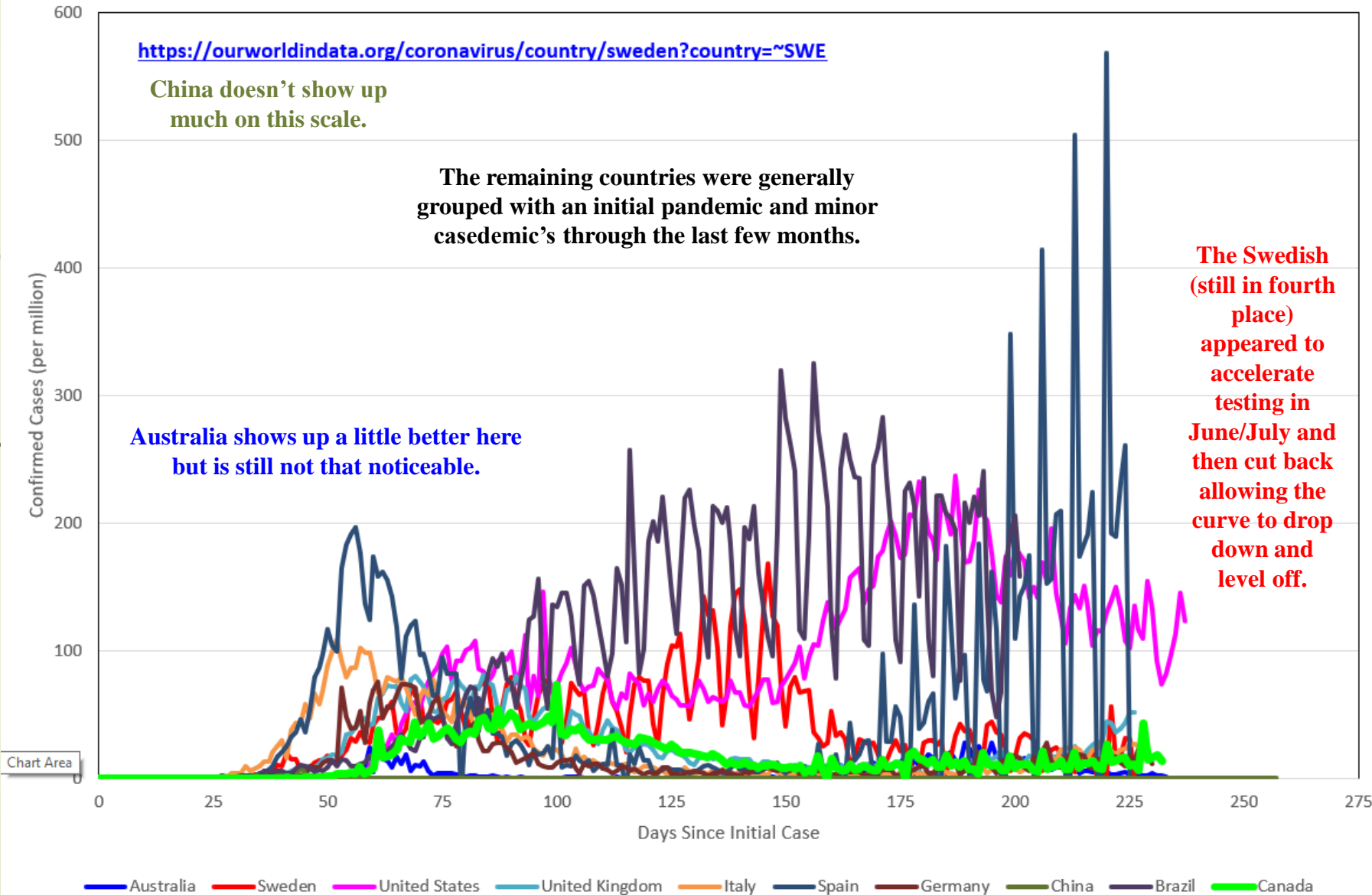
COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Country Comparison – New Daily Cases-PP

This plot compares the New Daily Cases (per million) for each of these countries. This plot doesn't separate the countries out as definitively. Their testing standards are not universal.

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Daily Confirmed Cases (per million)
Country Comparison

Note: The positions mentioned here are just relative to one another.



Spain's aggressive testing had them move into first place through August/September. They also came out of the gate strong with one of the higher case rates in Europe/the World.

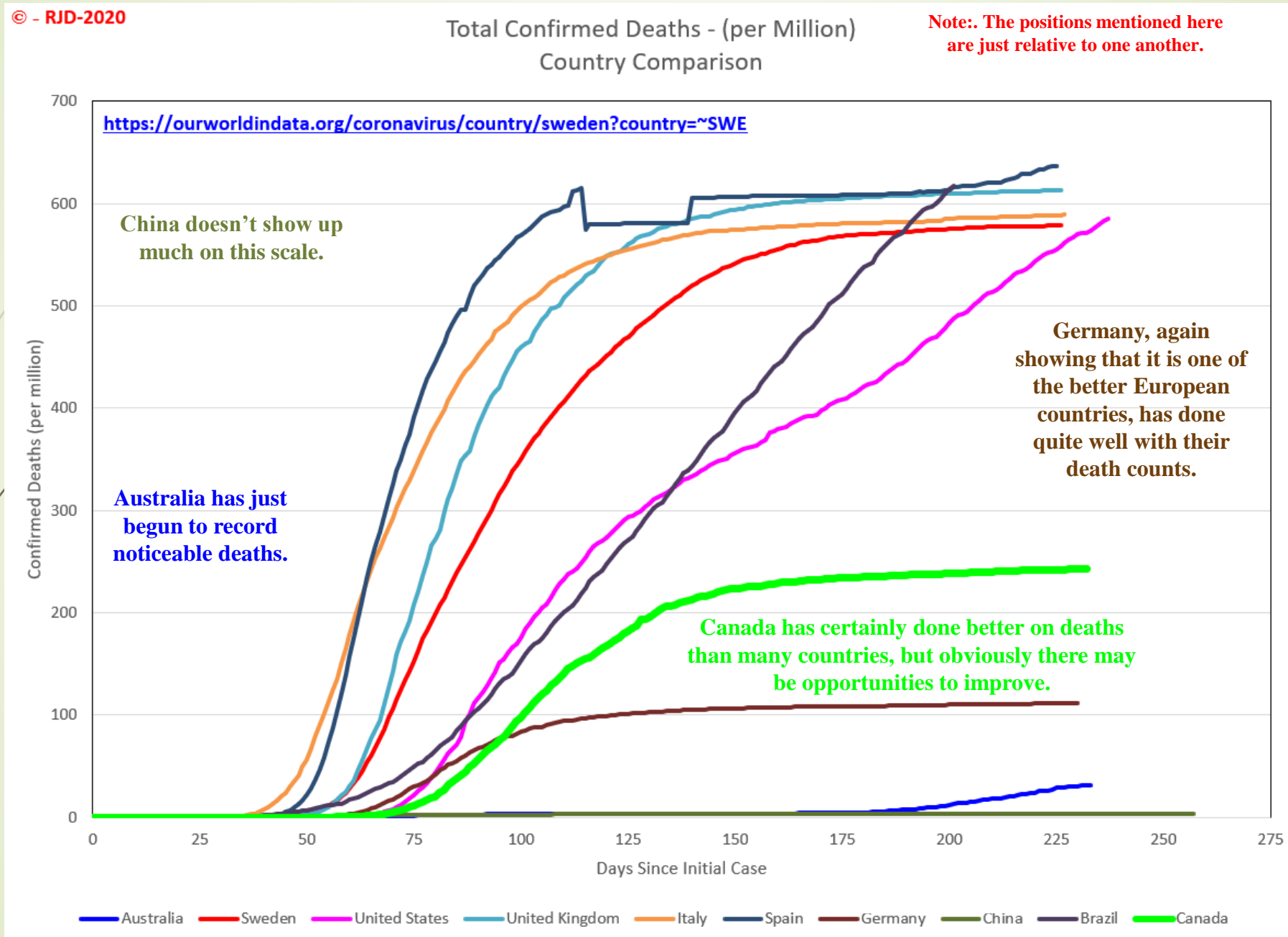
Brazil with their long drawn out pandemic stage took over second spot based on the New daily case parameter. Their cases have started to drop down.

The United States with their aggressive testing moved into third place for New Daily Cases. Their cases have also started to drop down.

09-2020
Country
Daily Cases-PP

PSS-1i COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Country Comparison – Cumulative Deaths-PP

This plot compares the Cumulative Deaths (per million) for each of these countries. A lot of the countries appear to be bunching up around 600 per million.



Spain was one of the poorer performing European countries and has had a minor but noticeable uptick in deaths recently.

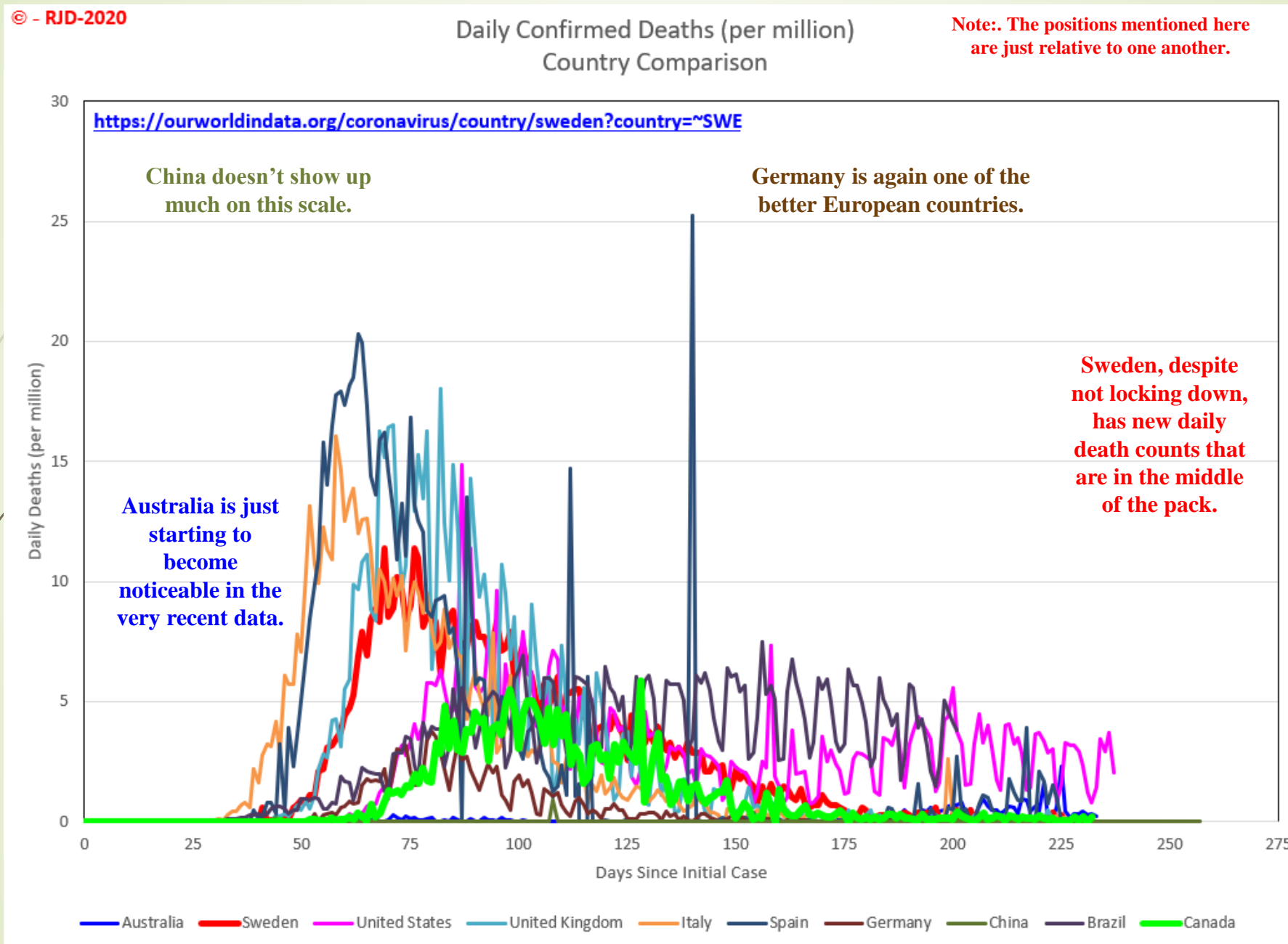
Brazil will blow past the 600 deaths per million. They do not appear to be handling COVID-19 very well when compared to other countries.

The United States still has a fairly aggressive death curve and will likely finish higher than the grouping at 600 deaths per million.

09-2020
Country
Cum Deaths-PP

This plot compares the New Daily Deaths (per million) for each of these countries. This data has started to group together, but some countries still have better results than others.

09-2020
Country
Daily Deaths-PP



Spain is the loser here. They had one of the highest daily death rates in the world through the initial pandemic phase. They recently had a very high new daily case rate which (thankfully) is not showing up in the later death rates.

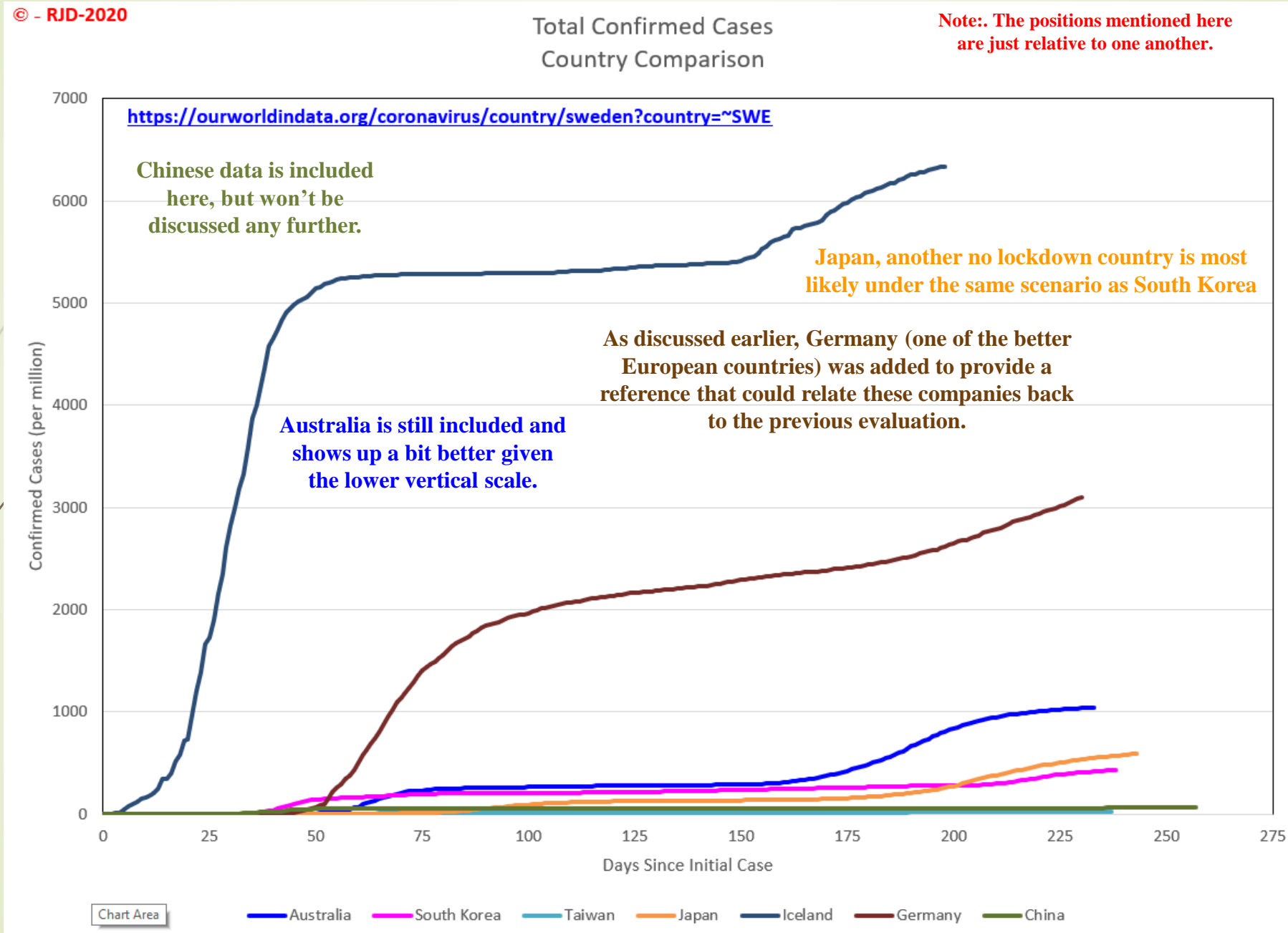
Brazil, again with their long drawn out pandemic stage shows up more in the later, more recent data.

The United States is also in the middle of the pandemic phase, but has not slowed their death rate as many of the other countries have done.

COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Outlier Comparison – Cumulative Cases-PP

The next four plots provide a comparison between a number of outlier (no lockdown, unusually low case/death) countries with Germany included for reference to the previous country plots. This plot compares the Cumulative Cases (per million) for each of these countries.

09-2020
Outlier
Cum Cases-PP



Iceland, a country that went with no lockdown had a sharp increase early on and quickly leveled off (roughly at Spanish levels). The case level did start rising again but is once again dropping off.

South Korea also went with no lockdowns. Whatever they were doing certainly seems to be working (probably an early and full shutdown of travel from China and a history of dealing with China's regular virus exports).

Taiwan (another country with no lockdown) has an unbelievably low case level, given its proximity to China. They likely took similar steps to South Korea and Japan.

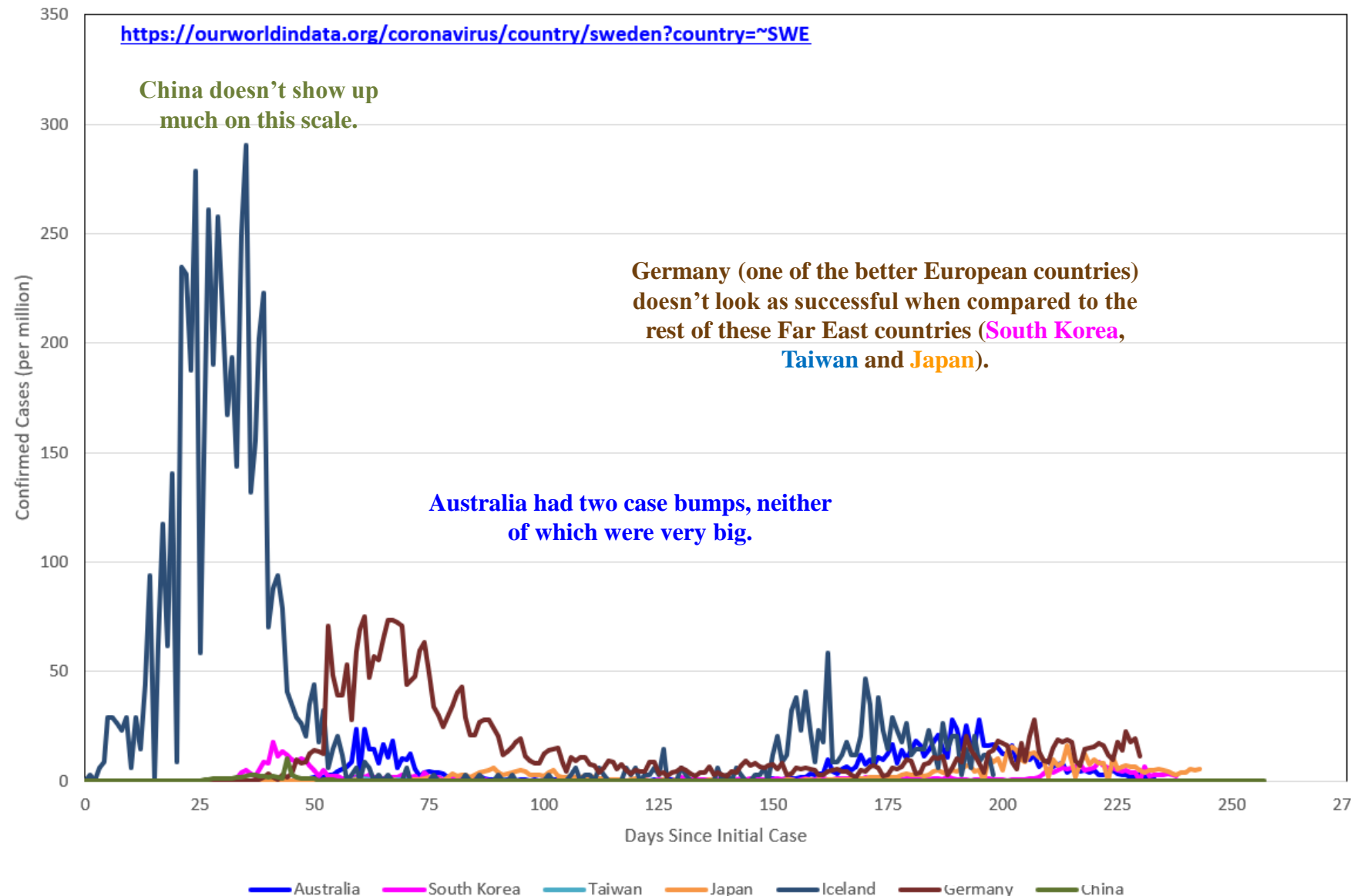
COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Outlier Comparison – New Daily Cases-PP

This plot compares the New Daily Cases (per million) for each of these countries. Most of these Far East countries have had very low case counts.

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Total Confirmed Cases
Country Comparison

Note: The positions mentioned here are just relative to one another.



Iceland dominates the New Daily Case plot due to the large surge in the first couple of months. Another minor case increase occurred over the summer but is already dropping off.

09-2020
Outlier
Daily Cases-PP

COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Outlier Comparison – Cumulative Deaths-PP

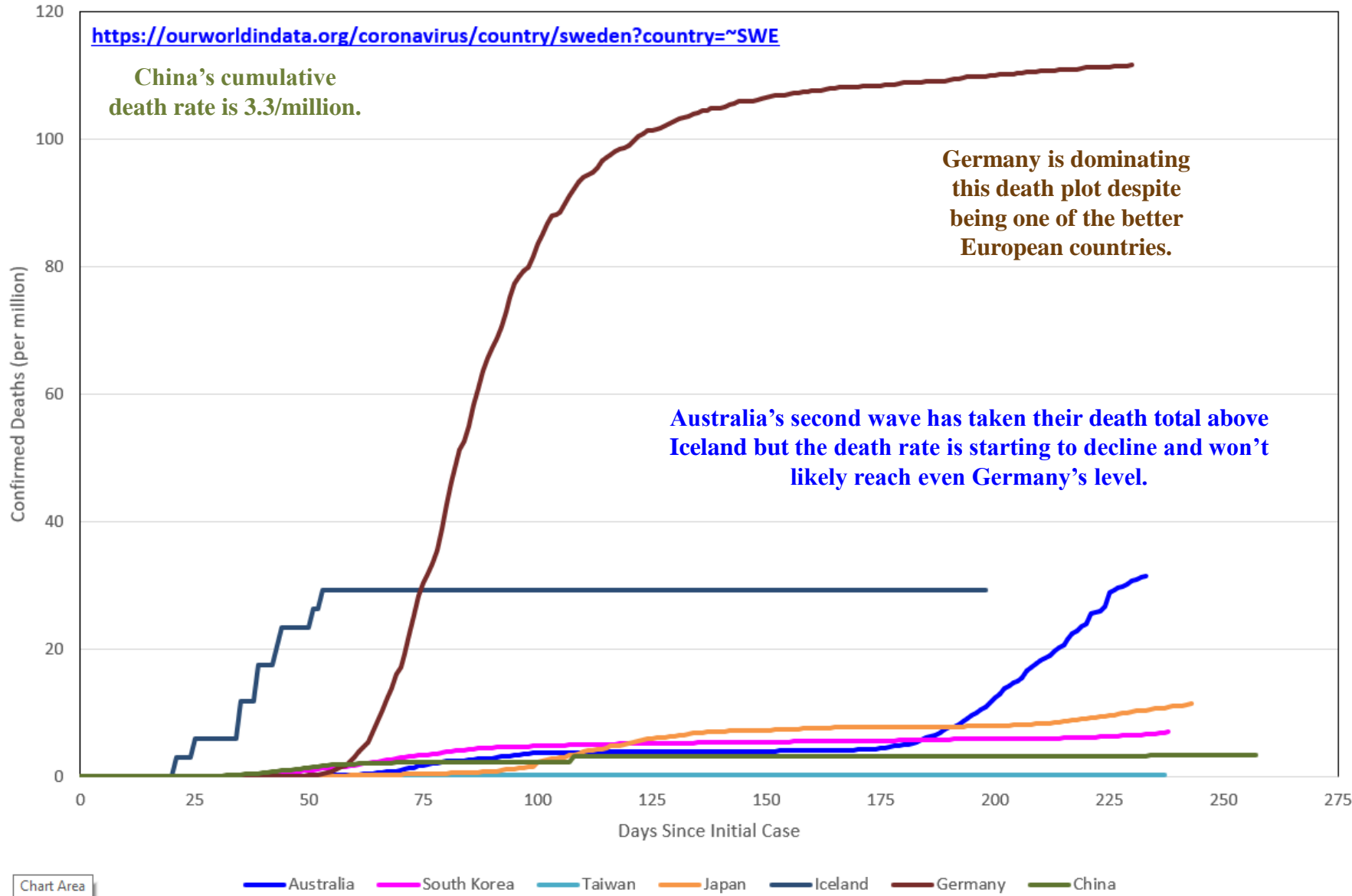
This plot compares the Cumulative Deaths (per million) for each of these countries. For reference, a lot of the countries on the previous Country Comparison were around 600 deaths per million.

09-2020
Outlier
Cum Deaths-PP

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Total Confirmed Deaths - (per Million) Country Comparison

Note: The positions mentioned here are just relative to one another.



Iceland has a relatively low death rate despite having a sizeable case load. And despite the recent uptick in cases, no additional deaths have occurred.

Japan's cumulative death rates are only 11.4/million.

South Korea cumulative death rates are only 7.0/million.

Taiwan's cumulative death rates are a paltry 0.3/million.

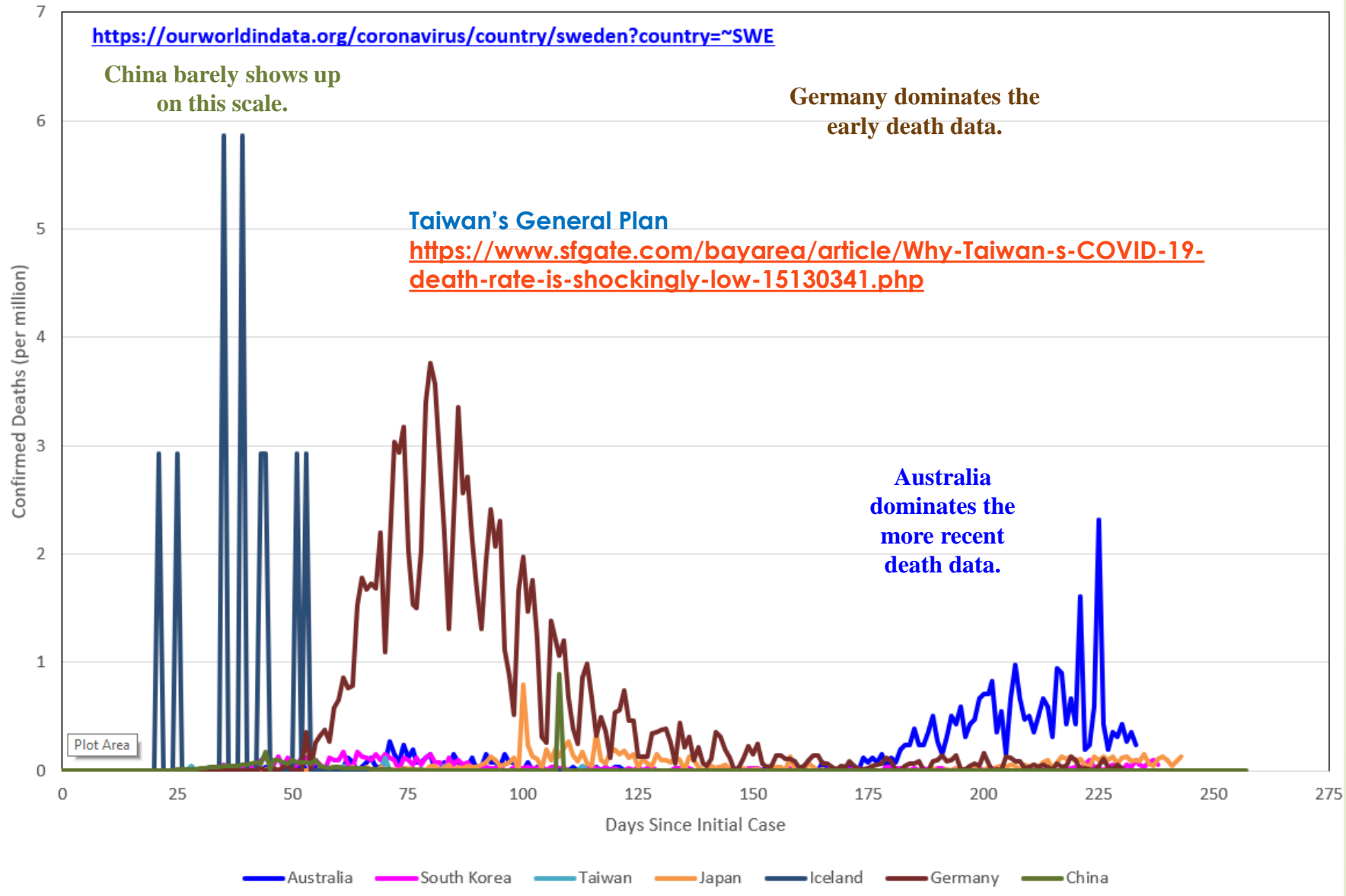
COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Outlier Comparison – New Daily Deaths-PP

This plot compares the New Daily Deaths (per million) for each of these countries. The Far East countries certainly look like they had the right approach.

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Total Confirmed Deaths - (per Million)
Country Comparison

Note: The positions mentioned here are just relative to one another.



Iceland has a small population and despite showing a high case load, there has only been 10 total deaths (all tragic) in Iceland.

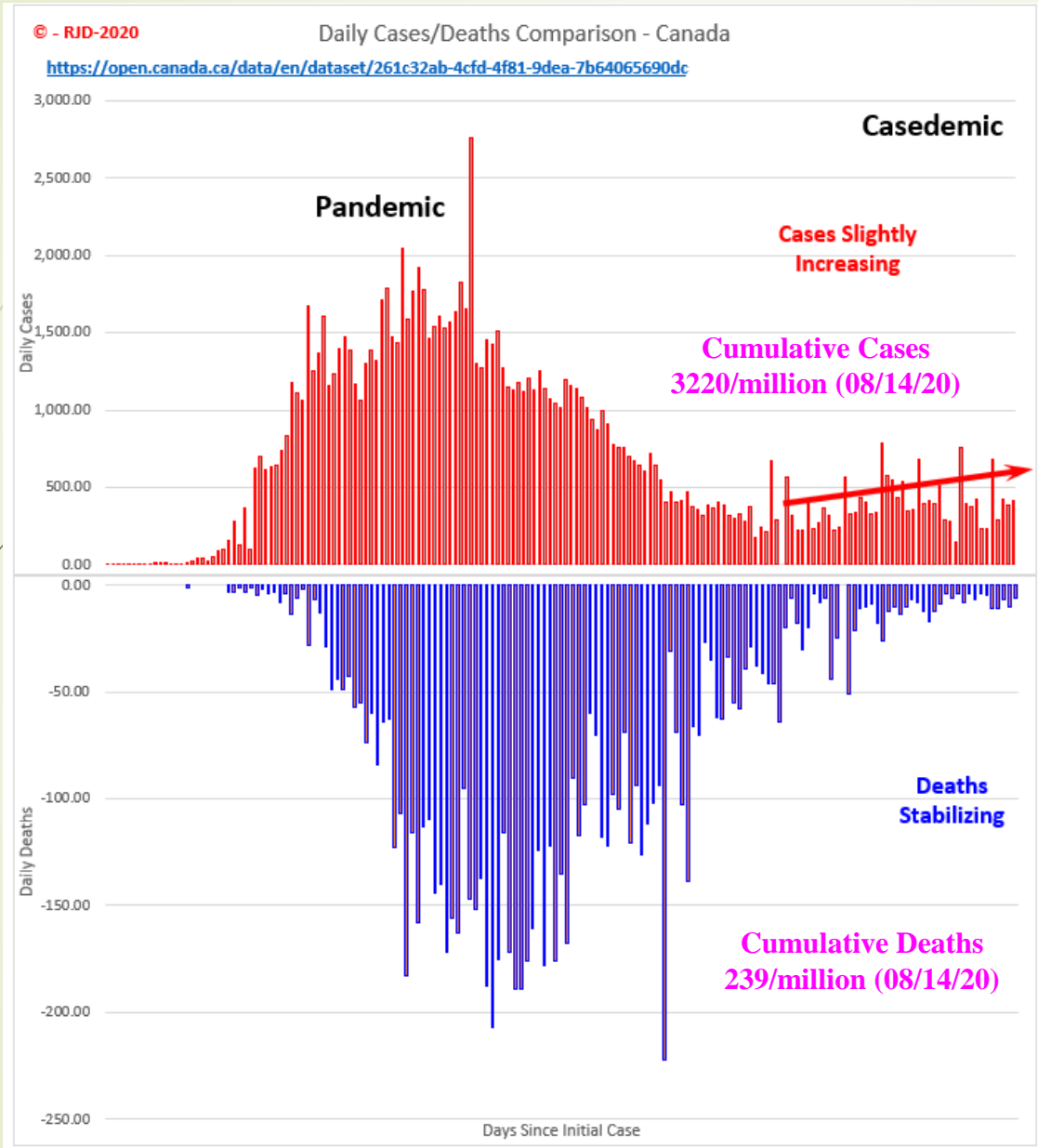
Japan, South Korea and Taiwan all have continually had very low daily death rates.

09-2020
Outlier
Daily Deaths-PP

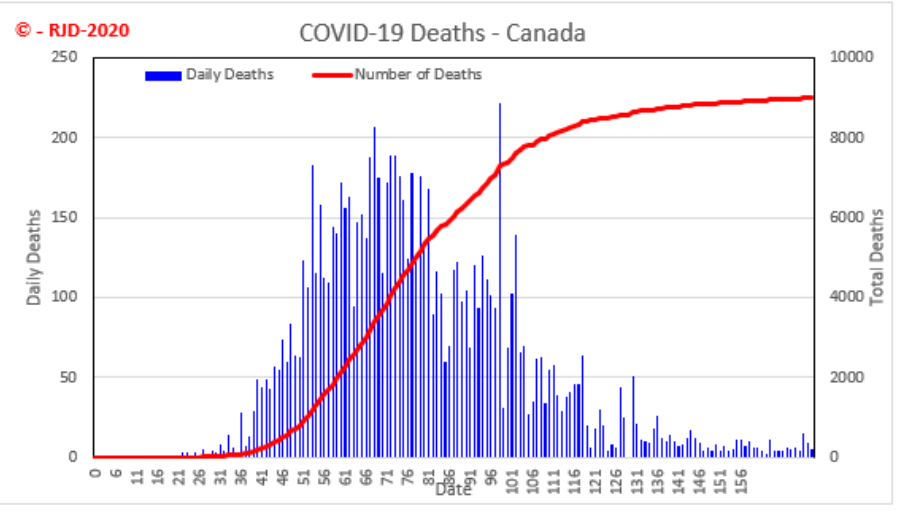
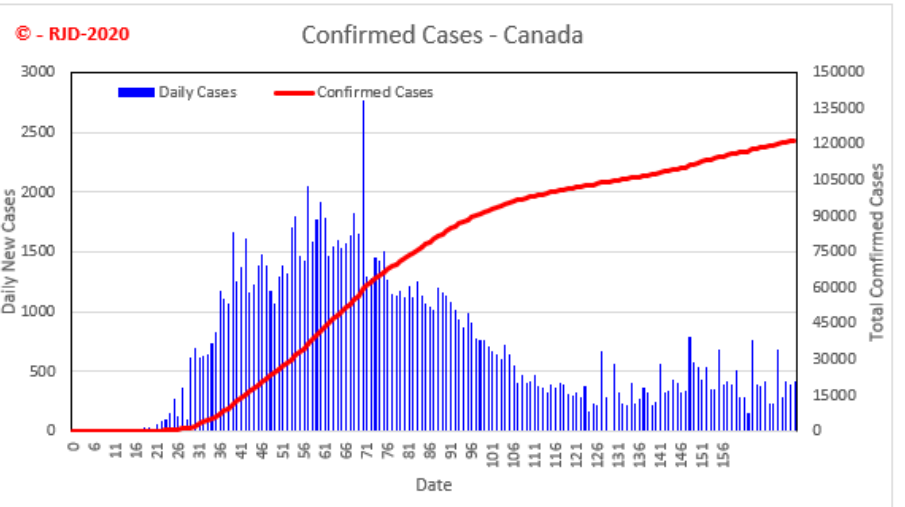
COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Canadian Detail - Canada

I'm just going to switch the discussion closer to home. The first plot shows the Canadian data in some detail. As shown earlier, Canada compared well to many of the European countries and the United States. But obviously some improvements are possible given the results in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan (all countries that did not go with internal lockdowns). Additional plots will look at the individual provinces.

09-2020
Canada
Detail

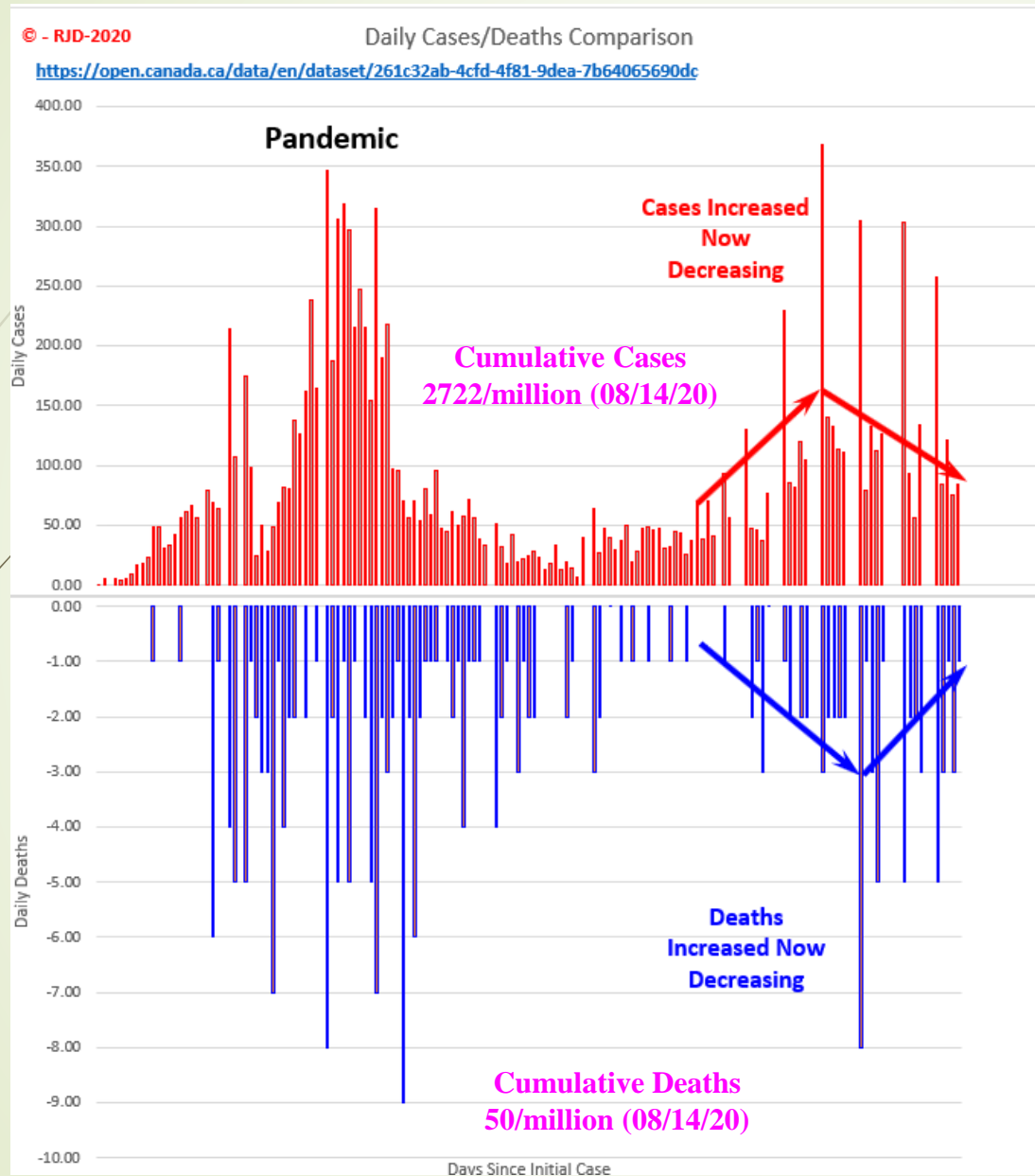


Initial Case 01-31-2020	Canada Population 37779537	Mortality 0.024%
Duration 196 days	Total Cases 121652	7.415%
Final Reporting Date August 14 th , 2020	Total Deaths 9020	

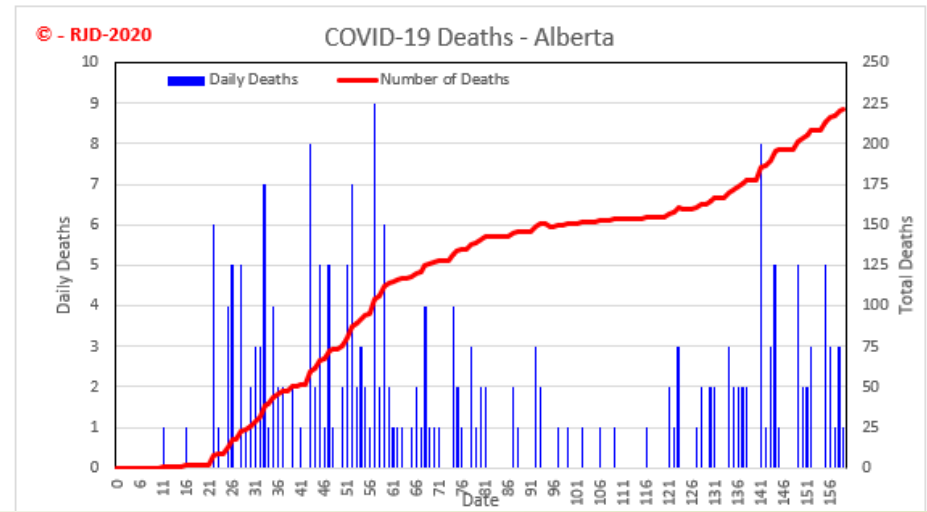
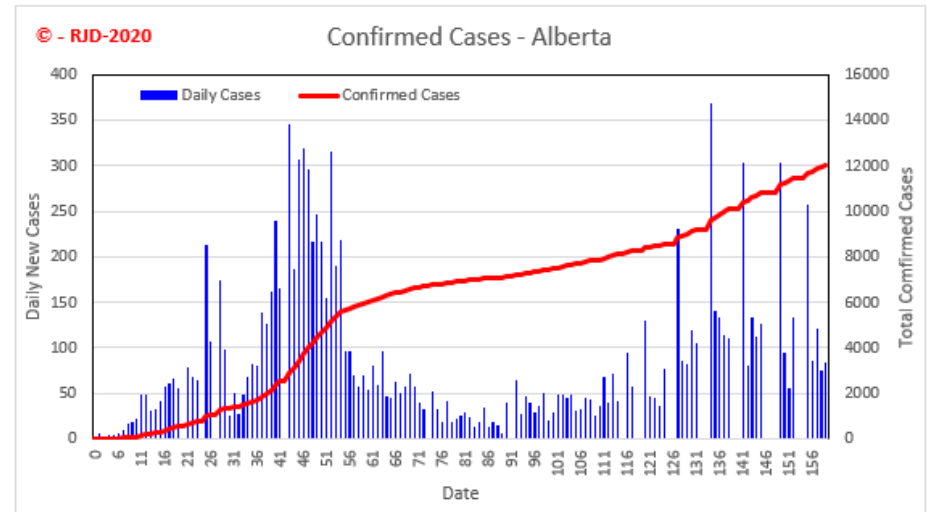


One more step closer to home. This plot shows the Alberta data in detail. Alberta has a profile similar to the United States. A Pandemic followed by a Fuzzy Casedemic. A second wave came through Alberta (for both cases and deaths) but the total cases are still less than the Canadian levels (2722 versus 3220 cases/million) and the death rates are significantly lower than the Canadian levels (50 versus 239 deaths/million).

09-2020
Alberta
Detail

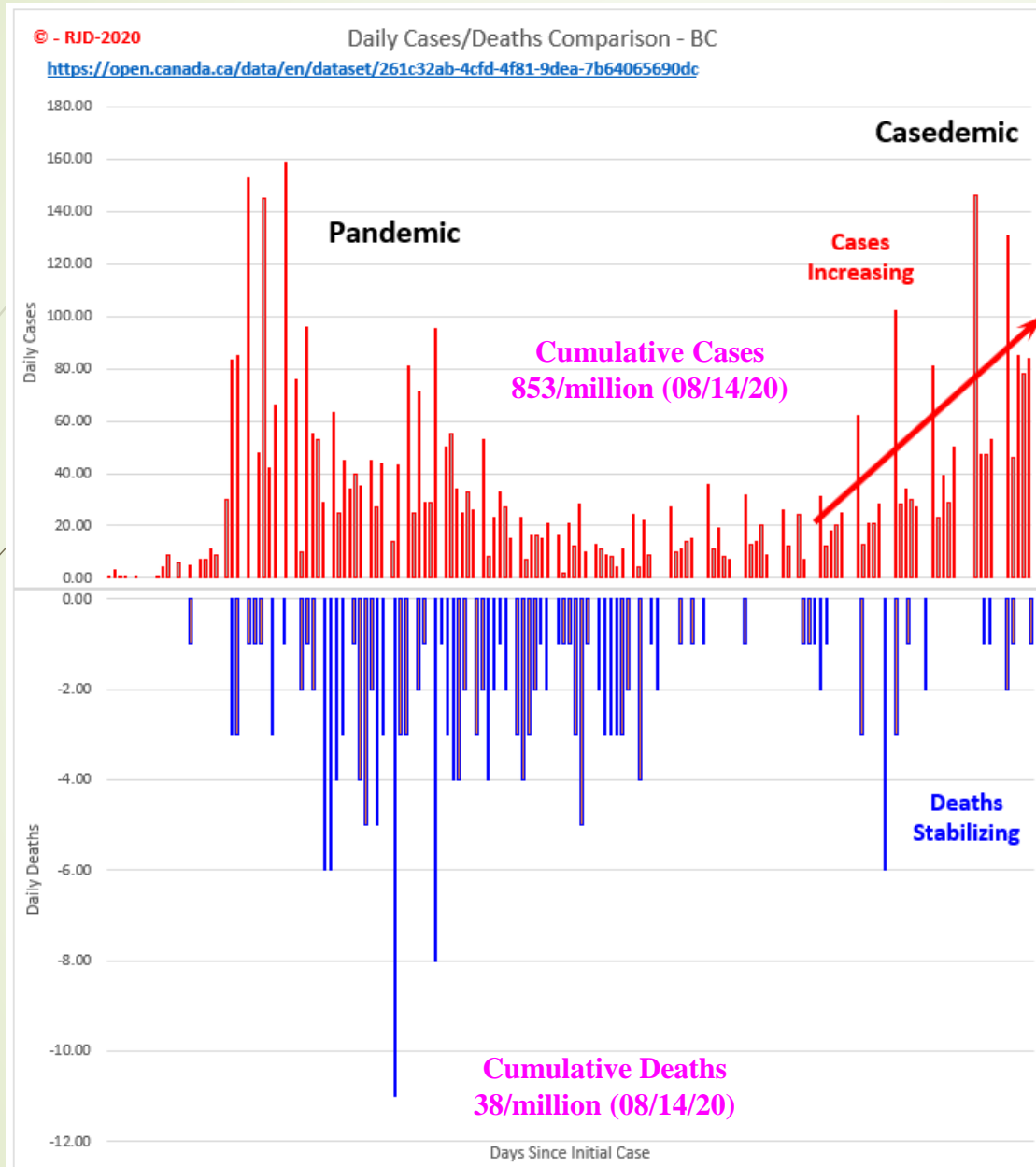


Initial Case March 8 th , 2020	Alberta Population 4428247	Mortality 0.005%
Duration 159 days	Total Cases 12053	1.834%
Final Reporting Date August 14 th , 2020	Total Deaths 221	

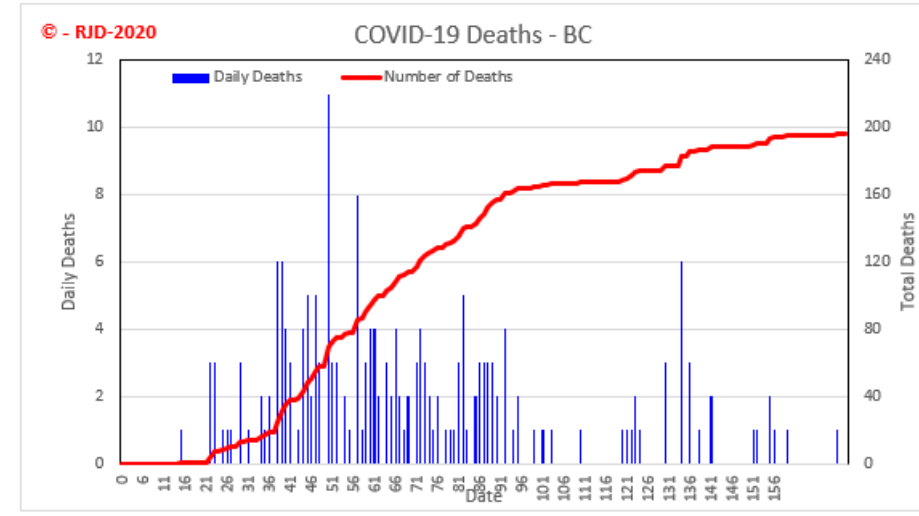
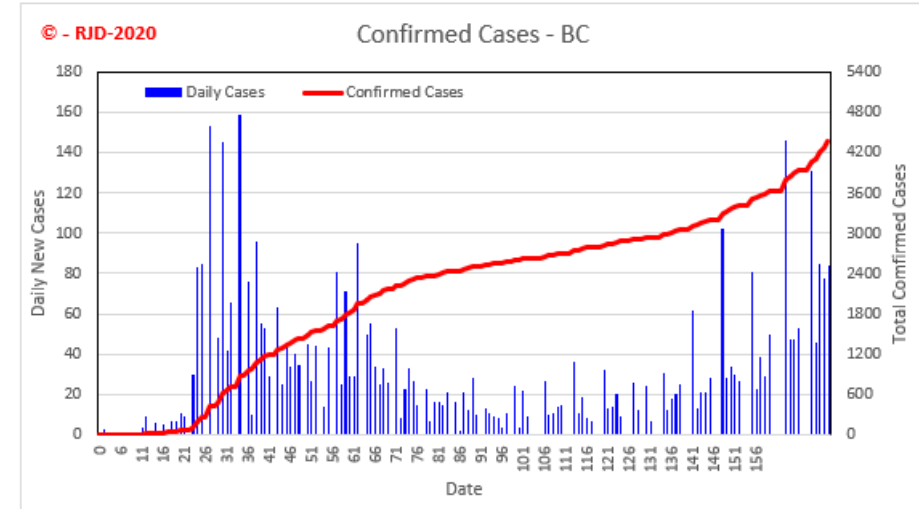


This plot shows the BC data in detail. BC has the more common profile. An initial Pandemic response followed by a Casedemic (where the number of cases go up but the number of deaths does not follow in tandem). BC has a significantly lower case load than Canada (853 versus 3220 cases/million) and the death rates are also significantly lower than the Canadian levels (38 versus 239 deaths/million).

09-2020
BC
Detail

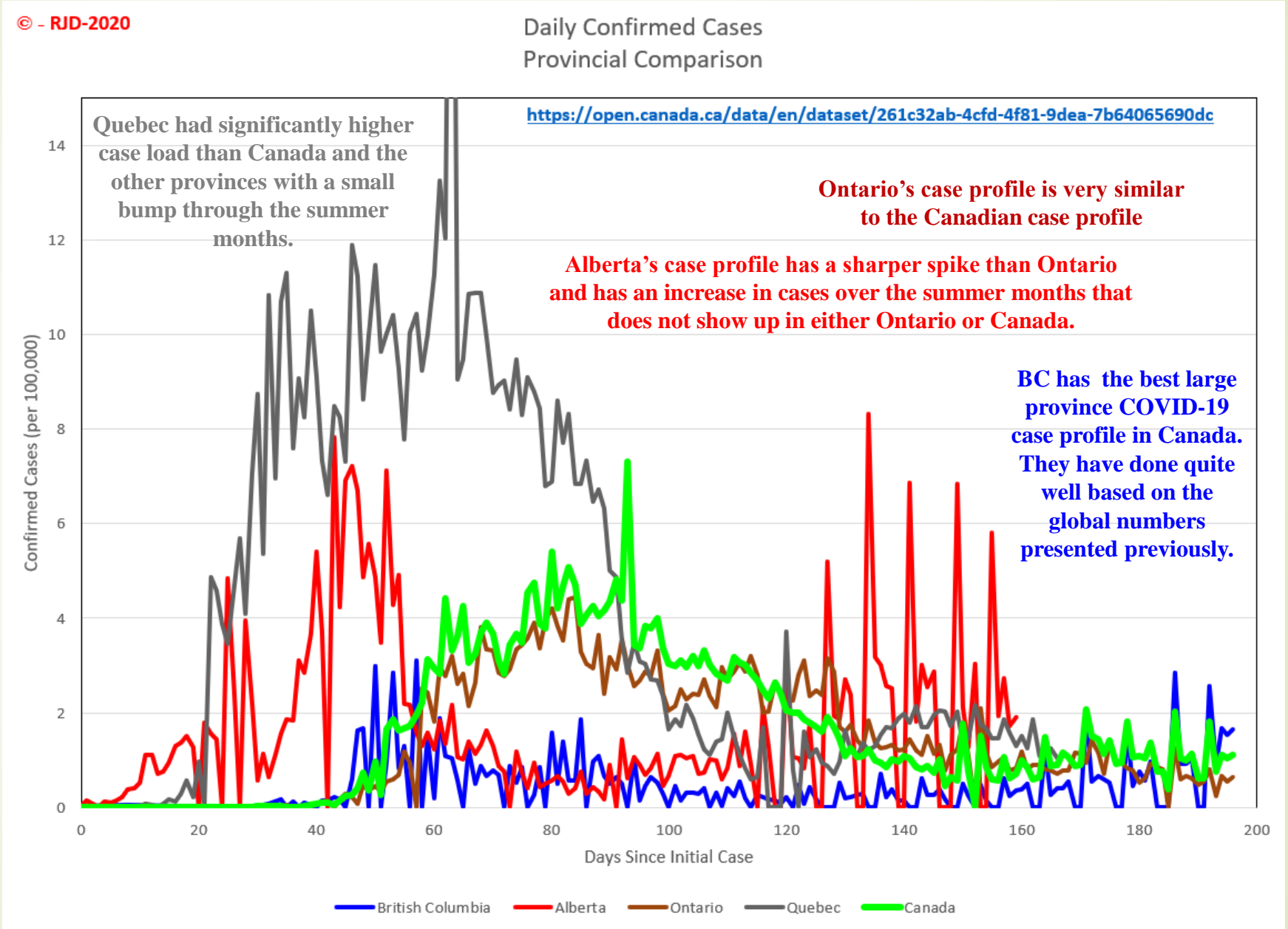


Initial Case 01-31-2020	BC Population 5110117	Mortality 0.004%
Duration 196 days	Total Cases 4358	4.497%
Final Reporting Date August 14 th , 2020	Total Deaths 196	



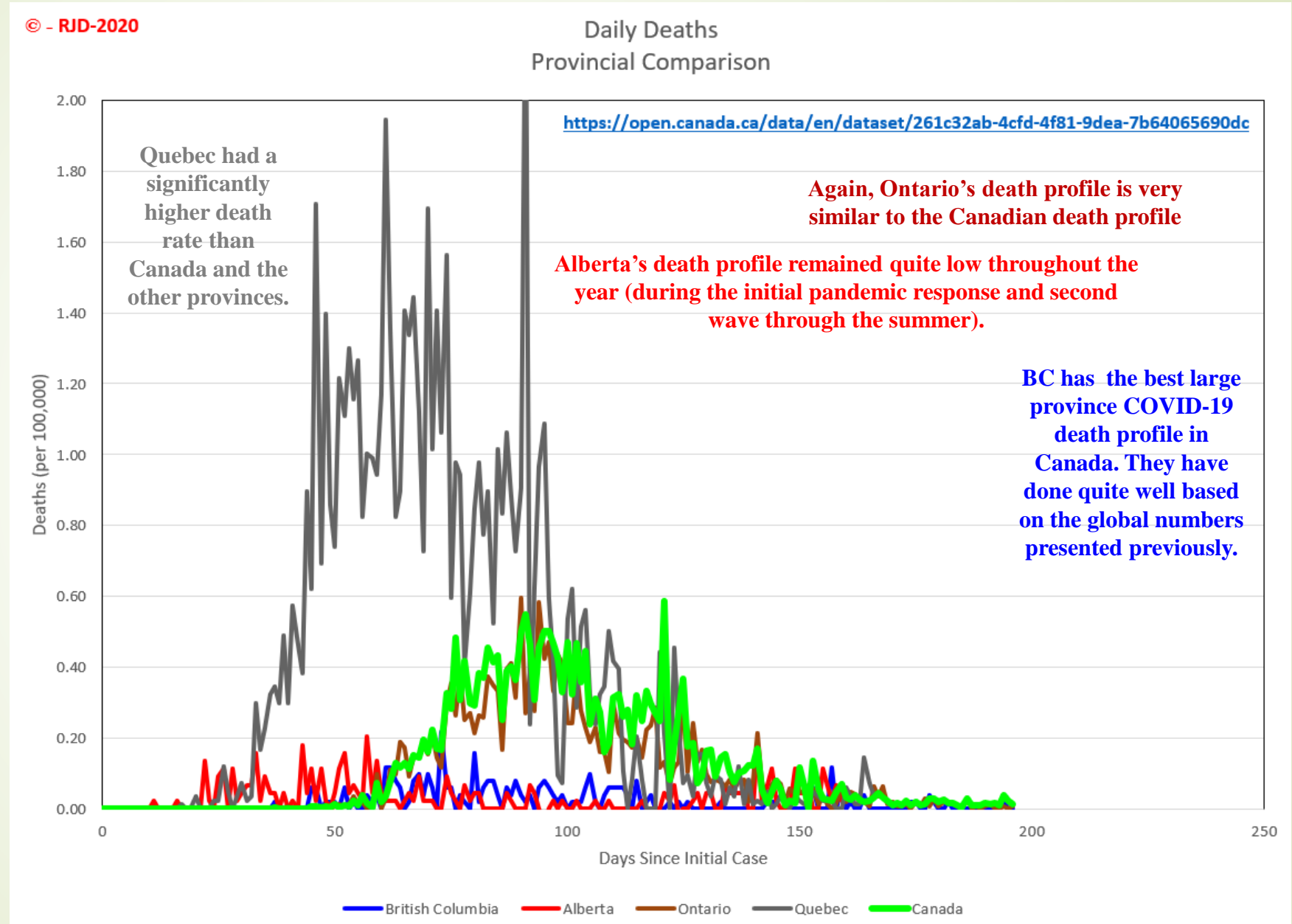
This plot looks at the daily confirmed cases for the four largest provinces (and Canada). The case responses are all quite different from one another. Another indication that the various regions of the country treat different issues differently? Given that this discussion is political, I would suggest that we (in Alberta, Saskatchewan and other areas out West) are different and are becoming increasingly less compatible with the policy coming out of Central Canada. The federal reaction to COVID-19 (along with a whole long list of other issues) has caused significant damage to our western economies and the residents. Something has to change, soon and significantly!

09-2020
Provincial Case Comparison



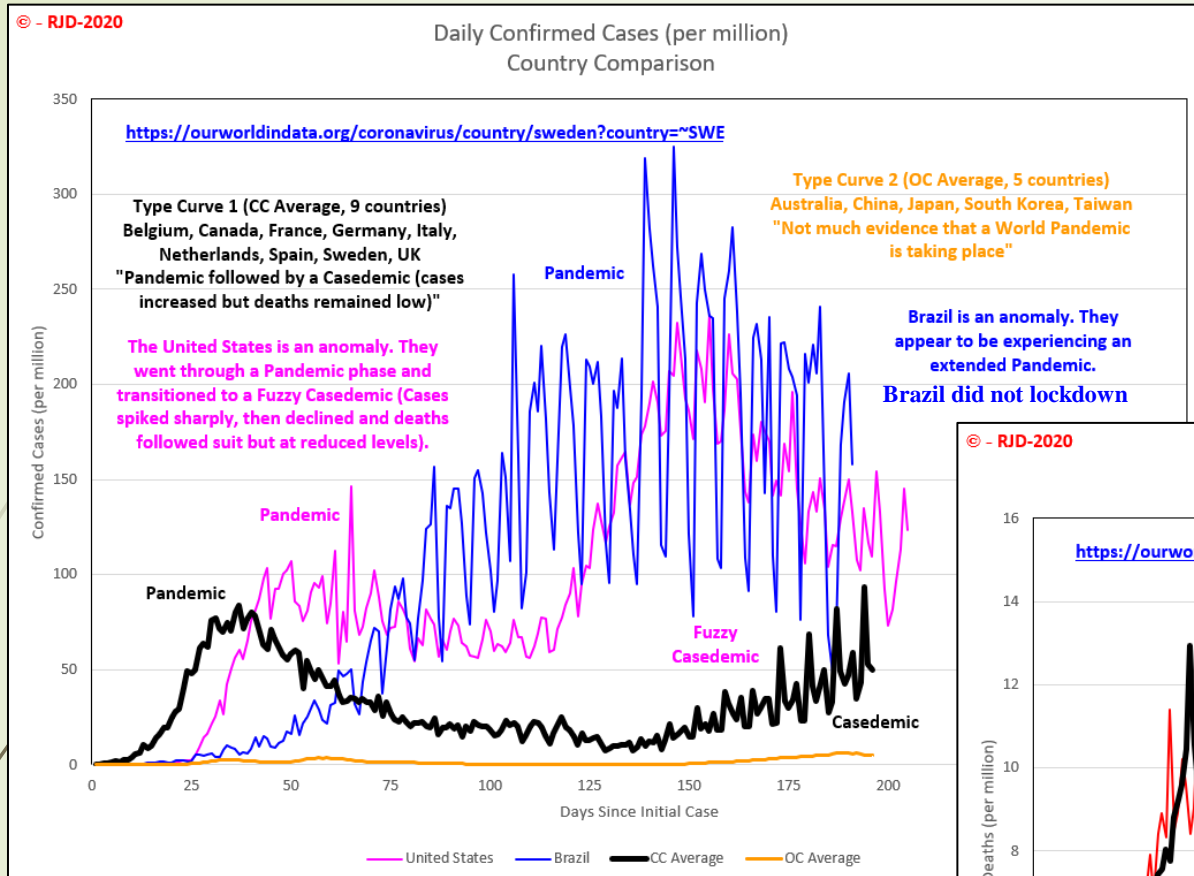
This plot looks at the daily confirmed deaths for the four largest provinces (and Canada). The death responses are also all quite different from one another. Ontario's population dominates Canada so it is not surprising that Ontario and Canada have very similar profiles. Alberta and BC's good performance offset Quebec's poor performance keeping the Canadian response similar to Ontario.

09-2020
Provincial Death Comparisons

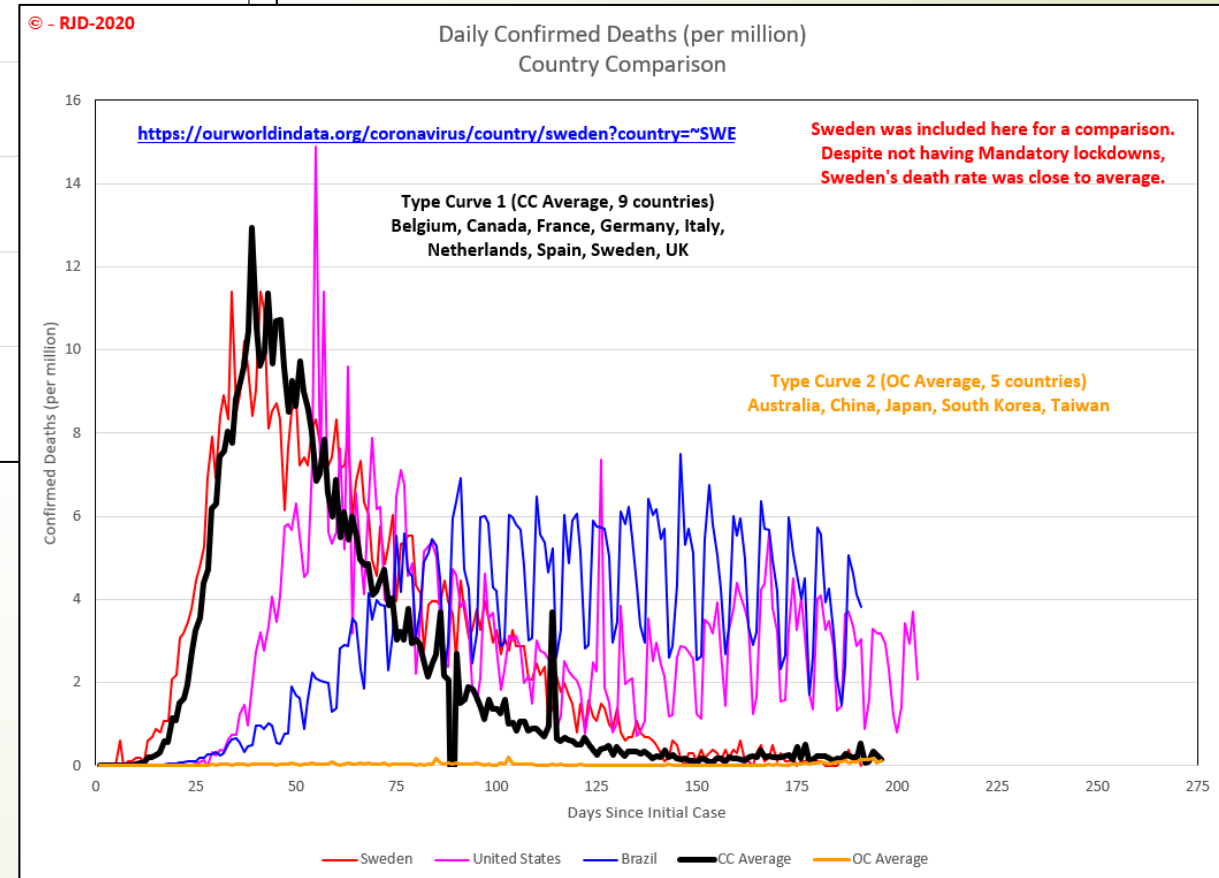


COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Typical Curves

This slide highlights two typical Type Curves for each of the daily confirmed cases and deaths. The United States and Brazil were anomalous so they were included separately.



Two countries had anomalous results. The US profile is quite unique and may be (based on speculation tied to a wide variety of media reporting) subject to questionable/murky reporting practices (refer back to PSS-1a, the CDC and NY Times). This is a US election year and the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown have political fingerprints all over them. I'm not sure how trustworthy the US data is. Brazil needs to be studied to find out why their cases/deaths have been so much worse than the rest of the World.



09-2020
Typical Curves

The COVID-19 profiles fall into two general categories. Note there may be more categories but they have not been showing up in any media reporting to date.

Type Curve 1 shows a typical Pandemic response followed by a second wave of cases, but not a second wave in deaths (i.e.: a Casedemic).

Type Curve 2 hardly shows any evidence that a global Pandemic is occurring. Note, three of the five Type 2 countries did not impose mandatory lockdowns on their citizens.

There are a few conclusions that can be drawn from the data. And to be fair they are my conclusions. Everyone is free to disagree with them and offer their own opinion on what the data is telling them. The powers that be have been trying to tie COVID-19 (C-19) to Climate Change ((CC) without any evidence). But there are parallels. Both use unvalidated computer models programmed with unsubstantiated theories. Both use fear porn. Both ignore portions of the data (CC – solar forcings, C-19 – current deaths) to keep the fear going. For both, the story is in the data (even when it is Questionable).

09-2020
Wrap Up

PSS-1u COVID-19 September 2020 Discussion : Wrap Up

1. Lockdowns. Are they still necessary? Not really. Most countries (whether cases are going up or not) are not showing any increases in new deaths (which are at or approaching zero deaths/million). The United States and Brazil are the only significant examples that don't conform but they too are headed down in deaths/million.
2. Masks. Are they still necessary? Again, not really. The case/death responses shown on these slides are not affected by the mask mandates. And if they actually are effective why weren't they imposed immediately when we were in the pandemic phase rather than the nearly non-lethal casedemics we are currently enduring? Oh wait, that's right, the WHO, Dr. Fauci, Dr. Tam and wide variety of other sources were telling us not to. And do they work? Not very effectively according to the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons, the CDC, the mask manufacturers, etc.. Links provided below. Finding links to studies showing masks are very effective was not as fruitful.
3. Whether you use a Type 1 scenario or a Type 2 scenario, the death count is at or approaching zero. So, which one is better? On a strictly death count basis, Type 2 is by far more superior. But have they just delayed the pandemic response? That is a good thing IF a safe and effective vaccine can be developed in a reasonable time frame. Colds are a coronavirus. Do they have a vaccine for the common cold yet? Many Type 2 countries did not lockdown their countries internally. They shut the country's borders down early and effectively (based on their continued experience with China's tendency to export viruses). But without a vaccine they are still vulnerable to the virus when they reopen and you are into a Type 1 situation (unless the rest of the planet has reached herd immunity and the virus can not get a foothold and spread).
4. Both internal and external lockdowns have serious negative implications on the economy. Based on Sweden's results, there is an argument to be made that lockdowns are not necessary. Their economy is close to normal already and they appear to have reached herd immunity. That is not the case in Canada or the US.

Was the initial shutdown necessary? Maybe, maybe not. The "Flatten the Curve" concept had merit, based on the available information at the time (poor as it was). But that "14 days" has turned into 6 months and exorbitant job losses, mountainous debt increases, social degradation (rising crime, rising domestic abuse (spousal and child)), unnecessary deaths (drug overdoses, suicides, delayed life saving medical procedures, etc.). **IT IS TIME TO END THE LOCKDOWNS!**

"Although mechanistic studies support the potential effect of hand hygiene or face masks, evidence from 14 randomized controlled trials of these measures did not support a substantial effect on transmission of laboratory-confirmed influenza." From the CDC.

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/5/19-0994_article

"In April, physicist Denis Rancourt published a research review on ResearchGate.com entitled "Masks Don't Work: A review of science relevant to COVID-19 social policy". After receiving over 400,000 views, it was summarily removed for "spreading information that could cause harm". Article Quote and D.G. Rancourt paper below.

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/06/06/coronavirus-fact-check-6-does-wearing-a-mask-do-anything/>

https://web.archive.org/web/20200531184631/https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340570735_Masks_Don't_Work_A_review_of_science_relevant_to_COVID-19_social_policy

More information?
climatechangeandmusic.com

This was not the first pandemic that has hit the world. But this is the first time that the healthy population has been quarantined. Given the key characteristics of COVID-19, was that really the best decision? The elderly population was the hardest hit by far, the younger population was largely unaffected. Based on some of the stories, a significant portion of the world (including Sweden) failed the older population allowing the virus into senior facilities. Quarantining the sick, properly isolating the elderly and vulnerable, practicing some voluntary pandemic measures might be a better path to take. Allow the young and healthy to continue living their lives and keeping the economy going. Allow us to get to herd immunity. The Hong Kong Flu in 1968 killed a lot more people (of all ages) than COVID-19 has and we didn't obliterate the economy in the process.

- Conclusion: Wearing masks will not reduce SARS-CoV-2. N95 masks protect health care workers, but are not recommended for source control transmission.
- Surgical masks are better than cloth but not very efficient at preventing emissions from infected patients.
- Cloth masks will be ineffective at preventing SARS-CoV-2 transmission, whether worn as source control or as personal protective equipment (PPE).

<https://aapsonline.org/mask-facts/>