



**NATIONAL COMMISSIONER OF THE  
ICELANDIC POLICE**  
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL PROTECTION  
AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



**Applies to: The media, almannavarnir.is, Administration and Chief Epidemiologist's contacts.**

**STATUS REPORT**

**Date: 16.04.2020      Time: 16:30      Location: Coordination Centre / Directorate of Health /Chief Epidemiologist**

**Emergency / Distress Phase: COVID-19**

**Developments**

Dissemination of information, making of instructions and advice to the public, to institutions and enterprises. All instructions can be found on the [Directorate of Health](#) website, the [National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police](#) website and the covid.is information website.  
The civil protection authorities' Coordination Centre coordinates all action and disseminates information regarding COVID-19 all over the country.

**Gradual relaxing of restrictions on social gatherings and school operations will begin on 4 May** [See further on the Government Offices website.](#)

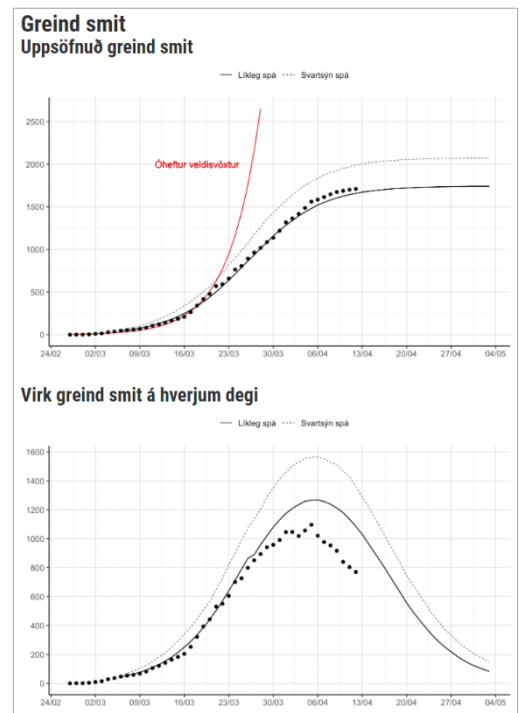
**Statistical information for Iceland**

The number of people in Iceland with confirmed infections is currently 1,739, with 587 in isolation. There are a total of 1,394 domestic infections and 8 of unknown origin. A total of 38,204 samples have been taken, including 818 in the last 24 hours. Eight of the people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in Iceland have passed away.  
[According to the National University Hospital](#) there are currently 33 patients in the hospital with COVID-19, of which 5 are in intensive care and 3 on respirators. 591 are being monitored by the COVID-19 outpatient unit, including 57 children who are being monitored by the Children's Hospital. 1,199 individuals have recovered and 61 individuals have been discharged from the hospital.

**Predictive mathematical model for the number of cases and pressure on health-care services** [covid.hi.is](#)

**Main results up to and including 13 April.**

- It is estimated that during this wave of the epidemic, just over 1700 people in Iceland will be diagnosed with COVID-19, but a more pessimistic prediction puts that number closer to 2100.
- The number of diagnosed individuals with an active infection is expected to peak in the first week of April and will likely be around 1300, but might peak a week later with 1600 sick individuals according to the more pessimistic prediction.
- It is estimated that during this wave of the epidemic, some 110 persons may need to be admitted to hospital, but that number might go as high as 150.
- The peak pressure on the health-care services due to hospitalisations is expected to take place before mid-April, when around 60 persons might be in hospital at the same time, with a more pessimistic prediction of 90 individuals.
- The prediction is that during the epidemic, around 24 persons may become seriously ill, i.e. will need to be admitted to intensive care during that period. A more pessimistic prediction puts that number at 35 individuals.
- The peak pressure on the intensive care units might happen in mid-April, when 10 persons are expected to be there at the same time, whereas the pessimistic prediction puts that number at 18.
- A minimal offset in the age distribution towards more diagnosed infections among individuals over the age of sixty would considerably increase the pressure on the health-care service.



**National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police's Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management  
COVID-19 press conference, Thursday 16.04.2020**

**Participants: Víðir Reynisson, Chief Superintendent of Police; Þórólfur Guðnason, Chief Epidemiologist; Alma D. Möller, Director of Health. Guests: Páll Matthíasson, Director of the National University Hospital, and Silja Ingólfssdóttir of the Red Cross, who discussed social isolation and loneliness.**

**CS Víðir Reynisson** reminded the public that the ban on social gatherings is still in force. It is not yet May 4th, and although he understands that people were relieved to hear that the rules will soon be relaxed, he stresses that these rules were not imposed for nothing. We do not want a resurgence of the epidemic.

**Chief Epidemiologist Þórólfur Guðnason:**

- He reviewed the numbers. The number of active infections is still going down. The number of people with active infections has gone down for the tenth day running. The number of sick people has not been this low since 22 March.
- 58 % of those diagnosed yesterday were already under quarantine. The disease is on the wane, but we will continue to see persistent infections within the community, and we are expecting around 10 people to be diagnosed per day in the next few days. It is not yet realistic to expect no new infections to be diagnosed. Therefore we need to continue to remind people to respect social measures like distance limitations, hand-washing and to continue using hand sanitiser.
- The working group on travel arrangements is expected to present its conclusions either side of the weekend. Remember the current rule – everyone entering the country has to be quarantined. This rule has hitherto not applied to foreign tourists, but the Chief Epidemiologist thinks that needs to change. Travel arrangements are also being looked into abroad and on the international level, and cooperation is absolutely necessary in this regard. The conclusions on how to continue on from here are expected in the next few days and following that, the Chief Epidemiologist will send his suggestions to the Minister of Health, who will publish the decision.

**Director of Health Alma D. Möller:**

- She complimented the children of the country and all those who take care of the children during these strange times. She also paid compliments to those in other front-line jobs, such as cleaning. Hygiene has never been as important, in all corners of society.
- Dr. Möller discussed the Rakning-C 19 contact tracing app, which has been downloaded by 133 thousand people, or around 37 % of the nation. Although the epidemic is on the wane, it is expected to persist for the next several weeks, and therefore it is very important to continue with the general safety measures. The app will be even more important in the weeks and months to come, when the virus will not occupy our minds as much as it does now.
- Despite the pandemic, there have been some good developments happening in the health-care sector. For example, yesterday the outline of a service plan for people with dementia was published, and the National University Hospital is putting the finishing touches on resources for children with addiction problems.
- Dr. Möller added that necessary health-care services must not be put aside for too long, and urged people who are in need of health-care services to seek them out. However, the rule of phoning in first is still in force.
- The Directorate of Health oversees all health-care services in the country and has now compiled numerical information regarding services and visits to institutions. These numbers show that the total number of communications with the clinics has increased by 30 % since last year. This is mostly due to COVID-19, and peaked at the beginning of March. Naturally, phone calls and electronic communications increased considerably. Hospital admissions are now around 70 % of what they were at the beginning of February, and 75 % compared with the same time last year. At this time, COVID-19 infections account for around 80 % of all hospital admissions in the country.
- Numerical information about waiting lists, visits to medical specialists, to psychiatric wards, etc., will be compiled in the next few weeks. All these factors need to be examined.

**Director of the National University Hospital Páll Matthíasson**

- Currently there are 23 National University Hospital staff under quarantine and 12 in isolation.
- A new shipment of protective gear is on its way from China.

- The National University Hospital's rules regarding maternity ward services remain unchanged and will do so until 4 May. Their relaxation and execution are being looked into.
- Rjóðrið, a place of rest for children with long-term illnesses will, however, be reopened forthwith. The ward was closed in order to protect the children and the Children's Hospital staff from infection.
- Various services are now available that were not available earlier. Efforts are being made to assist hospital patients to communicate with their loved ones via electronic means.
- A website is being built for National University Hospital staff that will contain various instructions on how to handle the aftermath of the epidemic. This material will also be accessible to the public and other health-care workers, via the National University Hospital's public website.

#### **Silja Ingólfssdóttir of the Icelandic Red Cross:**

- Ms. Ingólfssdóttir thanked volunteers all over the country. She also thanked those who work the 1717 phone line – their work is so invisible but yet so infinitely important. There is a lot of loneliness in the community right now and it is difficult to handle all the emotions that come to the surface. All research into the subject shows that long-term social isolation has negative health consequences for people.
- The Red Cross places an emphasis on eliminating people's social isolation. People who got visits from volunteers before the pandemic began now receive a phone call every day. Ms. Ingólfssdóttir stated that anyone can call in. Anyone can be lonely – and it is no-one's fault. There can be many reasons for people's social isolation, and the pandemic is not making things better for those who were already in that situation. We are going through many new experiences under completely new circumstances and seeking out new connections in such a situation is a very positive thing.
- Ms. Ingólfssdóttir urged people who are in this position to make use of the Red Cross services and to call the Red Cross helpline. The number is 1717. There are volunteers answering the calls. They can advise the callers where they can seek help, or just chat with them. We all matter! No issue is too small or too big. The phone line is open 24 hours a day, all year round.

#### **Questions and answers:**

- Steinunn Ása Þorvaldsdóttir of the TV show *Með okkar augum* asked Dr. Möller whether she had ever felt afraid in connection with the epidemic. Dr. Möller replied that she had not felt afraid because they had worked together so well and she had seen how well the community sticks together.
- Ms. Þorvaldsdóttir then asked CS Reynisson when we will be allowed to hug again. His reply was that this was a great question, but that it is clear that this will not be possible right away, but would hopefully happen in July, at the height of summer.
- Dr. Möller was asked what measures are being taken against the increase in violence and other such matters. She stated that people's well-being will continue to be closely monitored, especially with regard to suicide, and that a survey of the well-being of Icelanders was being prepared. There are no indications that the suicide rate has gone up, but vigilance is always important in that regard.
- The question was asked whether there would be any special measures taken to protect the elderly after the relaxing of the rules on 4 May. Dr. Guðnason said that senior citizens are a special at-risk group and this has affected the stricter rules. A working group is working on coordinating the rules better across the country, but nursing homes have often set themselves their own rules. All of this will be looked into more thoroughly.

#### **Various tasks**

##### **Screening in Ísafjörður and Bolungarvík**

Screening for the COVID-19 virus among the residents of the northern West Fjords started yesterday morning, with some 1,500 slots booked. The screening is a joint project of deCODE genetics and the West Fjords Health-Care Institution and will last for three days, ending on Friday, 17 April. The sampling takes place at the Bolungarvík search and rescue service building, and in Ísafjörður at the Cross-Fit centre, the Frumherji inspection facility and outside the basement of the Ísafjörður hospital. Participation in the screening is good and most of the appointment slots were filled quickly. Note that the screening is intended for individuals who are symptom-free. Individuals who are under quarantine or in isolation should stay at home. The project is being carried out by the Hvest staff and volunteers.

## **Response team to reduce the interruption of services to vulnerable groups**

Conditions are good within most local communities, but front-line social service and proximity service staff serving people with disabilities and the elderly have been under a lot of pressure. These staff have been doing a good job under unprecedented circumstances, with the aim of preventing COVID-19 infections and transmissions and to protect the service recipients. This attitude seems to govern the behaviour of these staff members both at work and outside of work. One example of solution-based implementation is that the East Iceland Health-Care Institution and the east Iceland social services, in cooperation with the Crisis Counselling Coordination Group for the East Iceland police district, have banded together with staff and volunteers to render in-home services and residential care in the area. Such cooperation is praiseworthy.

Many non-governmental organisations, such as Bjarkarhlíð, the Píeta organisation and Heimilisfriður kept open phone lines over the Easter holidays. The atmosphere was generally calm, but all these organisations received a number of phone calls about different issues. The welfare service reserve team was founded on 17 March and there are now over 1,400 people registered. One local community requested assistance over the Easter holidays, and three individuals from the registry were asked to go there.

The response team received a tip to the effect that it will be important to prepare how to handle children who are living in difficult circumstances when the schools reopen fully, and a special financial allocation should be foreseen. This especially refers to children whose families are living in social hardship or poverty, as well as immigrant families, etc.

## **The well-being of the nation during the COVID-19 era to be surveyed**

During its meeting today the government agreed to allocate 1,5 million ISK of its common disposable funds to carry out a survey on the well-being of the nation during the COVID-19 era. The University of Iceland's Centre of Public Health Sciences will carry out the survey in cooperation with the Directorate of Health and the Chief Epidemiologist, and also in cooperation with other academic bodies in the Nordic region. The aim of this survey is to evaluate the well-being and quality of life of the nation under the current conditions and the possible long-term effects on people's state of health. The project is in two parts. One part consists of inviting every individual over 18 who has an electronic ID to participate in an online survey on well-being during the uncertain times of the COVID-19 epidemic. This part of the survey will take place shortly and will be repeated in a year's time. The other part consists of seeking out the participants of two previous research projects on the well-being of the nation, i.e. the Directorate of Health's 2017 survey *The Health and Well-being of Icelanders* and *The SAGA cohort* research project by Unnur Valdimarsdóttir.

## **More than a billion to be given in support to cultural, youth and sports activities: Support due to COVID-19**

Half a billion ISK will be allocated to cultural activities and the creative arts, with a special emphasis on self-employed artists, and 500 million will go to sports and youth activities, to negate some of the economic effects of COVID-19. Additionally, 100 million ISK will be allocated to heritage conservation, with a special contribution to the Architectural Heritage Fund. This support is based on a proposal for parliamentary resolution on an investment effort by the government to counter the economic recession following the pandemic, which was adopted by Althingi on 30 March. Traditional cultural activities and sports and youth activities have more or less stopped in the past weeks and a large group of people and many clubs have lost a lot of income.

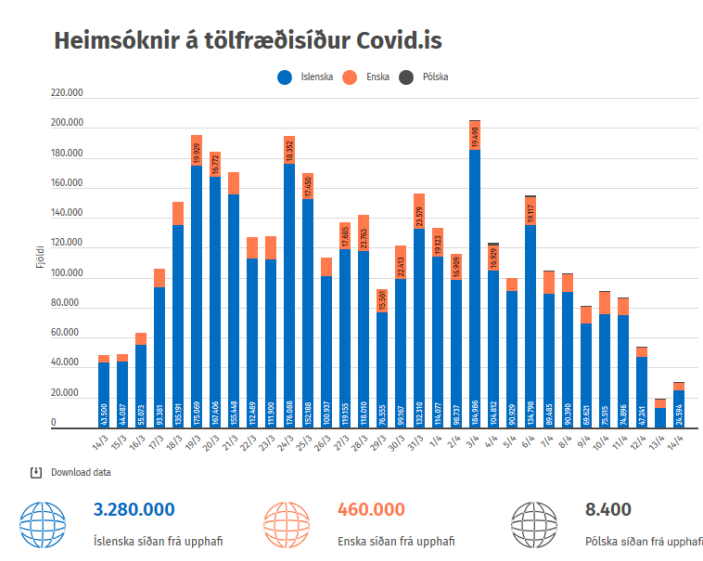
## **The Red Cross**

Due to the strain on the Red Cross telephone helpline 1717 and the net chat at 1717.is, the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#) has decided to support the service. The support will boost up the helpline and net chat to aid people, such as families, children and young people, people with disabilities, the elderly, and people of foreign origin during these unprecedented times. Phone calls to the 1717 line have tripled from the previous numbers. The calls are now both longer and more difficult.

Statistical information about the disease is updated once a day and published at 13:00h on the covid.is website.

The website contains information about the measures that have been taken in Iceland due to the COVID-19 disease.

Below you will find information on visits to the covid.is information page from the beginning.



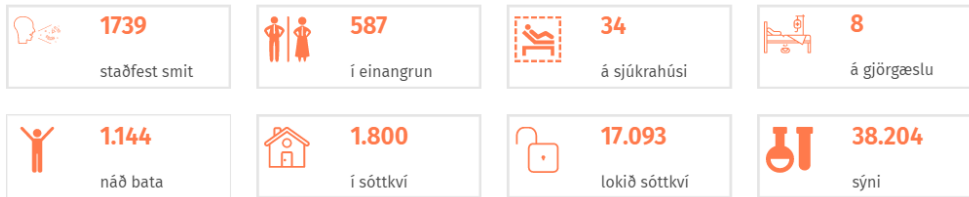
**Upcoming:**

- Press conferences are held every day at 14:03h.
- The next COVID-19 coordination meeting will be held on Friday 17 April at 9:00h.

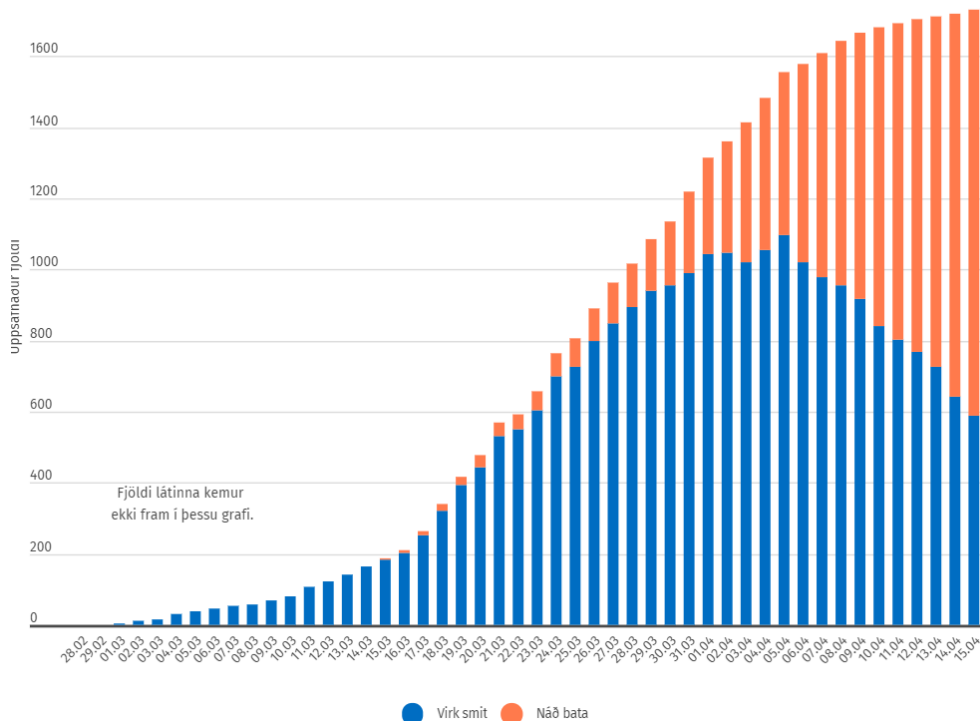
**Status**

Iceland – today’s status – statistics on <https://www.covid.is/data>

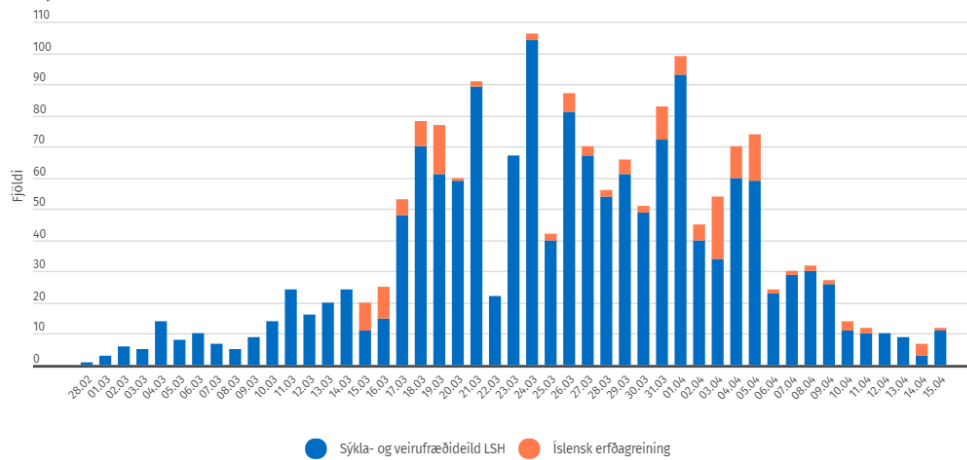
**Heildartölur**



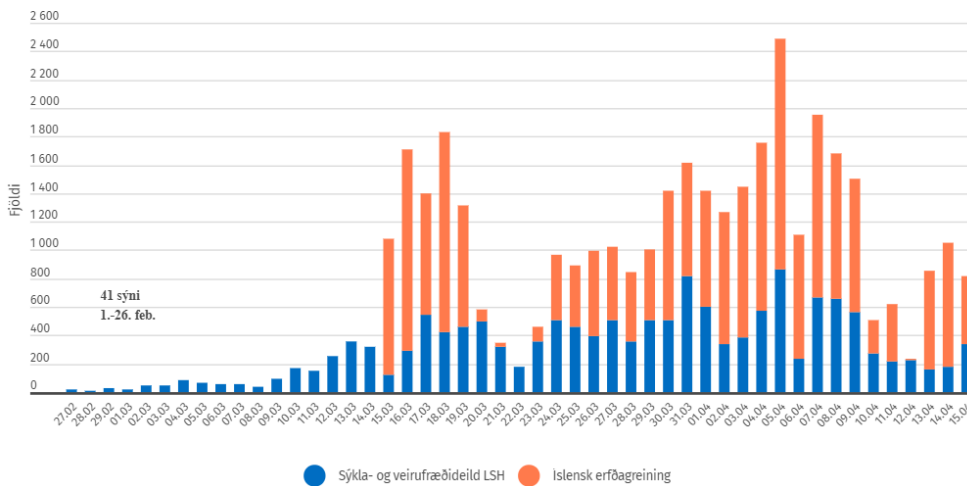
Af þeim sem greinst hafa með COVID-19 á Íslandi eru átta látin.



## Fjöldi smita



## Fjöldi sýni

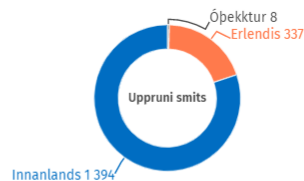


## Fjöldi smita eftir kyni



Download data

## Uppruni smits



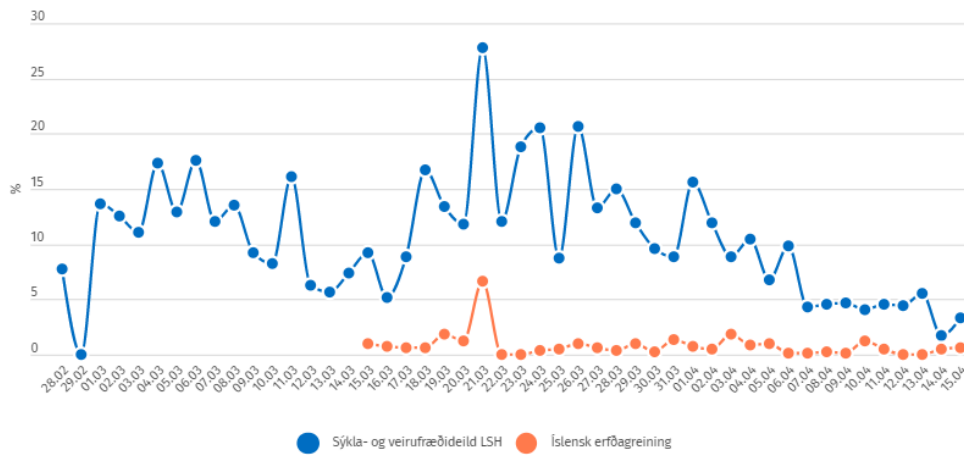
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## Smit / sóttkví eftir landshlutum

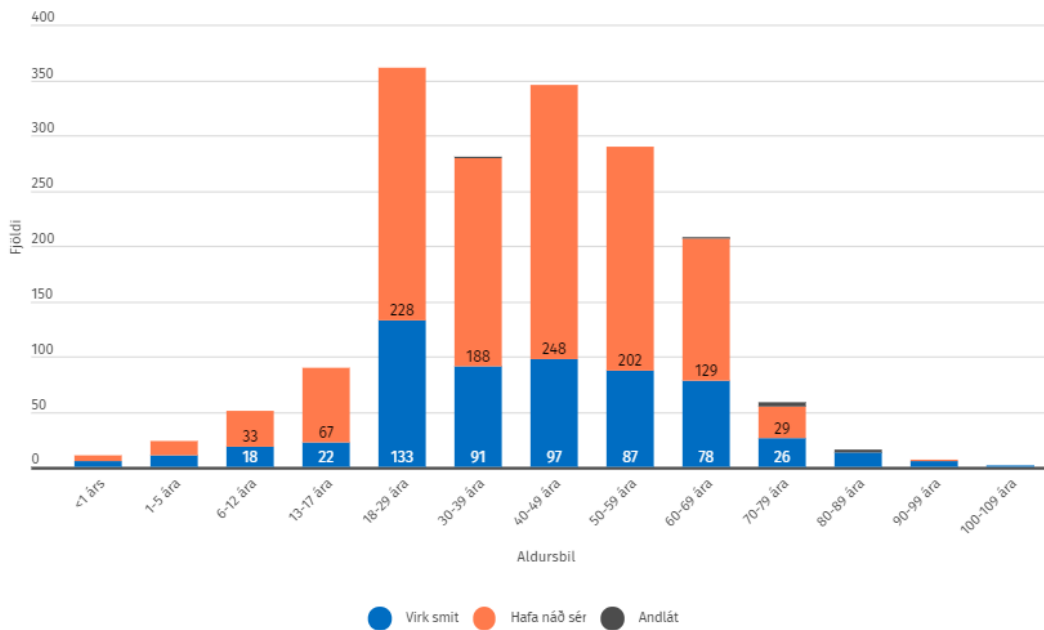


	Smit	Sóttkví
Höfuðborgarsvæði	1277	1235
Suðurnes	77	63
Suðurland	173	186
Austurland	9	24
Norðurland eystra	46	67
Norðurland vestra	35	6
Vestfirðir	78	88
Vesturland	41	49
Óstaðsett	2	82
Útlönd	1	0

## Hlutfall smita af fjölda sýna



## Fjöldi virkra smita eftir aldri, fjöldi þeirra sem hafa náð sér og andlát



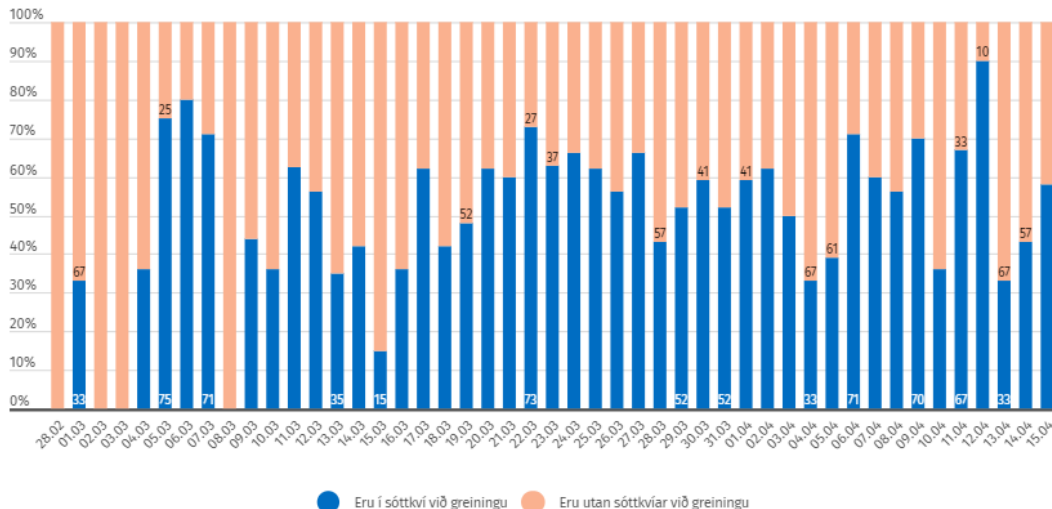
Download data

## Hlutfall smitaðra sem greinast í sóttkví



54%

þeirra sem hafa greinst voru í sóttkví



## Coronavirus – COVID-19 - Global spread

According to Johns Hopkins, **2,081,969 individual cases** of COVID-19 have been confirmed today and **138,487 individuals** have died. An additional **525.884 individuals** have already recovered from the illness. According to the ECDC, the epidemic is currently considered to be a moderate public health threat for healthy individuals and very high threat for older adults and individuals with chronic underlying conditions. Cf. the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](#) website for information on the development in each country. Cf. the ECDC risk assessment.

National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police's Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management [www.almannavarnir.is](http://www.almannavarnir.is)