

FENStatS COVID-19 WG
Background paper first meeting

1 Introductions and the composition of the Working Group

Members of the FENStatS COVID-19 WG (by 08.06.2020)

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2 Expectations, contributions, goals

2.1 What expectations do the members have?

- Sharing information on what is being done in each country and society.
- Interdisciplinary cooperation from a variety of perspectives, great network, engaged members with a “hands-on” mentality.
- Relevant contribution in the production and dissemination of knowledge related to the pandemic and its individual and social impacts (health, social, political).
- Development, adaptation and application of appropriate statistical methodologies in order to obtain reliable information.
- Standardisation of information from different sources, both between countries and within the same country.
- Exploration of options on how to render official statistics more comparable with regard to the current extraordinary demand for and significance of Corona-related data.
- Put together the expertise of the people involved in order to deliver solid scientific advice for guiding Governments (either in a national or European level) to implement policies about the pandemic.
- Analyse the impact of these types of events on the economy, strains on the health systems etc. develop indicators to measure vulnerability, resilience and adaptation costs related to these episodes.

- Informational quality (reliable, comparable, accurate, timely and relevant; identification and taking stock of good practices, issuing recommendations, on the collection of data, the preparation of related statistics and their use for analysis of interest; the identification of data gaps and the suggestions of ways forward.
- Analyses of the current possibilities to compare Covid-19 statistics between [European countries](#); start with Belgium where that [this page](#) gives an overview; there are also extensive daily reports.
- Science times do not match with “crisis times”: contributions from the scientific community (specially from mathematicians, statisticians and “data analysts”) are not always constructed with all the rigour and care that we presumably put in our daily job; similar concerns could be expressed regarding uncertainty quantification and communication.
- Improving data access across Europe, especially for secondary health care data.
- Improving the communication/collaboration between different countries on data (statistics) connected to COVID-19. Mostly by unifying the format these data are presented with, by working on a joint (data) portal that could be later used in statistical/epidemiological research and by helping (as a liaison towards national statistical societies) to overcome current challenges in assembling knowledge on valuable information from other research and industry related groups.

In summary, quite different expectations are expressed for the working group. One focus (at least in the short term) is to improve the comparability of relevant health statistics (especially causes of death). The expectation is also expressed that activities and information at national level will be networked and made more widely available through the working group. In addition to the focus on health statistics, social and economic consequences of the pandemic are also mentioned as areas of interest. With regard to the direction of the work itself, expectations are expressed that the group will devote itself to statistical models, software packages and other research topics, even if only with the aim of making them available for broader application. The same goes for access to data and statistics. Improving communication and literacy and containment of the difficult relationship between science and politics are apparently also important priorities.



2.2 What do they want to contribute?

- Sharing what is done in my country and in the network that I know

- Expertise in statistical literacy, data literacy and in communicating our work to the public and to reach decision-makers in business and politics.
- Results of software project SUCCE-D (CoronaCare Dashboard, visual, low-threshold accessible simulation and scenario planning tool for hospitals and local governments to estimate the resource requirements, i.e. beds, intensive care equipment, personnel, <https://succe-d.de>).
- Expertise in survival models, multistate models and joint models applied to the health sciences, contributing to the analysis of relevant indicators such as mortality.
- Experience in multidisciplinary teams involving health professionals.
- Expertise in change-point analysis, extracting the signal and use it for statistical inference, time series analysis for the analysis of COVID-19 data; developing simple tools (or even an R package) for a publicly available user-friendly software.
- Statistical analyses in the field of entrepreneurship, improving the quality of results of certain systems and adjusting business results to expected / desired results.
- Corona-related health data of national official statistics (e.g. death numbers, excess mortality, and diagnostic data of hospital)
- Statistical modelling of the Covid-related data; forecasting models regarding the spread of Covid.
- Background on financial statistics and national accounts, international standards in official statistics.
- Linking with the initiative launched by the CEMat (the Spanish Committee of Mathematics). Trying to join forces across all areas in Mathematics, CEMat set up the “Mathematical Action Against Coronavirus” (<http://matematicas.uclm.es/ceamat/covid19/en/links-and-contributions/>).
- Experience in secondary medical data at the Croatian Society of Medical Informatics.
- Background in data analysis/science in computer intensive and operations oriented biomedical research

The group brings a wide range of professional skills and experience, which harmonises well with the expressed expectations.



3 Working plan

Depending on the results of the previous discussion, concrete work packages will have to be agreed on the time axis. It is important to use cooperation as far as possible. In the field of literacy, for example, it is advisable to work closely with the corresponding ECAS working group.

4 Ideas for other people to engage

Here the possibility should be opened up to consult other expertise and experts, be it in core statistical areas on COVID-19 or on topics of communication or (social) media.

5 Role allocation, chairmanship

All members of the working group are expected to participate actively in and contribute to the work of the group (or its sub-groups). However, some volunteers will be needed to take on the role of coordination and facilitation and to keep the work on a dynamic path throughout the summer months.

6 Next meeting

Depending on the outcome of the discussion, a decision will have to be taken as to when and how to schedule the next meeting (or meetings) in July.