Tracking COVID-19

By Chuck Dinerstein, MD, MBA — April 4, 2020

There are several online trackers for the pandemic — many with very thoughtful infographics, combining illustration and information. One of the newer and better ones is The Upshot Coronavirus tracker from the New York Times.

Image courtesy of Pete Linforth on PIxabay [1]

One of the newer ones, at least for me, is the NY Times Upshot Corona tracker, which can be found here [2].

Just a few suggestions. Skip looking at the cumulative data, while they give you a sense of the scale, they do not tell you whether things are getting better or worse. For that, you need to look at the daily growth charts – the ones that are showing the rate of change. Flattening the curve requires the rate of change to go to zero and then hopefully negative.

COVID-19 deaths occur 5 to 14 days after diagnosis and hospitalization, they are a lagging indicator, so keep that in mind. The number of new cases will peak before the deaths. Finally, look at the new cases per population graph. Here you can see the information “normalized” for the population; here, you understand that New Orleans is faring worse than NYC.

Shout out to the NYT; this is excellent journalism.