

1.6 million French may be infected with virus: doctors' union

April 9 2020



Coronavirus. Credit: European Centers for Disease Control

More than 1.6 million of France's 67 million people may have been infected with the new coronavirus to date, according to a projection by general practitioners' union MG France, based on doctors' reports.

The union said in a statement that 2,048 members from around the

country who had participated in an [online survey](#) reported seeing 56,154 people with coronavirus symptoms between March 17 and April 3.

Extrapolating from these numbers, it estimated that 1.67 million people in France had been infected with the virus over this period.

This would represent nearly 2.5 percent of the population.

"Obviously, this is an extrapolation," MG France president Jacques Battistoni said at a press conference, adding the projection was based solely on people with symptoms—not asymptomatic carriers of the virus.

"But it does give an idea of the order of magnitude," he said.

By Wednesday, France's coronavirus death toll stood at 10,869, with 7,148 people in [intensive care](#) and 82,048 confirmed cases.

The country's [health authorities](#) have not published any official infection numbers as only a small number of people are actually tested for the virus.

Jean-Francois Delfraissy, who leads the coronavirus science council advising the government, told France Info Wednesday that a campaign of testing among the general population in eastern France suggested the infected population was smaller than expected, "possibly in the order of 10 to 15 percent."

The World Health Organization says the transmission rate of COVID-19—the number of people an infected individual infects in turn—is thought to be between 2.0 and 2.5 if social distancing measures are not applied.

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