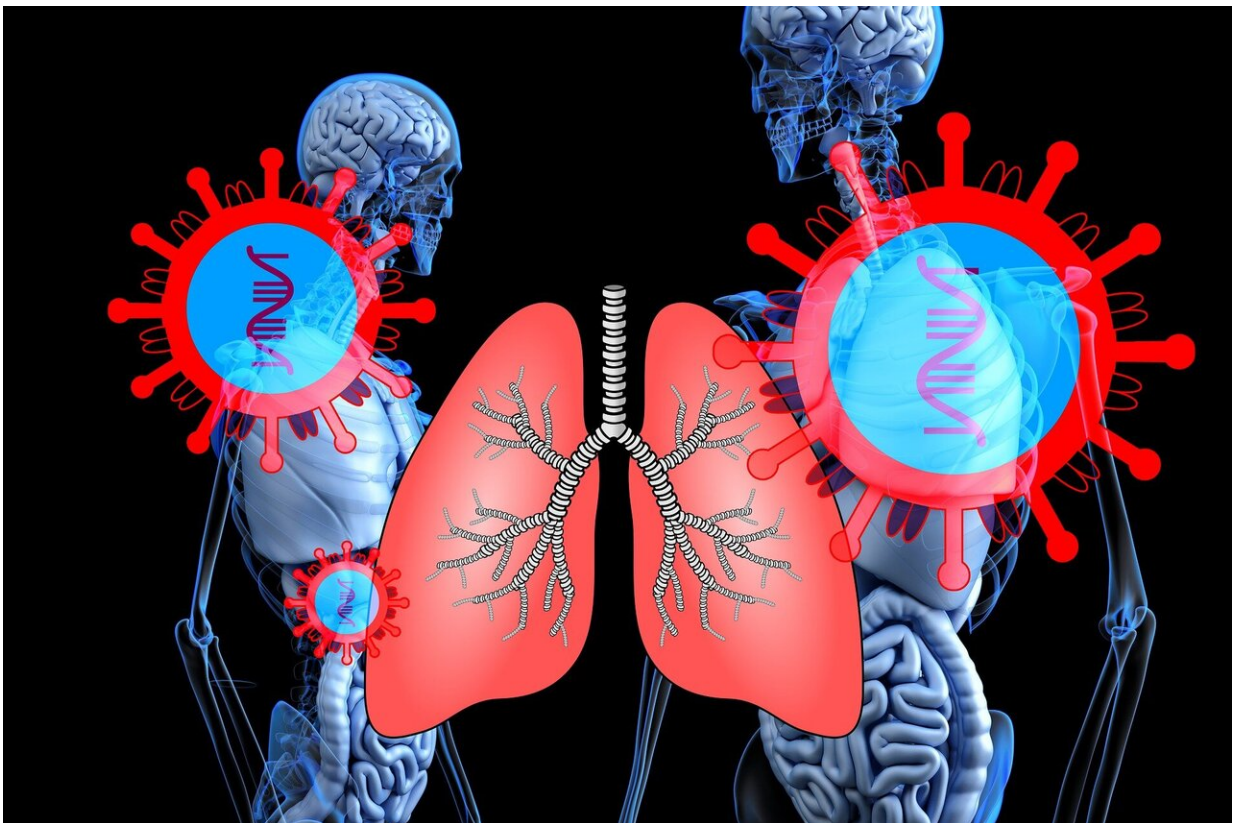


Spain to track mobile phones in virus fight, pharmacists seek help

April 2 2020



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Spain's coronavirus death toll surged past 10,000 on Thursday after a record 950 deaths in 24 hours, with the number of confirmed cases passing the 110,000 mark.

The country said it plans to use [mobile phone data](#) to track people's movements during a nationwide lockdown in place to try to curb the spread of COVID-19 while pharmacists asked the government for [protective gear](#) to prevent getting the disease.

The following are the latest developments in the pandemic in the country with the world's second highest death toll after Italy:

Mobile phone tracking

The Spanish government said it would use mobile phone location data to track people's movements and see how closely a nationwide lockdown is being respected.

"The goal is to analyse the effect which the (confinement) measures have had on people's movements, and see if people's movements across the land are increasing or decreasing," the government said in a statement.

Dubbed "DataCovid", the study will be carried out by national statistics institute INE with the cooperation of the country's main telecoms operators, it said.

The government said all the data it receives from the operators will be scrubbed of any personally identifiable information and will be completely anonymous, in line with the country's privacy laws.

Spain, a nation of around 47 million residents, imposed a nationwide lockdown on March 14 to fight the coronavirus, with people allowed out only to go to work, buy food, seek medical care and briefly walk their dog.

Restrictions have since been tightened, with non-essential workers asked

to stay at home from March 30.

Pharmacists seek aid

The head of college of pharmacists in the Madrid region, the worst-hit area of Spain, asked the government to supply pharmacy workers with protective gear like face masks in the wake of the death of at least five pharmacists from the virus.

About 270 pharmacists are in quarantine in the region because they have symptoms of the disease, forcing the temporary closure of dozens of pharmacies, Luis Gonzalez said during an interview with private television Telecinco.

"All I ask is that we please be sent medical supplies as soon as possible. We are also [health care workers](#), we are on the front lines of the fight, we are working with the public," he said.

"We are not seeking subsidies, we are not asking for economic aid, we only ask for protective gear...so we can continue providing our service, so no more pharmacies close."

Supermarket workers flash mob

About half a dozen supermarket workers sang and danced in the middle of a Madrid street along to the tune of "La Bomba" by Argentine dance music group King Africa to cheer up their neighbours who are confined to their homes.

The group—which remained a [safe distance](#) from each other as is recommended to prevent the spread of the [coronavirus](#)—clapped and raised their hands in the air as people looked on from their verandas,

according to a video posted on [social media](#) on Wednesday which has since gone viral.

At one point a police car drove by along the otherwise deserted street and briefly played its siren in an apparent sign of approval.

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