

Study shows a low prevalence of the coronavirus in Estonia

May 15 2020



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The results of a study conducted by the University of Tartu on the prevalence of the coronavirus were presented to the Government Committee responsible for the emergency situation on Tuesday. The results from the second week of the study continue to confirm the low prevalence of the virus in Estonia.

In two weeks, based on [random selection](#), a total of 6,024 adult residents have been interviewed and 4,728 tested in the course of the study. A total of 12 cases of the coronavirus have been identified, of which seven had been diagnosed with the virus prior to the study and six had recovered by the time of the study.

The results allow researchers to conclude that the infection is not widely spread in the society, and that the prevalence of the coronavirus remained stable over the study period. The researchers consider the gradual easing of restrictions justified.

"We will continue our successful cooperation with the researchers of the University of Tartu, whose study helps us assess the prevalence of the virus in the society. This will be even more important in two weeks, when we can evaluate the impact of the easing of restrictions that come into force this week on the wider spread of the infection," said Prime Minister Jüri Ratas.

The [prime minister](#) pointed out that yesterday, another group of researchers from the University of Tartu started work on an antibody-based seroepidemiological study in Saaremaa and Öismäe to help estimate the number of people who have been exposed to the coronavirus. "The work of the researchers is extremely important for us to be prepared for the second wave of the virus outbreak as soon as possible and to be able to respond to it promptly and efficiently," said Ratas.

In the second week of the study, 3,135 interviews were conducted and 2,495 adult residents were tested. The testing revealed eight cases of the coronavirus; six of the infected persons had been diagnosed with the virus prior to the study. The results of the first week were retroactively supplemented with 226 tests, one of them positive.

Professor Ruth Kalda, the head of the study of the University of Tartu, explained that when assessing the actual prevalence of the virus, it must be considered that six infected persons had battled the disease in March or early April and were currently considered healthy. Thus, only half of the positive cases were at risk of spreading the infection at the time of the study.

"As we can say on the basis of the first two waves that the prevalence of the virus in Estonia is low at the moment, we can take a two-week break and then see whether the opening of shopping centres has an impact on the spread of the virus. If necessary, we will conduct another wave of the study before Midsummer's Day and if the epidemiological situation is stable, we will continue monitoring the spread of the [virus](#) in autumn," said Kalda.

The next wave of the study is scheduled to take place from 22 May to 28 May, i.e. almost two weeks after the partial reopening of shopping centres.

Provided by Estonian Research Council

Citation: Study shows a low prevalence of the coronavirus in Estonia (2020, May 15) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-05-prevalence-coronavirus-estonia.html>

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