

# Polish hospitals struggle with surge of virus patients

April 5 2021, by Rafal Niedzielski

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A health worker carries medication inside the Intensive Care Unit at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Monday March 26, 2021. Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks. Tougher new pandemic restrictions were ordered in Poland for a two-week period surrounding Easter in order to slow down the infection rate. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)

Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks.

Tougher new pandemic restrictions were ordered in Poland for a two-week period surrounding Easter in order to slow down the infection rate. The country hit new records of over 35,000 daily infections on two recent days, and deaths have been in the hundreds each day.

The aim of the new restrictions was to prevent large gatherings over the long weekend culminating with Easter Monday. Meanwhile, the government is also trying to speed up the country's vaccine rollout, but the pressure on the country's hospitals is still relentless.

On Easter Sunday, [coronavirus](#) patients filled almost all of the 120 beds at the County Hospital of Bochnia, 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of the southern city of Krakow.

"It is a difficult situation, because there are a lot of patients," said Bozena Gicala, a nurse treating COVID-19 patients who spoke to Associated Press reporters visiting the hospital.

She said the support of her colleagues was critical in managing the unprecedented situation.

Another nurse, Ewa Ptak, said she had COVID-19 herself and is on a mission to help those who are suffering more than she did.



Paramedics arrive with a patient suffering from COVID-19 at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021. Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks. Tougher new pandemic restrictions were ordered in Poland for a two-week period surrounding Easter in order to slow down the infection rate. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)

"Thank God I went without a hospital and I was fine. But I know what it is and I just want to help people," Ptak said.

One patient, 82-year-old Edward Szumanski, voiced concerns about how some people still refuse to see the virus that has killed over 2.8 million people worldwide as a threat. Poland has seen about 55,000 of those

deaths.

"The disease is certainly there and it is very serious. Those who have not been through it, those who do not have it in their family, may be deluding themselves, but the reality is different," he said.

Szumanski said he is also worried that ICU spaces in hospitals could soon run out and that more people will die. There have been warnings and reports in Polish media about how the nation's health care system is reaching a [breaking point](#).

The hospital's medical director, Jaroslaw Gucwa, said the pandemic has been made worse by those who believe it is all a hoax and have shunned masks or ignored restrictions.



A medical worker attends to a patient suffering from COVID-19 inside the isolation area in the emergency ward at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021. Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks. Tougher new pandemic restrictions were ordered in Poland for a two-week period surrounding Easter in order to slow down the infection rate. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)



An image of the bandaged wrists of a patient suffering from COVID-19 in a ward at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)



A health worker passes by a patient suffering from COVID-19 in a corridor at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021. Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks. Tougher new pandemic restrictions were ordered in Poland for a two-week period surrounding Easter in order to slow down the infection rate. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)



A patient suffering from COVID-19 lays in a bed at a general ward that has been converted to a COVID ward at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)



Health workers wearing personal protective equipment prepare food for patients suffering from COVID-19 at the general ward that has been converted to a COVID ward in the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021.(AP Photo/Omar Marques)





A nurse attends to patients with respiratory problems at the emergency ward of the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021. Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks. Tougher new pandemic restrictions were ordered in Poland for a two-week period surrounding Easter in order to slow down the infection rate. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)



Medical Director, Jaroslaw Gucwa speaks during an interview inside the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021. Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks. Gucwa, said the pandemic has been made worse by those who believe it is all a hoax and have shunned masks or ignored restrictions. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)



Paramedics arrive with a patient suffering from COVID-19 at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021.(AP Photo/Omar Marques



A critically ill patient lays in bed in the Intensive Care Unit at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Monday March 26, 2021. Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks. Tougher new pandemic restrictions were ordered in Poland for a two-week period surrounding Easter in order to slow down the infection rate. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)



Medical workers wearing personal protective equipment transfer a patient suffering of COVID-19 to another ward at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021.(AP Photo/Omar Marques)



Health workers attend to a critical patient in the Intensive care Unit at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Monday March 26, 2021. Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)



A medical worker prepares medicine for a patient suffering of COVID-19 inside the isolation area of the emergency ward at the hospital in Bochnia, Poland, Sunday, April 4, 2021. (AP Photo/Omar Marques)

The [hospital](#) is so stressed that it is discharging patients who still need more treatment "in order to make room for the next ones in a serious condition. This is not a normal situation," he added.

Poland registered 204 new COVID-19 deaths on Easter Sunday, but the numbers in recent days have been much higher, mostly around 500 per day, On Wednesday, they hit a high for this year of 653.

"The hardest part is when you intubate your friends and leave them in intensive care," Gucwa said.

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