

India slams WHO over report claiming 4 million COVID deaths

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India has sharply criticised a forthcoming World Health Organization study which reportedly claims coronavirus killed four million people nationally, the latest analysis suggesting a significant undercount of the

pandemic's death toll.

The New York Times reported last week that New Delhi had stalled the study's release after disputing that India's true fatality count was eight times higher than official figures.

The conclusion matches similar figures by The Lancet last month and a February study in the journal Science that calculated a COVID [death toll](#) of at least 3.2 million.

But India's [health ministry](#) said in a weekend statement that the WHO's [mathematical modelling](#) of the pandemic was "questionable" and "statistically unproven".

Several concerns were raised to the global health body over the report, including what the ministry said was a "peculiar" assumption of a relationship between [lower temperatures](#) and monthly deaths.

India had shared its misgivings through several formal communications and meetings since last November, according to the ministry.

"A satisfactory response is yet to be received from WHO," it added.

The WHO was not immediately available for comment.

Indian officials have previously disputed the methodology behind The Lancet and Science studies that also found vastly higher death tolls.

Its official figures show 520,000 COVID deaths nationally, which still accounts for the world's largest single-country toll after the United States and Brazil.

India was battered by a devastating COVID outbreak last year that saw

thousands of people dying each day at its peak, overwhelming hospitals and crematoriums.

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