

#virus

Data Science

Coronavirus Model Update

In *Modeling Coronavirus Progress*, January 31, 2020, we discussed how epidemiologists model outbreaks and used a simple version of the standard SEIR model to provide thresholds to help investors translate daily announced counts of cases in China into a gauge of whether containment efforts were curtailing the spread.

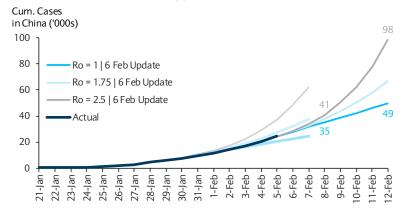
The key model parameter on which we are focused is the effective reproductive rate (Ro, the number of new infections for each existing one). If the data are consistent with Ro > 1, it implies exponential growth in the number of cases and an outbreak that is not yet on the path to containment. Data suggesting Ro < 1 indicate that measures have been effective in cutting off new infections and can eventually be relaxed as exposed people leave the window of time when they could be infectious.

Our initial model fit suggested a Ro of 2.31. From that, we created projections consistent with some critical values of Ro. Since then, the data have tracked above the Ro = 1 line, but below the Ro=1.75 line (Figure 1), suggesting progress but also the need for incremental control measures.

Because time spent on a given path renders the prior projections less meaningful, we re-fit the model to include data that have arrived since our initial publication (which represents a period after the most significant containment steps had been launched). We re-project from the current level to provide a new set of thresholds (Figure 1).

 From current levels, our new Ro = 1 scenario implies the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting 35k cases in China in their Saturday, 8 February, situation update, and 49k by Wednesday, 12 February. If case growth remains above that line, containment measures are still likely to need to be expanded, rather than reduced.

FIGURE 1 Updated Case Growth Numbers Suggest



Source: WHO, Barclays Research

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Special Report

Research 6 February 2020

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