

Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro

Figure RJ.1 – Accumulated number of deaths and deaths per capita for Rio de Janeiro and the seven other states surveyed.

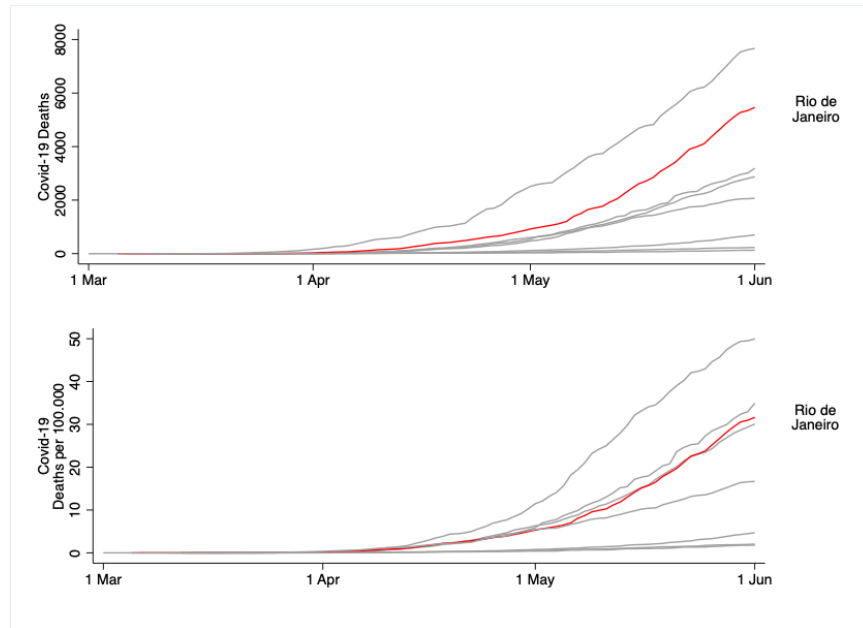
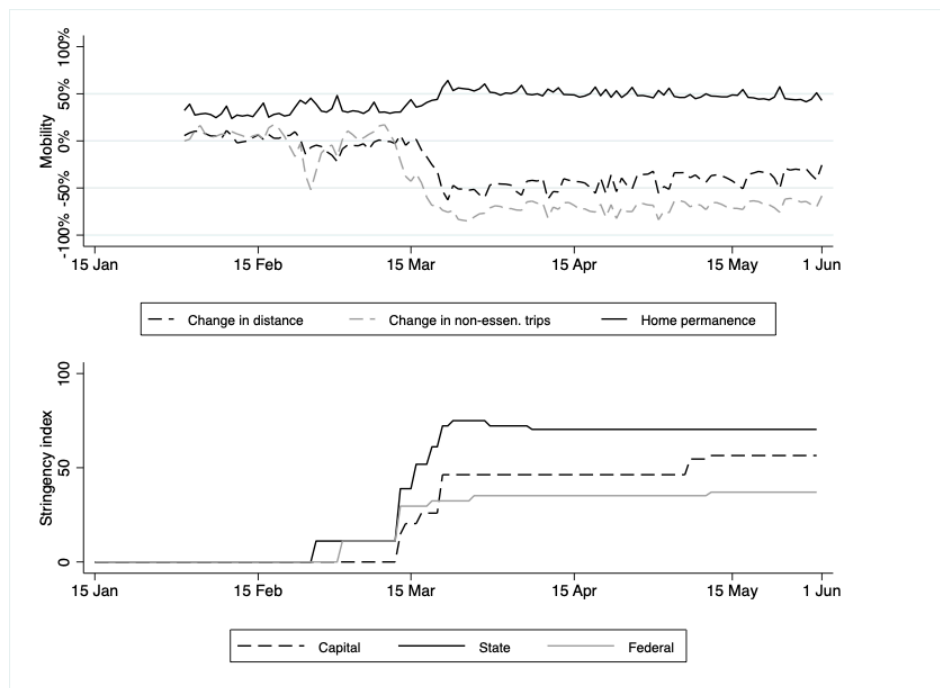


Figure RJ.2 – Mobility indicators for Rio de Janeiro state and the OxCGR stringency index for different levels of government.



State and City Government Responses

On 26 February, on the same day that the first Covid-19 case was confirmed in Brazil, the official social media pages of Rio de Janeiro's state government and the state health secretary announced that there were no cases in Rio and that the state government already had a contingency plan. The first confirmed case in the state was on 5 March. The first two deaths occurred on 19 March. Since then, these numbers have increased fast. There were 460.9 cases and 44.4 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants registered in the state, as of 15 June.

In mid-March, the state government launched an official 'hot site' with public information about the virus. Later in March, the government of Rio de Janeiro city, the capital of the state of the same name, launched its "Rio contra o Corona" campaign, also with a dedicated website

Acknowledging the risks that the state was facing, on March 13 the governor of Rio de Janeiro published a decree with the first set of government responses. All classes at schools and universities were suspended, and public events and activities with gatherings of people (such as concerts, fairs, and sporting events) were cancelled. On March 16, the state government declared a public emergency and recommended the closing of gyms, bars, restaurants, cinemas and tourist attractions across the state. As of March 19, commercial establishments and non-essential services, including shopping centres, were required to close their doors to the public, but bars and restaurants were allowed to continue operating at up to 30% of capacity. Small shops selling food and drinks, including butchers and convenience stores, have been allowed to provide take-away services. Three days later, the governor closed the state borders and suspended intercity buses. These policies were initially put in place for 15 days, but were extended several times and remained in force until 5 June.

The state government also introduced temperature checks of all passengers arriving on international flights into Galeão International Airport.

The state of Rio de Janeiro has had no curfews nor strict, state-wide stay-at-home requirements. But the state government has recommended staying at home and that people avoid going to beaches or visiting lakes and rivers. On 13 March, the mayor of Rio de Janeiro city recommended that those in high-risk groups should remain indoors, and this advice was later extended to all of the city's inhabitants. The city government dovetailed off state policy by cancelling events, and by requiring schools and commercial establishments to close their doors. It ruled that buses should only operate with seated passengers. On 23 April, the mayor of Rio issued a decree that required people to wear masks when outdoors in the city.

Even though the capital has not adopted a city-wide requirement to stay-at-home, roadblocks have been introduced in neighbourhoods with high rates of infection, including the regions of Bangu and Campo Grande.

From 6 June, the state government started a gradual process of easing closure and containment restrictions, allowing shopping centres, bars, restaurants, and tourist attractions (including Christ the Redeemer and the Sugar Loaf cable car) to reopen at reduced hours and at half capacity. Religious organisations were once again allowed to run services, and beaches, parks, and lakes were reopened for exercise. In order to be allowed to reopen, establishments of all kinds had to ensure a minimum of 1 metre distance between people on their premises, as well as supply hand sanitiser and require all employees and customers to wear face masks at all times. Schools and some workplaces (including cinemas, gyms, and theatres), however, are expected to remain closed at least until 21 June, as of 15 June.

Rio de Janeiro Survey Results

The city of Rio de Janeiro has 6.7 million inhabitants, with 15% of the population over 60 years of age. Its HDI is 0.799, making it the 8th most developed Brazilian capital (out of 27).

Only 12% of respondents in Rio de Janeiro stayed at home without leaving in a two-week period between 22 April and 13 May. Those who left home did so less often than every three days, on average (or on 4.6 days, on average, during the fortnight). More than three quarters of people in Rio (78%) went out for essential activities, such to the supermarket, the pharmacy, or bank. Just under a quarter (24%) left home to go to work (compared to 67% who did so in February). Those who left home during this period estimated that 75% of people they saw on the street were wearing masks. In Rio, 6% of people said they had been tested, and 1% stated that they had tried to get tested but had not managed met with success. Eleven percent of the sample reported having had at least one Covid-19 symptom in the week prior to interview.

Respondents who had visited hospitals and supermarkets during the fortnight prior to interview reported finding it easy to wash their hands with soap or alcohol gel if they wished, that employees in these places were wearing masks, and that measures had been put in place to help people stay two metres apart (for example while they queued or waited in a seating area). People going out to work in Rio said that distancing measures were less widespread in the workplace: 62% of them said that such measures had been introduced where they work. A quarter of respondents used public transportation in the prior two weeks, whereas 34% claimed to have used public transport in February. Just 16% of people said that reduced public transport services prevented them from going about their intended activities.

Knowledge about the symptoms of Covid-19 was similar among Rio's residents to the average across the eight cities surveyed. The average score for respondents from Rio was 83 out of 100. Knowledge about the meaning and practices associated with self-isolation on average received a score of 48 out of 100, which is slightly higher than the mean across the eight cities. (See the results section of the main paper for an explanation of these scores.)

The main sources of information about Covid-19 for the residents of Rio de Janeiro were TV news shows (60% of Cariocas said that they received most of their information about the disease from this source), and newspapers and newspapers websites (18%). Sixty-one percent of people stated that they had seen a public information campaign, with 82% of these people reporting seeing one on TV, 33% in newspapers, 33% on Facebook or Twitter, 27% on blogs, and 24% on WhatsApp. More than half of those who had seen a public information campaign (52%) recalled seeing a state-government campaign, 46% reported seeing a federal-government campaign, and 34%, a city-government one.

Around 49% of those surveyed in Rio said that their income had reduced since February, and nearly a third (30%) said they had lost at least half of their income. Six percent of the sample said they had lost all income since February.

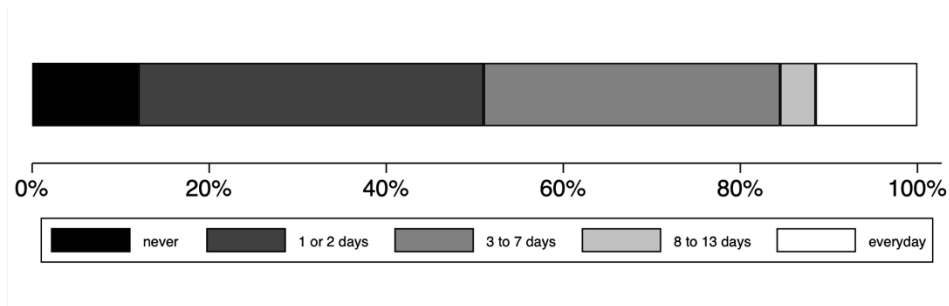
Respondents in Rio were not confident that the public health system can handle the outbreak. Only 16% of people believed that the regional public health system is either well prepared (9%) or very well prepared (7%) for the pandemic. Eighty-six percent of people said that they were either worried (11%) or very worried (75%) about shortages of medical equipment, hospital beds, or doctors.

A large majority of the population in Rio (81%) considers Covid-19 to be more serious than the common flu. At the time of the survey, there was appetite for stricter response policies: public policy responses to Covid-19 were considered adequate by only 41% of respondents, whereas 51% considered them to be less stringent than necessary. Only 9% believed they were too stringent. The average time that people in Rio estimated it will take for all measures to be lifted was 4.4 months, which is slightly lower than the average across the eight cities surveyed (4.6 months). Just 14% of respondents in Rio believed the policies would be removed in one go.

This summary is part of a broader study about Brazil's Covid-19 response policies. Please visit <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/brazils-covid-19-policy-response> for the full report: Petherick A., Goldszmidt R., Kira B. and L. Barberia. 'Do Brazil's COVID-19 government response measures meet the WHO's criteria for policy easing?' Blavatnik School of Government Working Paper, June 2020.

Figure RJ.3 – Social distancing, knowledge and testing in Rio de Janeiro.

A. Number of days that respondents left home in the previous two weeks.



B. Testing, knowledge, mask use, and reasons for leaving home.

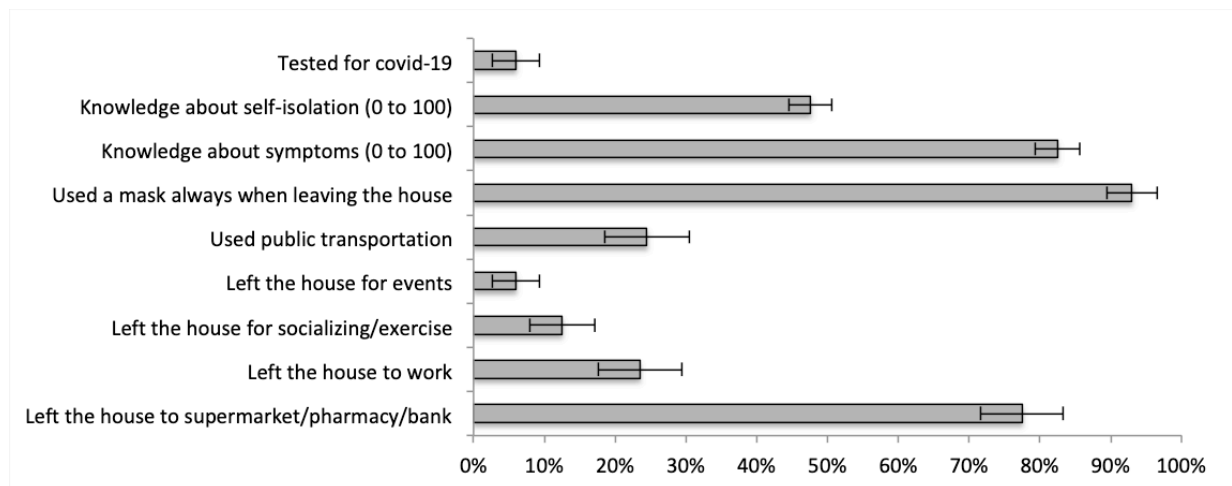


Figure RJ.4 - Hand hygiene, distancing and mask use.

