

Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker

Brazil's Subnational Policy Response

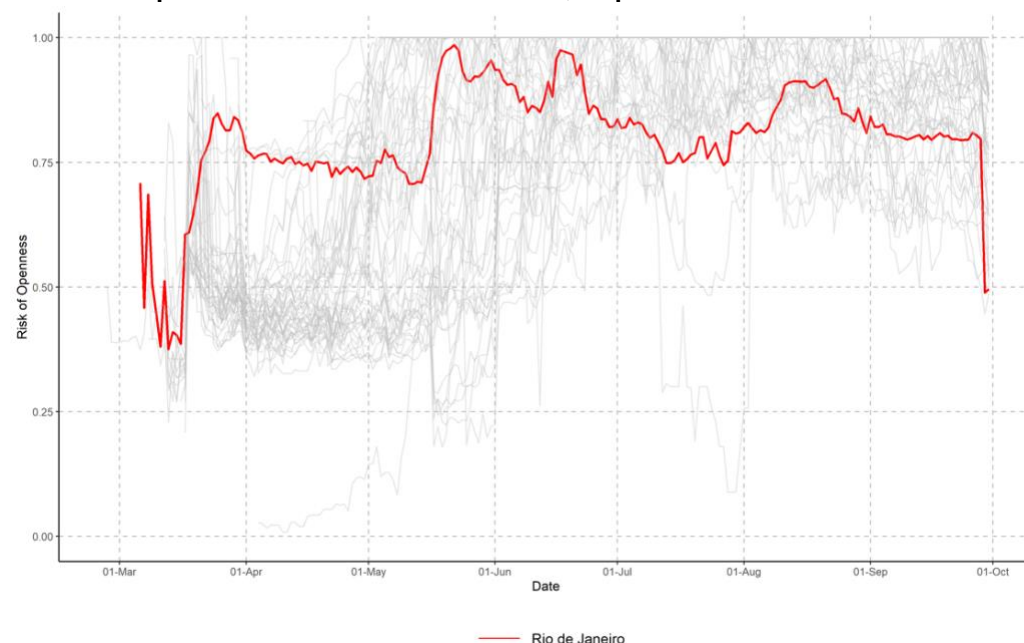
Policy note – Rio de Janeiro/Rio de Janeiro



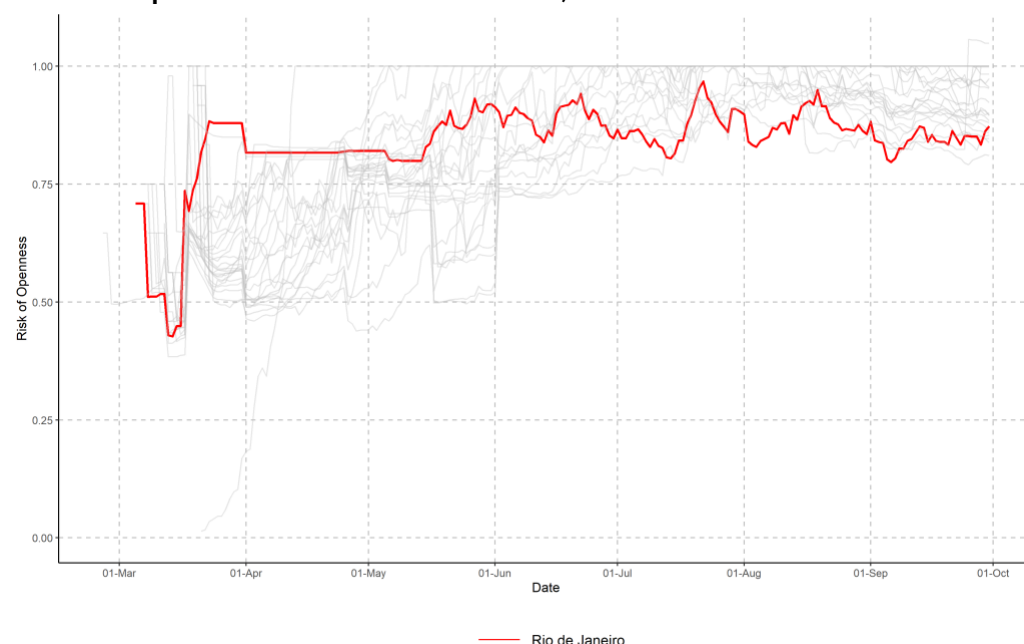
Region	Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro
Period	June to October 2020
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Figure RJ.1 – Risk of Openness Index (RoOI)

A. Risk of Openness Index in Rio de Janeiro, capital



B. Risk of Openness Index in Rio de Janeiro, state



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State and city government responses

Figure 1 shows how the Risk of Openness (RoOI) went up over the reported period and, despite a fall in the capital (likely to be caused by lack of updated epidemiological data), RoOI remained very high in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

The period between June and September saw a gradual easing of measures against Covid-19 in the city of Rio de Janeiro, guided by decisions by the state and municipal governments. The most significant changes in the city of Rio de Janeiro are associated with the economic recovery plan announced by the city on the 10 June. According to the plan, all activities must follow the so-called 'Golden Rules' of the municipal government, which are general measures of hygiene and social distancing. Changes between stages of the plan are to be based on developments in health indicators, such as the number of cases and availability of hospital beds. In the first stage, individual sports activities were allowed on the beaches, as well as the opening of decoration stores and car dealerships. Although state policy authorised the reopening of a series of non-essential services as of 6 June, in the capital reopening of businesses followed the municipal plan. Shopping centres in Rio de Janeiro only resumed operations when stage 2 measures were brought forward to 11 June, with reduced capacity and restricted hours of operation. On 27 June, high street stores and beauty salons started to operate in the city of Rio, measures that were planned for stage 3, but were anticipated.

Until 18 June, blockades were active in some streets and neighbourhoods of the city. After that date, only the blockades in Bangu and Campo Grande, in the West Zone, and in the commercial area of Avenida Sargento de Milícias, in Pavuna, continued. Restrictions on intercity and interstate transport to states with confirmed cases of Covid-19, which were in effect until then, were removed as of 19 June. On that date, interstate transportation was authorised to resume activities, but without exceeding 50% of its capacity. Most of the intercity transport, with the exception of the ferry line Charitas that connects the capital to Niterói, has also returned to operation. In modes of transportation operated by the municipal government, the transportation of passengers standing up is forbidden.

As of 19 June, the state government determined that religious activities could be resumed, following hygiene measures, as could bars and restaurants. The latter, however, only received approval from the municipality to open on 2 July, together with fitness centres, marking the start of stage 3A. Stage 3B of the municipality plan began on 10 July, and did not bring any changes to retail or hospitality sectors. However, parks and squares were reopened, as well as craft fairs and avenues that are open to pedestrians only on Sundays and holidays.

On 17 July, as part of stage 4, tourist attractions reopened, limited to a maximum of one-third of their occupation capacities. Street commerce was allowed to reopen, but only on Saturdays. High street shops, commercial centres and shopping malls are now able to operate at two thirds of their capacity, instead of the one-third of the previous stage. The city announced the creation of 'micropoles' to facilitate inspection and social distancing, on streets Olegário Maciel, in Barra da Tijuca; Dias Ferreira, in Leblon; at Nelson Mandela Square, in Botafogo; and in Varnhagem Square,

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in Tijuca. These areas now have specific entry and exit points. Group sports that allow social distancing were also allowed to restart on beaches, but only on weekdays.

On 1 August, the stage 5 of the reopening began. On the beaches, the municipal government allowed citizens to swim in the sea, but without lingering on the sand. The opening hours of restaurants and bars were extended, and shopping centres are back to their opening times prior to the pandemic. Finally, on 1 September, the first part of the final reopening stage, 6A, began. It was initially scheduled for mid-August but was postponed by the municipal government. Museums, art galleries, amusement parks, libraries and cultural centres were allowed to open. Children's party houses and children's entertainment areas in shopping centres were also able to resume activities. This stage remains in effect until the end of September, with continuing restrictions on the presence of the public in sports and on the beaches.

The reopening of educational establishments in Rio de Janeiro involved by judicial conflicts. In August, the city announced that face-to-face teaching in private schools could return voluntarily for a few grades, but that decision was overturned by a court order. On October 1st, the Rio de Janeiro Court of Justice (TJRJ) reversed that decision, allowing the opening of private schools. At the state level, the government authorised the resumption of face-to-face education in September. This decision was initially suspended by the Regional Labour Court (TRT), but the suspension was later revoked by the same court. Since 14 September, private schools in the state of Rio de Janeiro have been able to open their doors. This opening can only take place in regions of the state categorised as areas with low risk of contagion for at least the two weeks prior to the reopening. This was the case in the capital, where some private schools did reopen. However, the City Hall reiterated that the previous decision of the TJRJ was still in effect, and therefore the reopening of schools continued to be suspended. Nonetheless, a few private schools continue to be open.

As of 23 April, wearing masks outside the home has become mandatory, as determined by the municipal government. Not following this rule can lead to fines. On 3 June, the state government passed a decree requiring mandatory use of masks across the state. Agglomerations, defined by the city as gatherings of 10 or more people with no apparent reason, remain prohibited for the whole period. To reinforce this rule, DiskAgglomeração, a telephone number that citizens can call to report such gatherings, remains active. Any events with presence of the public were also prohibited.

In the city, there is no contact tracing policy, be it organised by the state or municipal governments. PCR testing follows the guidelines of the state, with tests being performed only in symptomatic cases in hospitals and healthcare facilities, to be ordered by health professionals. Information campaigns continued to be carried out, both by the state and municipal governments. From mid-June, however, there was a change in tone of campaigns, which accompanied the easing of restrictions, representing a call for the population to participate in the economic recovery. For example, the capital city government stopped using the hashtag #FiqueEmCasa (stay at home) at the beginning of the month.

Figure RJ.2 – Accumulated number of deaths and deaths per capita for Rio de Janeiro and the eight other states surveyed

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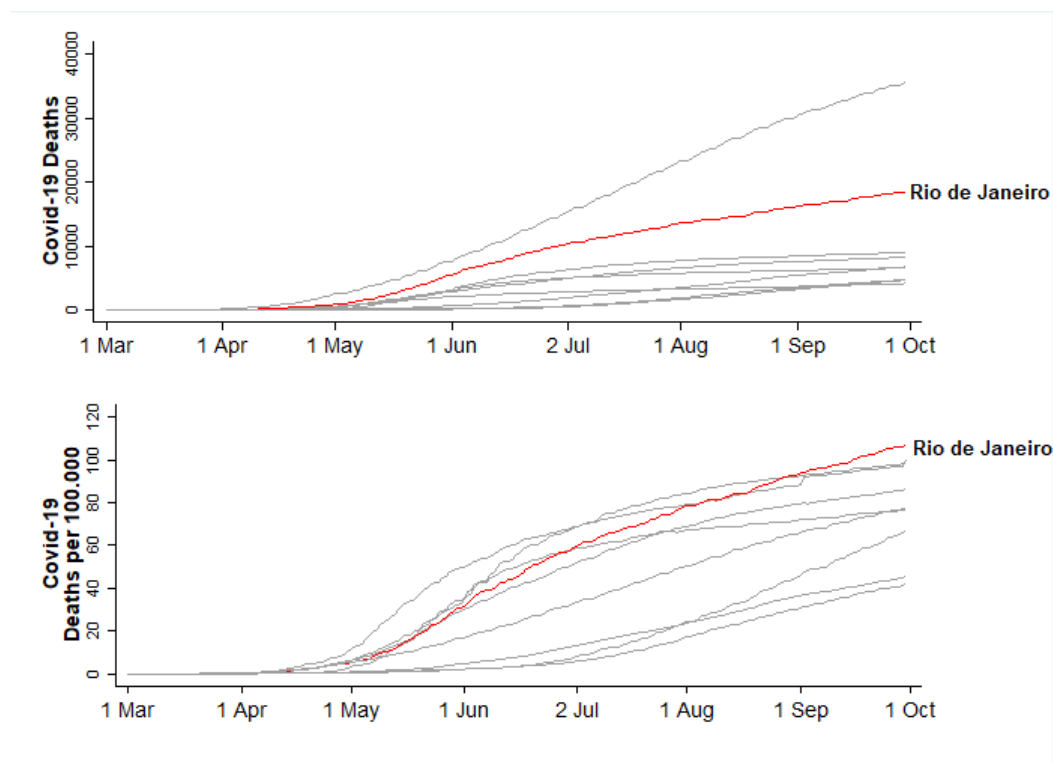
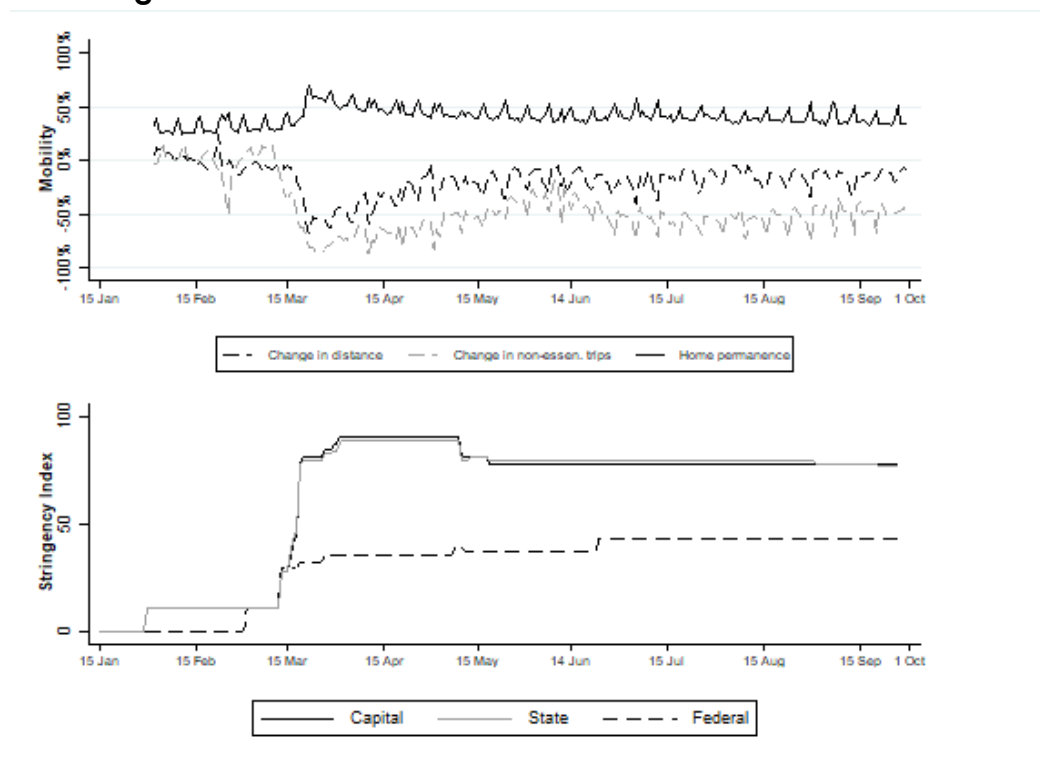


Figure RJ.3 – Mobility indicators for Rio de Janeiro state and the OxCGR stringency index for different levels of government



Rio de Janeiro Survey Results

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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, compared to 7% in a two-week period between 13 July and 18 September. In the first period, those who left home did so less often than every three days, on average (or on 4.6 days, on average, during the fortnight). In the second period, in turn, those who left home did so on 7.3 days, on average, during the fortnight. More than three quarters of first-round respondents in Rio (78%) went out for essential activities, such as 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). In the second round, 76% of citizens went out for essential activities, while 34% left home to go to work (compared to 62% who did so in February). Those who left home during the first period estimated that 75% of people they saw on the street were wearing masks, compared to 68% in the second round. In Rio, 6% of first-round respondents said they had been tested, compared to 20% of those in the second round. Only 1% of respondents in the second round stated that they had tried to get tested but had not managed to meet with success, compared to none in the first round. Fourteen percent of the first sample and 24% of the second reported having had at least one Covid-19 symptom in the week prior to interview.

A quarter of respondents used public transportation in the two weeks prior to the interviews, which took place between 6 and 27 May, whereas 43% used it in the two weeks before the second round of the interview, which took place between 27 July and 2 October. Furthermore, 64% of those in the first round claimed to have used public transport in February, compared to 68% in the second. Just 16% and 14% of people in the first and second round, respectively, 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 and 79 out of 100 in the first and second round, respectively. Knowledge about the meaning and practices associated with self-isolation on average received a score of 48 and 47 out of 100 in the first and second round, respectively, which is slightly higher than the mean across the nine 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% and 61% of Cariocas in the first and second round, respectively, said that they received most of their information about the disease from this source), and newspapers and newspapers websites (18% and 13% in the first and second round, respectively). In the first round, 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. Among respondents in the second round, 61% percent of people stated that they had seen a public information campaign, with 80% of these people reporting seeing one on TV, 17% in newspapers, 17% on Facebook or Twitter, 16% on blogs, and 10% on WhatsApp. In the first round, more than half of those in the first round who had seen a public information campaign (52%) recalled seeing a state-government campaign, 46% reported seeing a federal-government

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campaign, and 34% a city-government one. Among second-round respondents, 35% of those who had seen a public information campaign recalled seeing a state-government campaign, 56% a federal-government campaign, and 41% a city-government one.

In the first round, 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. In the second round, 42% claimed that their income had reduced since February, and 25% said they had lost at least half of their income. Four percent of the sample said they had lost all income since February.

First-round 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.

In the first round, a large majority of the population in Rio (81%) considered Covid-19 to be more serious than the common flu. In the second round, however, this number went down to 69%. At the time of the first-round 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. In the second round, the appetite for stricter response policies remained: public policy responses to Covid-19 were considered adequate by only 24% of respondents, whereas 29% considered them to be less stringent than necessary. Only 7% believed they were too stringent. The average time that people in Rio estimated it would take for all measures to be lifted was 4.4 months and 7.1 months in the first and second round, respectively, which is slightly lower than the average across the nine cities surveyed (4.6 months and 7.5 months in the first and second round, respectively). Just 14% of first-round respondents in Rio believed the policies would be removed in one go.

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Figure RJ.4 – Social distancing, knowledge and testing in Rio de Janeiro state

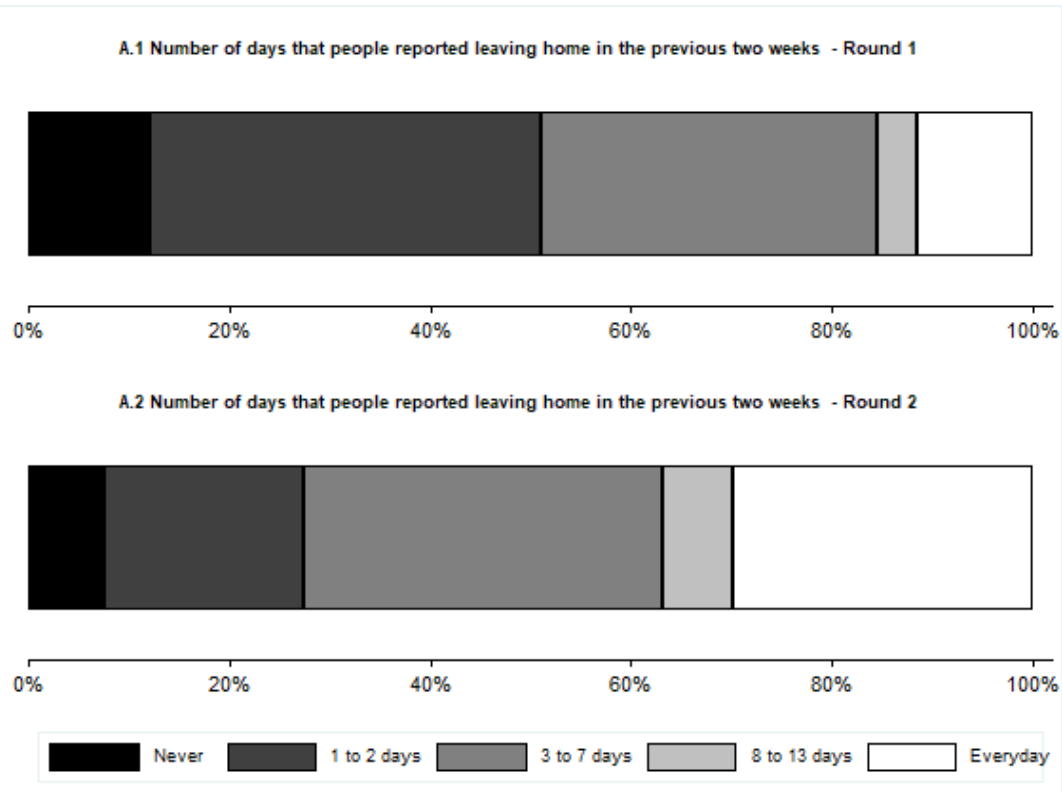
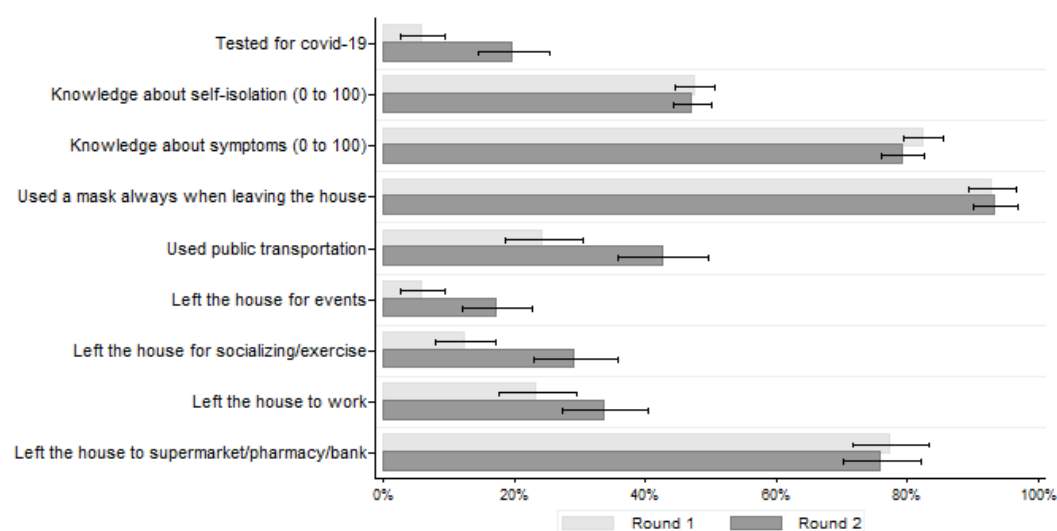


Figure RJ.5 – Testing, knowledge, mask use, and reasons for leaving home



Data available at: <https://github.com/OxCGRT/Brazil-covid-policy>