



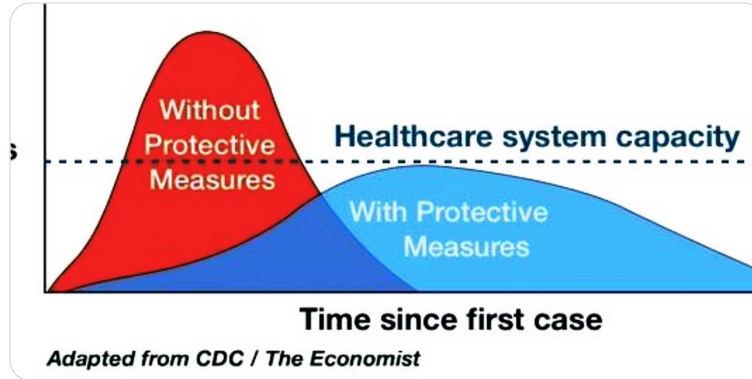
Carl T. Bergstrom @CT_Bergstrom

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1. A very short thread on the power of data graphics and scientific communication.

Roughly a week ago, some very smart person* sat down, drew this graph, and saved lives.

(*It's 2 AM. Without an economist subscription, I can't quickly discover whom. Maybe someone can help.)



1:50 AM · Mar 6, 2020

View Tweet analytics

9,160 Retweets 1,445 Quote Tweets 14.7K Likes



Reply



Carl T. Bergstrom @CT_Bergstrom · Mar 6, 2020

...

Replying to @CT_Bergstrom

2. This single picture explains the concept of *flattening the epidemic curve* to non-specialists without requiring any additional text. Looking at the picture, you can see that even if you don't reduce total cases, slowing down the rate of an epidemic can be critical.

11

350

2,207



Carl T. Bergstrom @CT_Bergstrom · Mar 6, 2020

...

3. There is a lot of complicated epidemiological modeling behind this idea, but this graphic strips all of that away, and discards irrelevant details to provide a straightforward story that people find easy to grasp at a glance.

It *simplifies* and *highlights* what matters.

6

185

1,694



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...

4. I've seldom seen a piece of sci-comm matter so much. We have an opportunity to flatten the #COVID19 #coronavirus epidemic curve by aggressive social distancing and other measures.

But people don't understand what the point is, if the virus is going to circulate broadly.

7

287

1,832



...



Carl T. Bergstrom  

· Mar 6, 2020



5. This graph provides the answer, powerfully and concisely.

And because of that, it has exploded across twitter and other media. I've used it myself a number of times. This graph is changing minds, and by changing minds, it is saving lives.

 6  186  1,376  



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6. So to the designer of the graph, I apologize for not attributing your work.

Still I hope you feel great pride that by sitting down for a few minutes or hours, and using your skills as a communicator to get this message across, you have literally saved lives.

Thank you.

 14  135  1,669  



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7. As a disinformation researcher I see so many downsides of tech. But this is the best of humanity.

Many have worked hard over decades to figure out how diseases spread and what we can do about it. Their work allows one person to understand, synthesize, and see how to convey...

 2  107  1,099  




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8. ...this understanding with a few pen-strokes. Because of our communication technology, others view this simple diagram, realize its value, and share with millions—who change their behavior based on what they now understand as well, slowing a deadly virus.

Lives are saved.

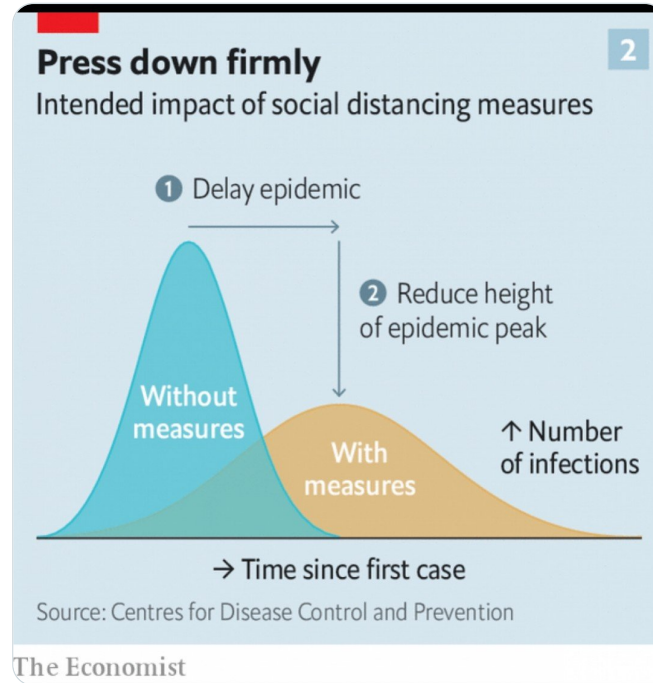
 1  100  837  



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9. Thank you to all identified the designer of the @TheEconomist graphic (below) as @_rospearce. Marvelous work.

I'd love to find the designer of the modified version. By adding the dashed line for healthcare capacity, that diagram stresses an important aspect of the story.



23 552 2,514



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10. Credit for the revised version goes to @drewaharris.

I hope that I do one thing in my career with as much positive impact as you did by creating and publicizing this graph.



Drew A. Harris @drewaharris · Mar 6, 2020

Replying to @j4cob @CT_Bergstrom and 2 others

Sorry. I posted the wrong link to the full resolution file. Try this.
drive.google.com/file/d/1YGTUc...

6 178 1,322

Note: I posted this thread to Twitter in the early hours on March 6th, 2020. In December 2022, I left Twitter in response to CEO Elon Musk's repeated attacks on public health and endorsements of medical disinformation. Thus my twitter account is currently disabled and locked. But after the New York Times named this one of "the 25 most important tweets" in the history of the platform in their story, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/02/10/opinion/twitter-all-time-tweets.html> , I felt it important to make this thread available in full. Those who followed me before I left the platform can see this content at https://twitter.com/CT_Bergstrom/status/1235865328074153986

-Carl Bergstrom