

# Rich nations see virus rates fall quicker—study

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Richer countries were more likely to see rates of COVID-19 fall faster during the first wave of the pandemic, according to new research published in the journal *Frontiers in Public Health*.

The study by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) professors Shahina Pardhan and Nick Drydakis examined [economic indicators](#) in 38 European countries, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, life expectancy, and public spending, and the number of new [coronavirus](#) cases per million of the population between 1 April and 31 May 2020, using data from Our World in Data based on the seven-day rolling average of new cases for each country.

A significant negative correlation was found between number of cases and GDP per capita across the two months. The study found that the country with the highest GDP per capita in Europe (Luxembourg) experienced the biggest fall in cases (271 per million of the population). The opposite was found for countries with lower GDP per capita, such as Ukraine (fell by one case per million) and Romania (fell by seven cases per million).

Researchers concluded that countries with higher GDP per capita were able to spend more on test and trace solutions, [public health](#) messaging and had economies that better facilitated home working than poorer nations. The UK recorded a reduction from 3,706 new cases on 1 April to 1,500 new cases on 31 May, a reduction of 20 cases per million of the population during this time.

Lead author Professor Shahina Pardhan, of ARU's School of Medicine, said, "Our study found a strong negative correlation between number of cases and GDP per capita. This is not only potentially down to the ability of wealthier nations to spend more on healthcare and prevention, but it is possible that suppressing the spread through lockdowns is more difficult to implement in [poorer countries](#) where there are a greater number of people working in sectors where manual labor is needed.

"COVID-19 is a global issue and has spread rapidly from country to country. It does not discriminate, and it is in everybody's best interests to ensure that poorer countries are given the assistance they need to fight this virus during this second wave and beyond."

**More information:** Shahina Pardhan et al, Associating the Change in New COVID-19 Cases to GDP per Capita in 38 European Countries in the First Wave of the Pandemic, *Frontiers in Public Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2020.582140](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.582140)

Provided by Anglia Ruskin University

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