

Majority of Russians Doubt Official Coronavirus Data – Poll

March 27, 2020



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A majority of Russians don't believe their country's official coronavirus data, according to a study [published](#) by the independent Levada Center pollster Thursday.

Russia has [reported](#) 840 cases of coronavirus and three deaths, a number that has drawn widespread skepticism as numbers in neighboring Europe have soared. This week, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin, who is leading the national coronavirus taskforce, warned President Vladimir Putin that official figures were likely underestimating the spread of the disease.

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Fifty-nine percent of Russian respondents said they don't believe the officially reported numbers, while 38% said they trust the authorities' information.

The number of Russians who are afraid of contracting the infection has significantly increased since February, Levada said. Forty-four percent of Russians now worry that they'll catch the virus compared to 30% of respondents last month.

Almost half of respondents (48%) said they think it's likely that Russia will see a nationwide coronavirus epidemic. About the same percentage — 47% — told the Levada Center that they think Russia's healthcare system can handle such an epidemic.

On Thursday, Moscow's chief infectious diseases specialist [said](#) that Russian doctors are preparing for an “explosive” escalation of the coronavirus situation across the country. The same day, the World Health Organization (WHO)'s representative to Russia [said](#) that the UN body has no reason to believe that the country is underreporting its data on the actual number of infections.

Levada conducted its survey among 1,624 respondents in 50 Russian regions from March 19-25.

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