The Moscow Times
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Moscow Risks New York-Level Coronavirus Outbreak, Expert Says

April 14, 2020

The Russian capital has reported 13,002 out of Russia's 21,102 coronavirus cases as of Tuesday, a fraction of the 106,763 confirmed cases and 7,349 deaths in New York City. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Similar population density means Russia's coronavirus outbreak could hit Moscow with the same intensity as it has hit New York City, the epicenter of the United States' outbreak, a top virologist has warned.

The Russian capital has reported 13,002 out of Russia's 21,102 coronavirus cases as of Tuesday, a fraction of the 106,763 confirmed cases and 7,349 deaths in New York City. Case numbers there skyrocketed after the city expanded testing capacity, virologist Sergei Netyosov said in an interview with Russia's health news website Reminder on Monday.

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"The overcrowding in New York, especially in Manhattan, is the same as inside Moscow's

Garden Ring. There’s very active contact between people: residents are used to going to cafes or restaurants two to three times a day,” Netyosov was quoted as saying.

“There are very many conditions for transmission, that’s why there’s an epidemiological rampage. We’ll have the same [coronavirus] picture, especially in Moscow. I strongly suspect this, although I don’t want to,” he added.

Netyosov is the Novosibirsk State University’s head of microbiology and virology lab and the former head of Vektor, which until recently was Russia’s only coronavirus testing lab.

Russia’s officially reported numbers have sparked suspicion, especially after China reported a second wave of new infections coming mainly from Russia and tightened border security measures.

Experts warn that Russia's testing capacity is hampered by bureaucracy, while officials warn that the real number of cases is likely much higher.

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