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‘Those Meant to Die Will Die,’ Russia’s Coronavirus Info Chief Says

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Russia has confirmed 308,705 coronavirus cases, the second-highest number of infections in the world, and 2,972 deaths as of Wednesday. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Russia’s coronavirus information chief has predicted that the infection will kill as many people in the country that it needs to, appearing to backtrack on his previous prediction that it would be “impossible” for the virus to spread to Russia.

Doctor and television presenter Alexander Myasnikov was in mid-April appointed to the post whose duties are informing the public about treatment and prevention methods and battling “fake news” surrounding the virus. Previously, Myasnikov estimated the likelihood of coronavirus spreading in Russia at “0.0%” and called the country’s low death rate a “Russian miracle.”

“The infection will still take its toll and we’ll all get it,” Myasnikov said in an interview with pro-Kremlin pundit Vladimir Solovyov that aired Tuesday.

“Those meant to die will die. Everyone dies,” Myasnikov said as the global coronavirus death

toll reached 325,156 people and the case count crossed 5 million.

The doctor urged Russians not to panic over potential symptoms, saying: “Even if it’s coronavirus, so what?”

“Of course you need to get a test to avoid infecting others, but you do understand it’s an illusion,” he said. “We’ll run out of tests if everyone runs out to check after every sneeze.”

Related article: TV Doctor to Head Russia’s Coronavirus Information Center

After his remarks got picked up in the Russian press, Myasnikov accused news outlets of taking his words out of context and said they were meant to reassure people who are feeling “uncertainty and fear of tomorrow.”

“There’s no need to waste energy and destroy your psyche with panic. We’re all mortal by dint of our existence,” he wrote on his social media page.

“The fact that a person is mortal shouldn’t darken the days of our, alas, fleeting life. We should just live and enjoy this life.”

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The relatively low death toll compared with the other countries with high infection rates has drawn questions over Russia’s counting methods, which Russian authorities maintain are accurate.

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