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Most Russian Doctors Mistrust Official Coronavirus Data – Poll

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

Around half of Russia's doctors believe that official statistics undercount the number of coronavirus cases in the country while one in 10 say the numbers are too high, the Vedomosti business newspaper reported Tuesday.

The survey's results follow questions over Russia's relatively low Covid-19 death toll among the hardest-hit countries as authorities doubled fatalities for the early months of the outbreak. Russia has attributed its low mortality figures, which stood at 10,494 as of Tuesday, to mass testing and scrupulous autopsies determining the exact cause of death.

Among the doctors polled for the global research association ESOMAR, 49% said the official tally of Russia's coronavirus cases is too low and 47% said they believe that Covid-19 deaths are undercounted.

Conversely, 9% said of the respondents the official caseload is too high and 11% said they believe Covid-19 deaths are overcounted, according to the results cited by Vedomosti.

“Doctors have more expert information and most of them talk about lowered statistics,” Stepan Goncharov, sociologist with the independent polling agency Levada Center, told Vedomosti.

“Those who have worked with patients infected with Covid-19 have more of this mistrust,” Goncharov said.

Only a quarter of the polled doctors (23%) said they trust the official caseload, while 21% said they trust the official death toll, Vedomosti reported.

Levada Center and Russia’s state-funded pollster FOM conducted the survey for ESOMAR among 502 Russian healthcare professionals between June 8-17.

Around 60% of the respondents had experience with Covid-19 patients and 16% work in so-called coronavirus “red zones.”

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