



Collective Prevention Services

COVID-19 Response Overview 22nd March 2021

Regional Epidemiology

Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao (ABC) are experiencing high COVID-19 transmission (Figures 1-3; note chart Y-axes differ). These three islands have strong travel connections with Sint Maarten. Anyone travelling from these islands (as of March 23, 2021) to Sint Maarten now requires a negative 72hr PCR, however CPS remains concerned that the magnitude and exponential growth of cases in these locations results in a higher probability of imported cases into St Maarten.

Figure 1. Aruba Epidemiological Curve¹.

Aruba Situation

8,624

confirmed cases

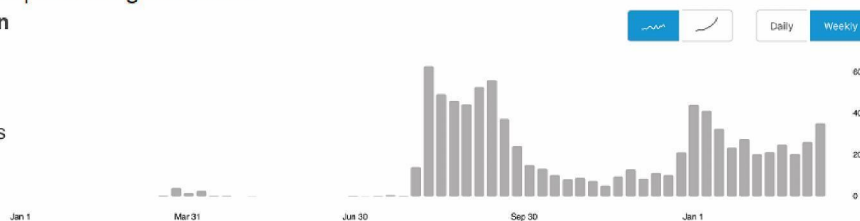


Figure 2. Bonaire Epidemiological Curve¹.

Bonaire Situation

919

confirmed cases

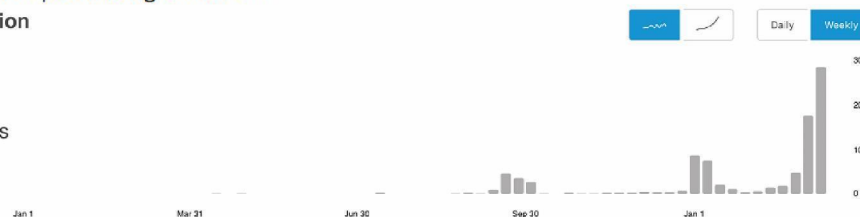


Figure 3. Curaçao Epidemiological Curve¹.

Curaçao Situation

5,520

confirmed cases

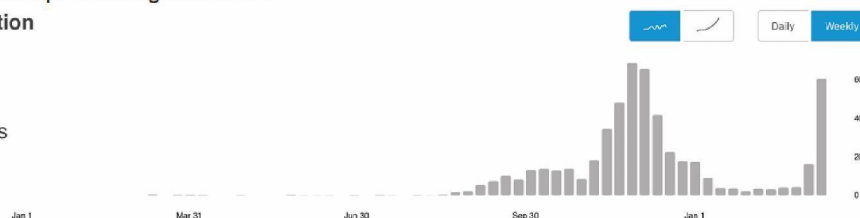


Figure 4. Sint Maarten Epidemiological Curve¹.

¹ World Health Organisation: <https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/aw>

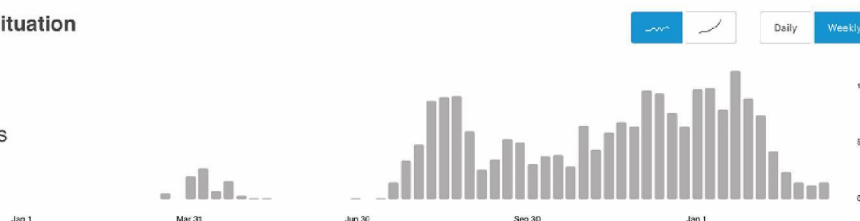


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Sint Maarten Situation

2,093
confirmed cases



Importantly, the ABC islands have recorded a significant number of cumulative B.1.1.7 “UK variant” cases to date, identified and recognized globally as a Variant of Concern (VoC) (Table 1.). Internal communications between public health agencies currently indicate that ~75% of new cases in Curaçao are caused by the UK variant. Indeed the rapid transmission and high magnitude of cases across the ABC islands reflects the epidemiology that characterized the emergence of the UK variant in SE England during late 2020.

Table 1. Cumulative number of cases stratified by location.

Variant	Colloquial Name	Location	Cumulative Cases
B.1.1.7	UK	Aruba	114
B.1.1.7	UK	Bonaire	70
B.1.1.7	UK	Curacao	35
P.1	Brazil P1	Aruba	3
P.1	Brazil P1	Bonaire	0
P.1	Brazil P1	Curacao	0
B.1.351	South Africa	Aruba	2
B.1.351	South Africa	Bonaire	0
B.1.351	South Africa	Curacao	0

Considering this epidemiology and the consequent likelihood of imported cases from highly concentrated pools of the UK variant (B.1.1.7), CPS recommends temporary border closures to Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, effective immediately. In addition to the measures proposed, CPS will ensure systematic nationwide genetic surveillance is strengthened.

on Sint Maarten Returning residents should be required to hold a negative 72hr PCR test, and to be PCR-tested on arrival. Further regional surveillance is ongoing to identify any additional Leeward Islands that should also fall under this recommendation.



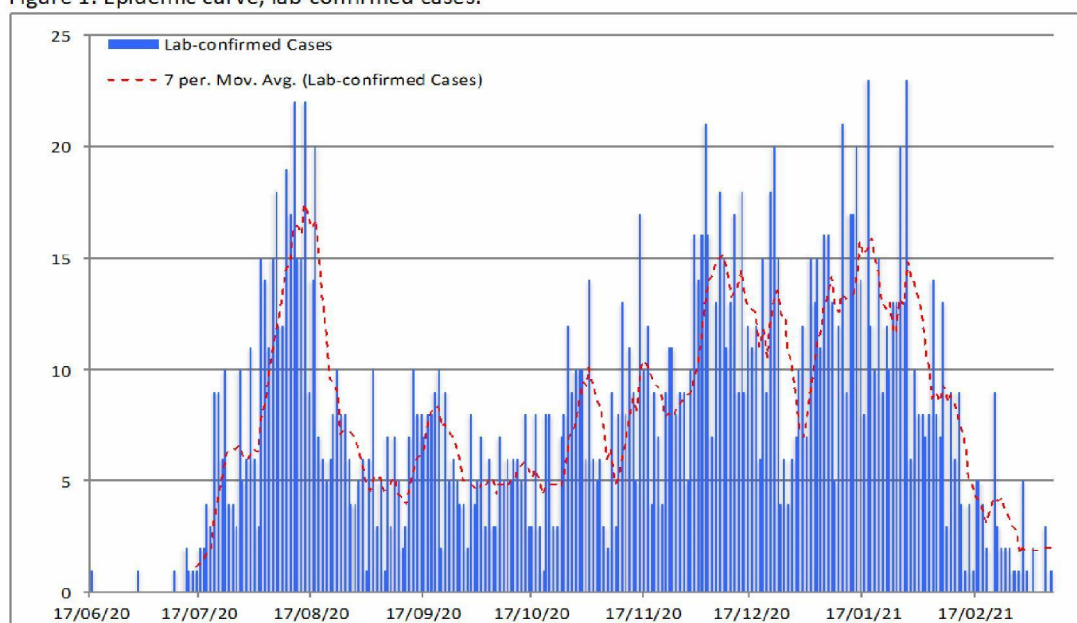
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Sint Maarten Epidemiology

A total of **2104 lab-confirmed cases** have been recorded on Sint Maarten as of midday Monday 22nd March 2021. Sint Maarten is trending at **3-5 cases per day** (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Epidemic curve, lab-confirmed cases.



Age Distribution

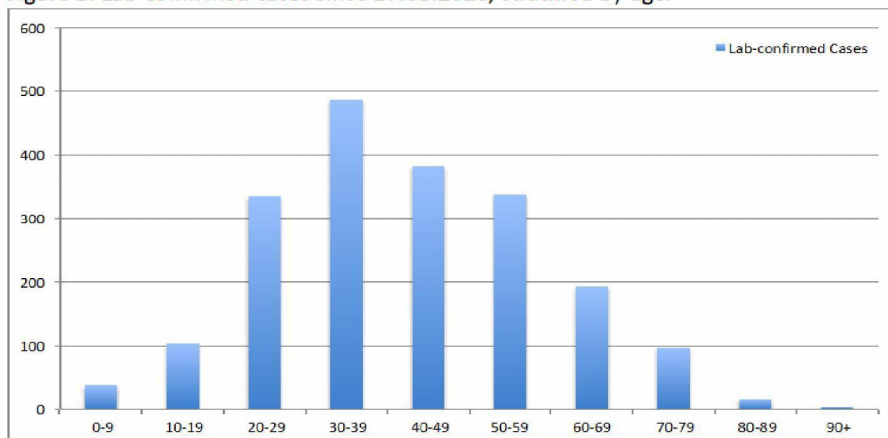
Cases stratified by age show that 7.1% of cases fall within the 0-19 age group (Figure 2). A further 77.4% of cases fall between the ages of 20 to 59 with the remaining 15.5% falling within the 60+ age group (Figure 2).



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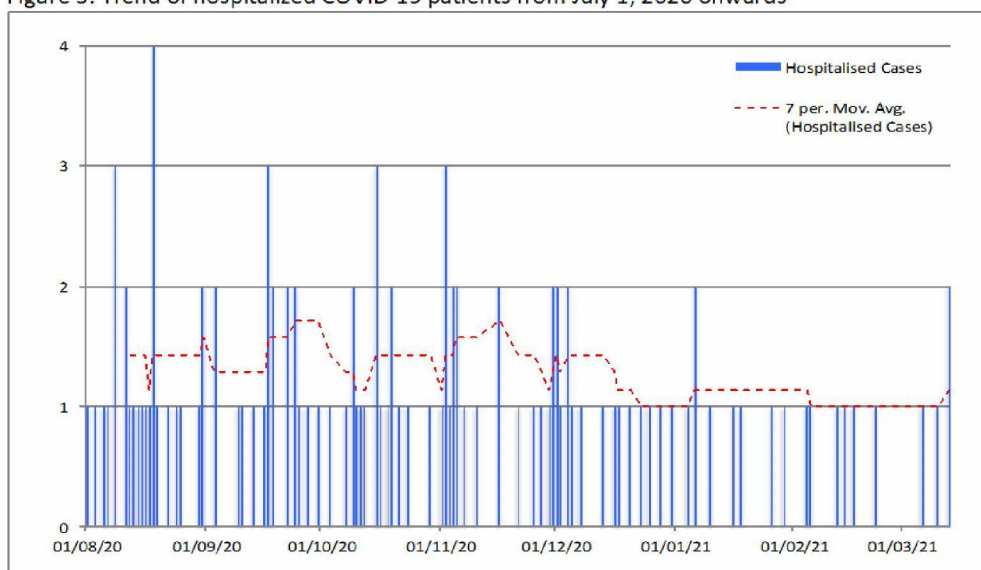
Figure 2. Lab-confirmed cases since 27.08.2020, stratified by age.



Hospitalizations and Deaths

Since the 1st July 2020, a total **113 patients have been hospitalised** in the Sint Maarten Medical Centre due to COVID-19. The number of COVID-19 admissions has stabilised and is trending at 1 per week (Figure 3). A total of **12 persons have died from COVID-19** related illness (6 males; 6 females; aged between 41-92 years) since 1st July 2020.

Figure 3. Trend of hospitalized COVID-19 patients from July 1, 2020 onwards





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Active clusters

CPS is currently monitoring **0 active clusters**.

Schools

Schools have recorded a total of **103 cases** (40 teachers; 61 students; 2 ancillary staff) and **1 cluster**.

COVID-19 Vaccination

The Vaccination Management Team (VMT) continues efforts to increase public awareness about COVID-19 registration and vaccinations. Over the months of February and March, VMT have engaged several businesses to offer information sessions about the vaccination strategy and the importance of registration.

In conjunction with VMT's initiatives, CPS and ARS have proposed a joint island-wide vaccination campaign. This is in part due to the low turn out in registered persons on the French Side. As an island we cannot neglect the importance of a unified message and campaign. This collaboration is also grounded in the MOU that was signed at the start of the outbreak on St. Maarten/St. Martin last year. A proposal is forthcoming to the Minister of VSA for approval.