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Subject: Invitation to review a manuscript for BMC Medicine -BMED-D-21-00410 - [EMID:c24f18eb1f19c0d5]
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BMED-D-21-00410
Using syndromic measures of mortality to capture the dynamics of COVID-19 in Java, Indonesia in the context of vaccination roll-out
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BMED-D-21-00410
Research article
Using syndromic measures of mortality to capture the dynamics of COVID-19 in Java, Indonesia in the context of vaccination roll-out

BMC Medicine

Abstract: Background

As in many countries, quantifying COVID-19 spread in Indonesia remains challenging due to testing limitations. In Java, non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) were implemented throughout 2020. However, as a vaccination campaign launches, cases and deaths are rising across the island.

Methods

We used modelling to explore the extent to which data on burials in Jakarta using strict COVID-19 protocols (C19P) provide additional insight into the transmissibility of the disease, epidemic trajectory, and the impact of NPIs. We assess how implementation of NPIs in early 2021 will shape the epidemic during the period of likely vaccine roll-out.

Results

C19P burial data in Jakarta suggest a death toll approximately 3.3 times higher than reported. Transmission estimates using these data suggest earlier, larger, and more sustained impact of NPIs. Measures to reduce sub-national spread, particularly during Ramadan, substantially mitigated spread to more vulnerable rural areas. Given current trajectory, daily cases and deaths are likely to increase in most regions as the vaccine is rolled-out. Transmission may peak in early 2021 in Jakarta if current levels of control are maintained. However, relaxation of control measures is likely to lead to a subsequent resurgence in the absence of an effective vaccination campaign.

Conclusions

Syndromic measures of mortality provide a more complete picture of COVID-19 severity upon which to base decision-making. The high potential impact of the vaccine in Java is attributable to reductions in transmission to date and dependent on these being maintained. Increases in control in the relatively short-term will likely yield large, synergistic increases in vaccine impact.

Our flexible approach during the COVID-19 pandemic

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