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Shoresh Institution update
Coronavirus and Israeli readiness

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As the Covid-19 pandemic spreads, Israel's government has implemented some of the most stringent clampdowns in the developed world. This, despite the relatively low rates (thus far) of contagion and zero fatalities to date in Israel.

Shoresh findings on Israel's healthcare system provide a background glimpse at the underlying rationale for the severity of the measures – namely, Israel's lack of degrees of freedom that exist in other countries. Before the outbreak of the current pandemic, hospital occupancy rates in Israel were already the highest in the developed world while its mortality rates from infectious diseases, which doubled in the past two decades alone, are not only higher than in every other developed country, they are 73% higher than the second ranked country (see graphs below).

The Shoresh findings have become a valuable resource for media within Israel and abroad. One of Israel's leading television commentators, Nadav Eyal, has used the Shoresh graphs to highlight just how few degrees of freedom Israel actually has with regard to dealing with infectious diseases. Other examples from Israel include major articles based on Shoresh findings in two of the country's leading English language papers, the [Jerusalem Post](#) and the [Times of Israel](#) on March 16). Some examples from abroad include two pieces in the Washington Post within a span of three days ([March 10](#) and [March 13](#)) and another one in [Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung](#), one of Germany's leading newspapers, on March 13.

These come on the heels of a major feature piece in the [NY Times](#) at last week that was (in the words of David Halbfinger, the Time's Jerusalem Bureau chief and one of the article's authors) "inspired" by Shoresh research.

At such a critical moment, it is important to point out that although Israel's national priorities pivoted away from root (*shoresh*) issues such as healthcare and education decades ago, the country is nonetheless one of the world's most nimble in dealing with extremely severe crises at very short notice and in thinking outside the box to find solutions. Hopefully, this will be a wakeup call for more serious strategic long term policies that won't require Israel to implement such severe measures in the future.


Dan Ben-David
President

(see graphs on next page)

