

The Coronavirus Panic

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ABSTRACT

Beginning in late 2019, a deadly virus began to plague our world, killing thousands upon thousands of individuals. With a pandemic of this magnitude, panic surely follows. In this poster, in order to see the peak of panic in various countries, Google search trends have been analyzed. Based on the research, trends in searches for “coronavirus” seem to peak around the time the virus entered a certain country, making millions feel threatened. In some regions of the world, panic seemed to be much greater than in other regions. The panic in Italy was almost doubled that of the panic in the US. In the future, using resources to track internet searches can be a great way to tell what a region, or people, are most concerned about at the time being.

OBJECTIVES

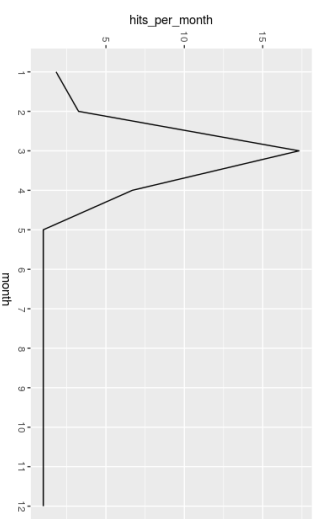
The main objective of this study was to analyze trends in Google searches for the term “coronavirus,” as well as terms related to this. The other objective was to compare the panic in the US, to panic in Italy. And finally, compare the terms “depression” and “coronavirus.”

MATERIALS AND METHODS

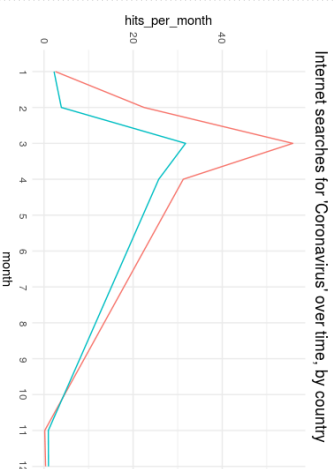
Using a coding program called RStudio, and the coding package called “trendy,” I was able to read in data from the internet, specifically the term “coronavirus.”

- After I installed the “trendy” package, I read in the term “coronavirus,” and it yielded raw data from the internet.
- Next, the data was loaded into a visual graph that depicts the number of Google searches for the term “coronavirus.” The scale was set as 12 months.
- The next step was to compare the panic in the US to the country Italy.
- Finally I compared “depression” to “coronavirus”.

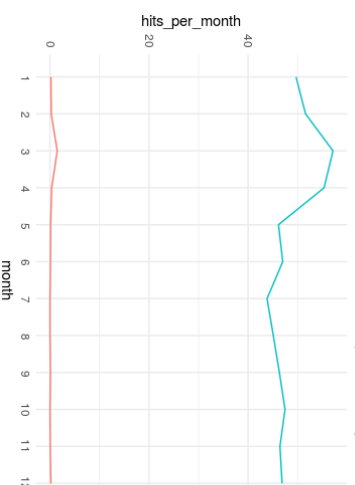
RESULTS



This graph depicts the results for “coronavirus” in the US. As you can see, the searches peaked in March, when the virus became very apparent in the US.



Internet searches for 'coronavirus' over time, by country



This second graph illustrates the searches in Italy (red line), and the searches in the US. Clearly, the panic in Italy was far more serious, and had a much higher peak.

This final graph illustrates searches for “depression” (blue line), and searches for “coronavirus” (red line). If you look closely, you can see that there is a spike in March for both terms. This is likely caused by the isolation and fear individuals have been living in. This isolation can take a major toll on a person’s mental health.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the research, the US reached its peak panic in early March. Italy - a country that was hit incredibly hard - peaked around the same time, but at a much greater magnitude. This is likely due to difference in health care quality and systems. Finally, though it may seem small, there was a spike in both “depression” and “coronavirus,” which I presume to be due to the less than normal conditions we are all living in.