ISRCTN10182320 https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN10182320

# Monitoring the course of the COVID-19 epidemic in Estonia

**Submission date**
14/03/2021

**Recruitment status**
No longer recruiting

**Registration date**
16/03/2021

**Overall study status**
Completed

**Last Edited**
01/04/2026

**Condition category**
Infections and Infestations

[_] Prospectively registered
[X] Protocol
[_] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[_] Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
COVID-19 is a condition caused by the coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) that was first identified in late 2019. The ongoing pandemic is an unprecedented global emergency. Epidemic risk management is a highly complex task in which sets of measures need to be put in place and coordinated at local, national, and international levels to minimize health and economic consequences. This complex and monumental task is highly knowledge/evidence-dependent. There are many unanswered questions on the novel SARS-Cov-2 virus including the immune response and pathogenesis at the individual level. However, the answers to very similar questions at the population level (scale of exposure/infection in the population, the effect of community mitigation measures implemented) are crucial for an effective response to the pandemic and to inform future strategies.
The main aim of this study is to estimate the prevalence of symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID-19 in the general population and how this varies over time.

Who can participate?
People selected at random from the Estonian population registry will be invited for participation

What does the study involve?
Participants will be asked to visit a national covid testing center and fill in a web-based questionnaire and undergo nasopharyngeal swabbing (collected from the back of the nose and throat).

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The possible benefits are that participants will get results from tests for SARS-CoV-2. The main disadvantage of taking part is the time and inconvenience of nasopharyngeal swabbing.

Where is the study run from?
University of Tartu (Estonia), and delivered by Kantar-Emor AS, OÜ Medicum Eriarstiabi, and SYNLAB Eesti OÜ (Estonia)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
March 2020 to December 2023

Who is funding the study?
Ministry of Education and Research (Estonia)

Who is the main contact?
Unfortunately, this study is not recruiting public volunteers.

# Contact information

### Type(s)
Scientific

### Contact name
Prof Ruth Kalda

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# Additional identifiers

# Study information

### Scientific Title
COVID-19 active monitoring program in Estonia

### Acronym
COVEST

### Study objectives
The main aim of this observational study is to estimate the prevalence of symptomatic and asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection in the general population and how this varies over time.

### Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

### Ethics approval(s)
Approved 13/04/2020, Research Ethics Committee of the University of Tartu (Grant Office, University of Tartu, Raekoja plats 9, 51004 Tartu, Estonia; +372 (0)737 6215; eetikakomitee@ut.ee), ref: 310/T-1

### Primary study design
Observational

### Study design

Surveillance study based on repeated cross-sectional surveys of the general population (recruited via stratified random sampling)

### Study type(s)
Screening

### Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2 infection)

### Interventions
Randomly selected consenting adults are asked to visit national testing centers for a nasopharyngeal swab and fill out a web-based questionnaire.

### Intervention Type
Other

### Primary outcome(s)
SARS-CoV-2 prevalence measured using SARS-CoV-2 RNA RT-PCR at each of the cross-sectional study rounds (every month in 2020, six times a year in 2021, 2022/23 to be decided)

### Key secondary outcome(s)
The proportion of symptomatic cases among people testing positive for SARS-CoV-2, measured using a web-based questionnaire at each of the cross-sectional study rounds (every month in 2020, six times a year in 2021, 2022/23 to be decided)

### Completion date
30/12/2023

## Eligibility

### Key inclusion criteria
1. Adult, male or female
2. Willing and able to give informed consent for participation in the study

### Participant type(s)
All

### Healthy volunteers allowed
No

### Age group
Adult

### Sex
All

### Total final enrolment
0

**Key exclusion criteria**
Does not meet inclusion criteria

**Date of first enrolment**
23/04/2020

**Date of final enrolment**
30/11/2023

# Locations

**Countries of recruitment**
Estonia

**Study participating centre**
**University of Tartu**
Ravila 19
Tartu
Estonia
50411

# Sponsor information

**Organisation**
University of Tartu

**ROR**
https://ror.org/03z77qz90

# Funder(s)

**Funder type**
Government

**Funder Name**
Ministry of Education and Research (Estonia)

# Results and Publications

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

## IPD sharing plan summary

Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date

## Study outputs

| Output type | Details | Date created | Date added | Peer reviewed? | Patient-facing? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interim results article | | 01/04/2026 | 01/04/2026 | Yes | No |
| Preprint results | Non-peer reviewed 1st year results | 13/09/2021 | 21/09/2021 | No | No |
| Protocol file | | | 06/04/2021 | No | No |
| Study website | | 11/11/2025 | 11/11/2025 | No | Yes |