



The Italian portal dedicated to Covid-19 goes online

The Italian Covid Data Portal aims to display the scientific data produced nationally on Covid-19 and Sars-Cov-2 and promote their open sharing. Developed by Elixir-it, the Italian node of the European bioinformatics and biological data infrastructure coordinated by the National Research Council, it aims to foster broader collaboration among researchers. The portal represents the Italian branch of the portal established at the European Commission's invitation by the European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI) and other partners.

The Italian Covid-19 Data Portal is now online at <https://www.covid19dataportal.it/>. The site gathers and displays research data produced in Italy on Sars-CoV-2 and Covid-19.

The portal has been developed to support researchers and any other interested stakeholder by the Italian node of the European infrastructure for life sciences data, Elixir, coordinated by the National Research Council and participated by 22 other subjects among Universities, Research institutions - as the Italian National Institute of Health (ISS) - and technological centres as Garr.

The portal represents a convenient tool to collect and display Italian research results on Covid-19, making it easier for everyone to get access and monitor its progress. For instance, up-to-date information and statistics are made available on the number of viral genomes sequenced in Italy and stored in public databases, as well as on the geographic and temporal spread of "variants" under investigation for their potential infectivity or pathogenicity features. At present, the viral genomic data currently available highlight potential issues, since they are very limited or altogether unavailable for some of our country's regions. Encouraging and fostering a more homogeneous and widespread effort in data production and sharing is one of the most ambitious missions for the new portal.

Moreover, the portal aims to collect and publicize services for data production, management and analysis, available in Italy so that researchers can easily find them. Finally, the portal will provide tutorials and guidelines and a help-desk service chaired by experts, to assist Italian data producers in submitting to the recognized international public repositories.

"Population and publication of the portal contents will follow a "bottom-up" approach: researchers and other experts will be able to report their research and data, which will be progressively made available and displayed through the portal for the benefit not only of the scientific community, but also of institutions, companies, and, in general, for any interested citizen" declares Graziano Pesole (Cnr-Ibiom), the head of node of Elixir-It. "We hope that this work can assist in spreading the Open Data principles for health-related scientific data in our country and be used as an aggregation and access hub for Italian research on Covid-19. In the next few months, it will be important to reach out to researchers and offer them concrete support to make their data available in an open and timely manner. This effort will also be made possible thanks to the support of ICDI (Italian Computing and Data Infrastructure), which gathers the main Italian research institutions and infrastructures, including Elixir-It, to support the adoption of Open Science" principles.



The Italian Covid-19 Data Portal constitutes the Italian branch of the international Covid-19 Data Portal <https://www.covid19dataportal.org> established last April by the European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI, European Institute of Bioinformatics), with ELIXIR's support, after prompting by the European Commission. To assist in the critical endeavour of facilitating the sharing of scientific data on Covid-19, several countries - including Sweden, Poland, Slovenia, Norway and Japan - have already implemented and deployed similar portals at the national level. Those portals serve as local hubs for researchers and producers of scientific data and, at least in some instances, to inform citizens about the circulation of viral variants in their respective countries.

"The European Commission has identified the principles of Open Science and free access to data and scientific literature (Open Access) as priority policies to help in the dissemination and exploitation of knowledge", adds Pesole. "The current health emergency has made those needs even more evident and urgent, only by sharing data among all possible stakeholders, we will be able to compare the different studies, favouring breakthroughs leading to the solutions needed to win this battle".

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Worldwide Covid Data Portal:

Sweden: <https://www.covid19dataportal.se/>

Poland: <https://www.covid19dataportal.pl/>

Slovenia: <https://www.covid19dataportal.si/>

Norway: <https://www.covid19dataportal.no/>

Japan: <https://www.covid19dataportal.jp/>

Card

Who: Istituto di biomembrane, bioenergetica e biotecnologie molecolari del Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche (Cnr-Ibiom) di Bari;

What: Italian COVID-19 Data Portal (<https://www.covid19dataportal.it/>), web portal that collects and makes available, in open mode, the most complete and updated data of Italian research on the virus Sars-Cov-2 and Covid 19.

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