

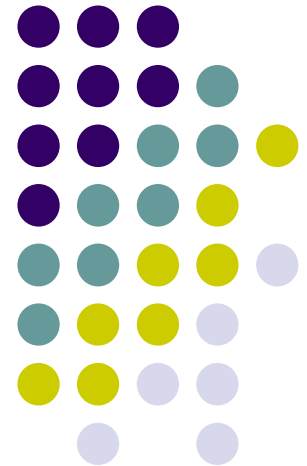
Balancing saving lives and livelihood: three painful years under the Covid-19 epidemics in Japan:

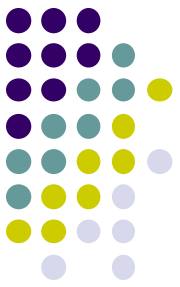
A Comparative Study of Pandemic Control Policies and Their Impacts on Societies and Economies

Taipei
August 19, 2023

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Professor Emeritus
The University of Tokyo

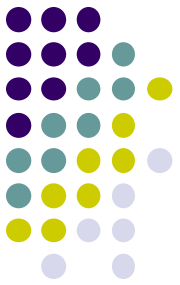
yasukik@m.u-tokyo.ac.jp





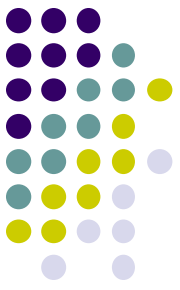
Contents of the talk

1. Cases and deaths of Covid-19
2. Measures against Covid-19
3. Effectiveness of the measures
4. Broader social impacts of Covid-19
5. Recovery from the pandemic
6. Final remarks

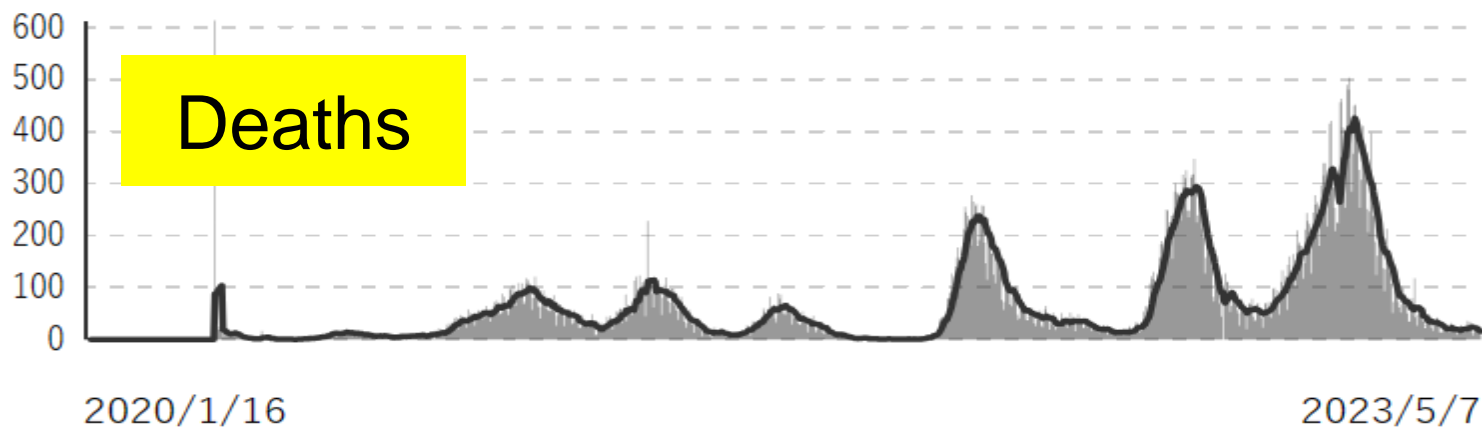
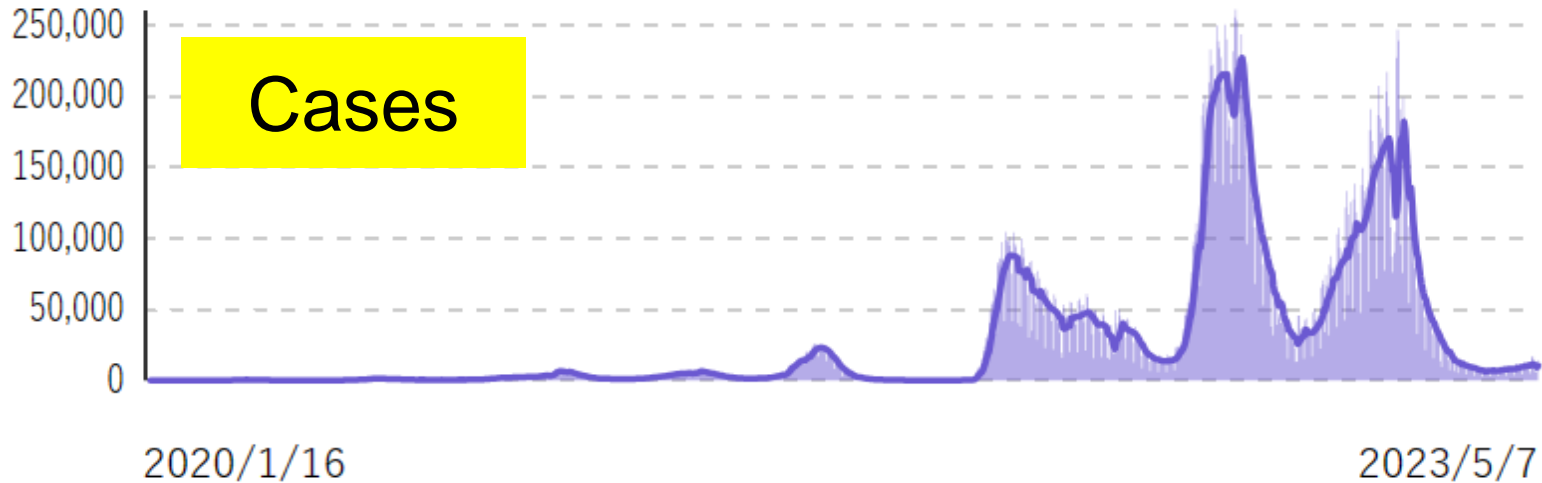


1. Cases and deaths of Covid-19

Numbers (7-days average) of confirmed cases and deaths of Covid-19 in Japan until May 7, 2023*



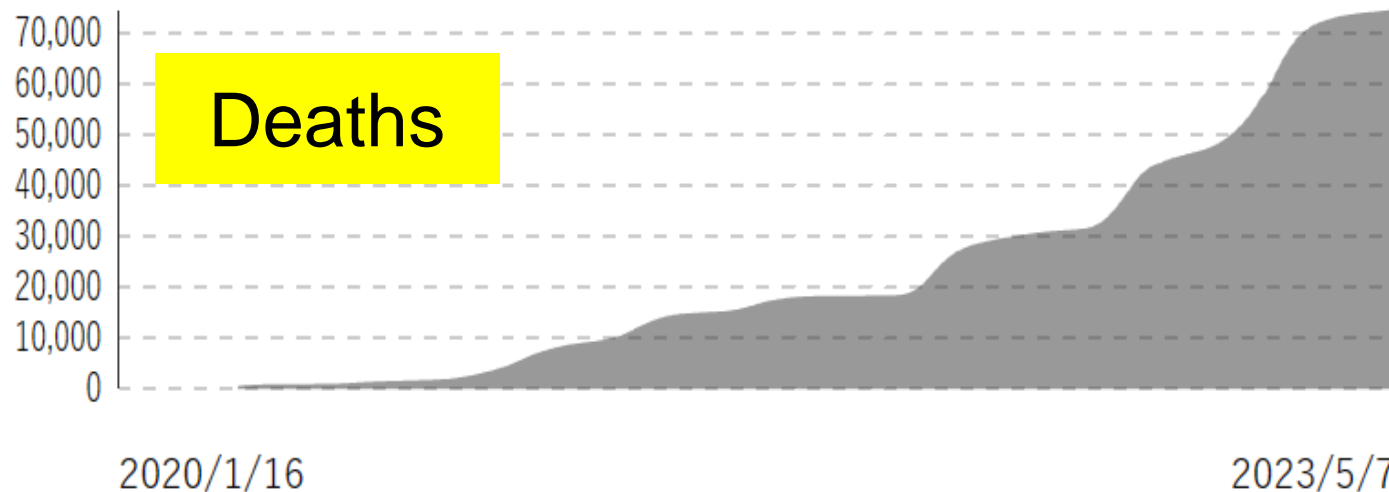
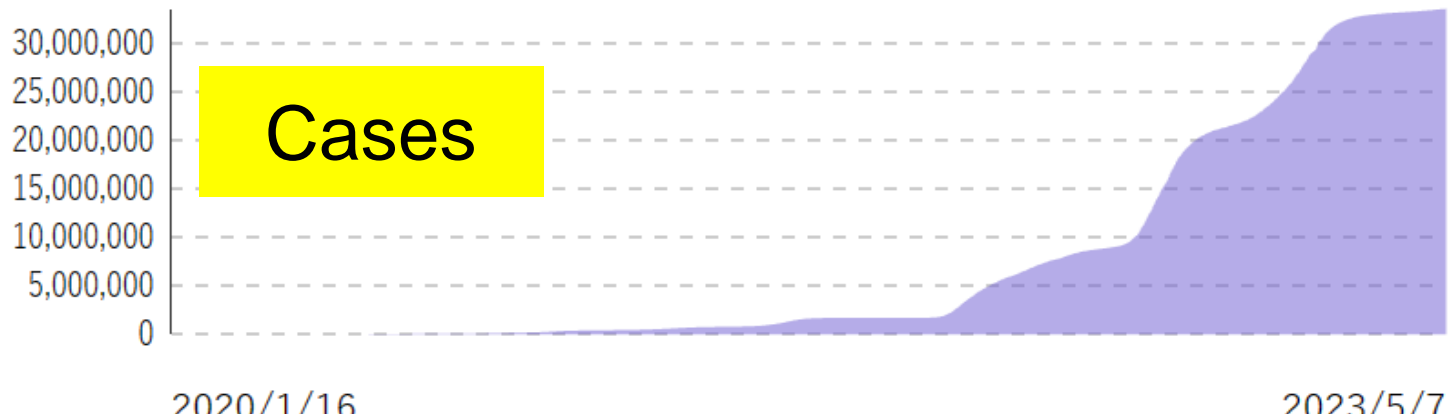
* The surveillance of all the cases was ended on May 7, 2023, because the government downgraded the legal status of Covid-19.



(Cited from Asahi Newspaper Digital. <https://www.asahi.com/special/corona/>)

Cumulative numbers of confirmed cases and deaths of Covid-19 in Japan until May 7, 2023*

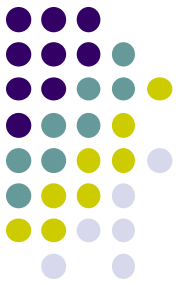
* The surveillance of all the cases was ended on May 7, 2023, because the government downgraded the legal status of Covid-19.



About 34 million people were infected. (27% of total population)

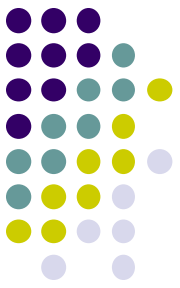
74,694 died (0.06%).

(Cited from Asahi Newspaper Digital. <https://www.asahi.com/special/corona/>)



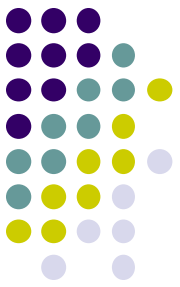
2. Measures against Covid-19

Government measures with people's collaboration against COVID-19 epidemic in Japan



- **“Soft Lockdown”**
request-based business reduction
- **Active surveillance**
e.g. contact-tracing
- **Evidence-based message**
with “peer pressure”

“Soft Lockdown” were held three times in some areas (including Tokyo) in Japan



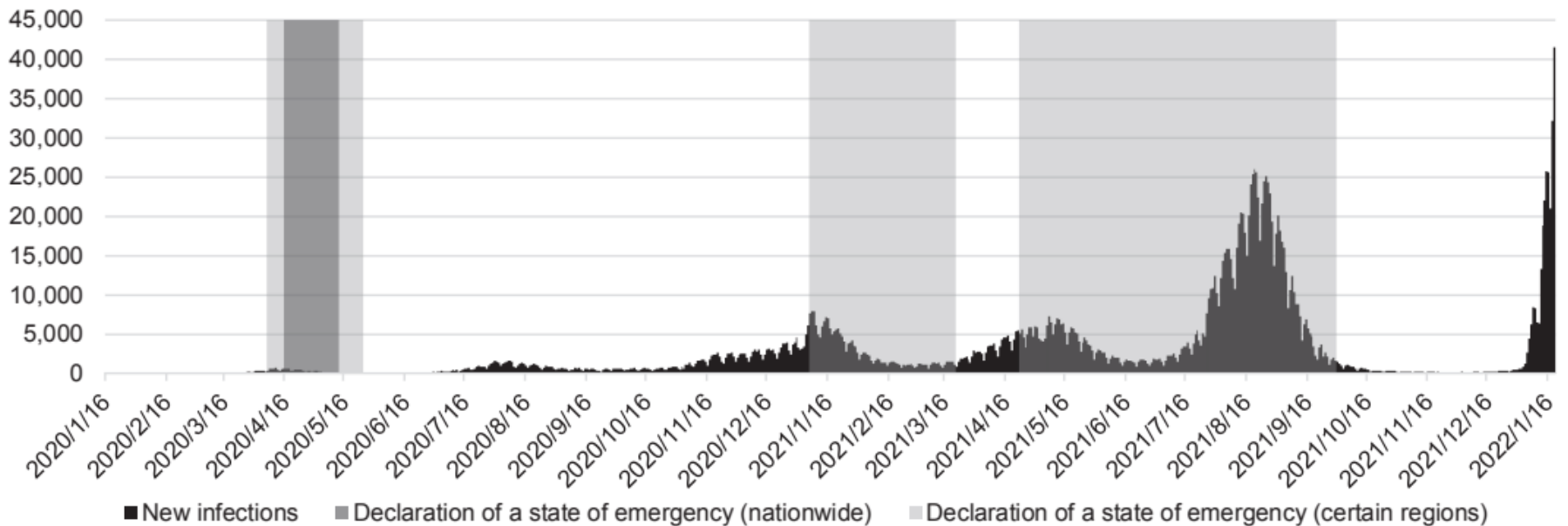
Apr-May,
2020



Jan-Mar,
2021



Apr-Sep,
2021










(Cited from Fig 1 of Takahashi’s work published in *Japan Labor Issues* (Nov. 2022)
<https://www.jil.go.jp/english/jli/documents/2022/40-01.pdf>)

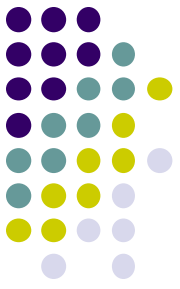
State of emergency is issued in epidemic areas: Non-legally binding “Soft Lockdown”



-- no penalty, request basis --

 外出 移動	Stay home, Not crossing prefectural boarder, Telework, Staggered commuting	Request
 飲食	Closing bars and “karaoke” all day, Closing restaurants by 8 pm	Request, Penalty (since February 2021)
 商業 施設	Closing department stores all day, or short-time business	Request
 イベント	No spectator match, or number limit No audience event, or number limit	Request
 交通	Last train advance	Request
 学校	Staggered school Online lectures	Request
 路上・ 公園	Refraining from drinking on the street	Request

Active surveillance (1)

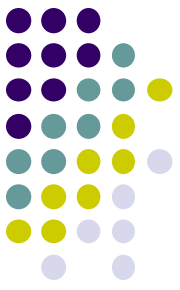


-- Contact tracing --

- In Japan, by law all physicians must report every COVID-19 case they diagnose to a nearby public health center (**PHC**).
- 469 **PHCs** are operated by local governments all over the country.
- **PHC** conducts active surveillance to examine the source of infection and to identify those who came into contact with the case (i.e., **contacts**).
- Contact tracing requires the collaboration of people.

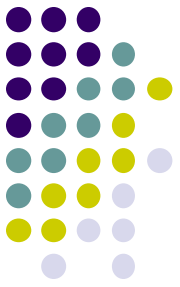
Active surveillance (2)

-- Contact tracing --



- The confirmed cases including test positive are isolated for at least 10 days starting from when symptoms appeared or the test was positive, either in a hospital, a designated hotel where medical staff are on standby, or at home in contact with PHC, depending on the severity of the disease and the family situation.
- Any contacts who are highly suspected of being infected by the PHC are requested, but not compelled, to quarantine at home for 14 days starting from the day of last contact with the confirmed case, and to have a PCR test if they wish.

Evidence-base message (ex. 1)



Important notice for preventing COVID-19 outbreaks.

Avoid the “Three Cs”!

- 1. Closed spaces** with poor ventilation.
- 2. Crowded places** with many people nearby.
- 3. Close-contact settings** such as close-range conversations.



One of the key measures against COVID-19 is to prevent occurrence of clusters.

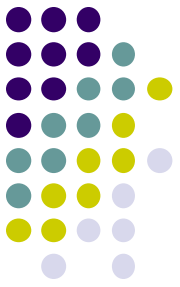
Keep these “Three Cs” from overlapping in daily life.

Avoiding “Three Cs”

- > Closed spaces
- > Crowded places
- > Close-contact settings

Three Cs were identified through anti-cluster measures.

Evidence-base message (ex. 2)



Please cooperate in measures against infectious diseases.

! “Coughing manners”

The basic measures against infectious disease, as well as the novel coronavirus, are **washing hands** and **“coughing manners” including wearing a mask.**

■ In order not to transmit viruses to others.

It is possible that the droplets ejected when you cough or sneeze may contain viruses. Please observe the following “coughing manners”.

- **Wear a mask.**
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue etc.**
- **If you suddenly sneeze or cough do so into your elbow or inside your jacket.**
- **Keep as far away as possible from other people.**



“Coughing manners”

Three “coughing manners”



Coughing or sneezing without shielding your mouth or nose.

Using your hands to cover coughs or sneezing.



Wear a mask. (covering mouth and nose)

Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue/handkerchief.

Cough or sneeze into your sleeve.

• Observe the manners on a train, at work, school or wherever people gather.

Correct way to wear a mask.



1 Ensure both your nose and mouth are covered.

2 Place the rubber string over your ears.

3 Cover up to your nose so there are no gaps.



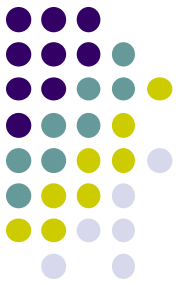
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare



“Coughing manners”
in order to not to transmit
viruses to others

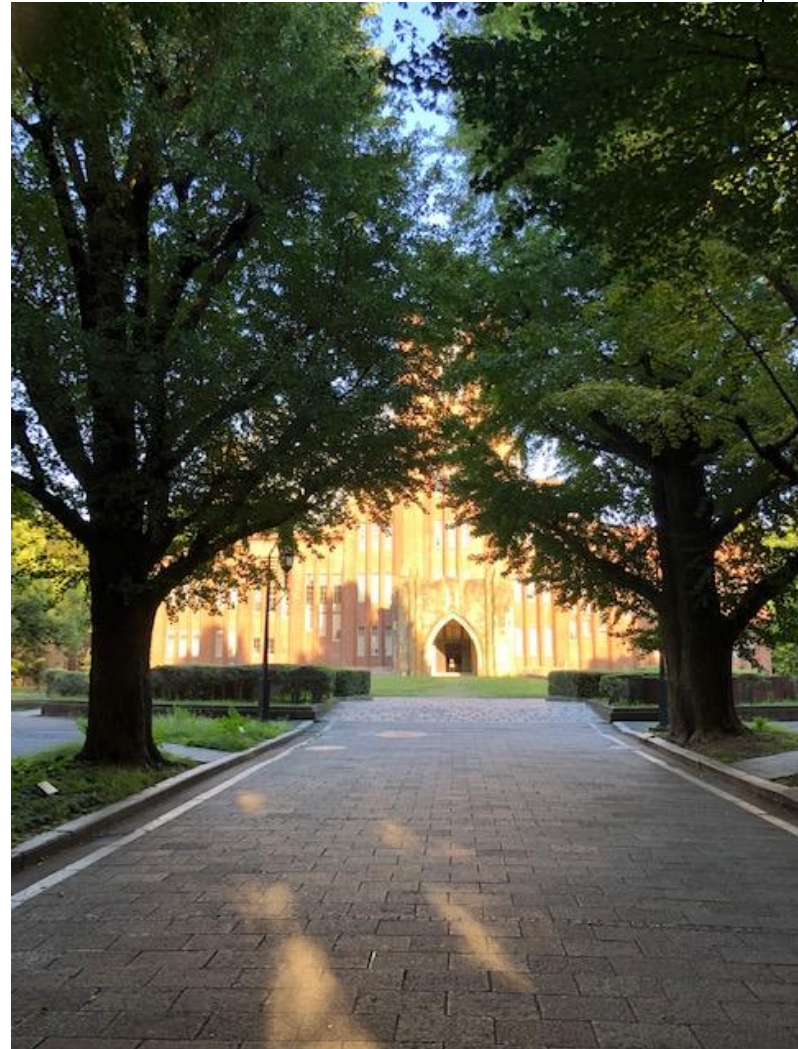
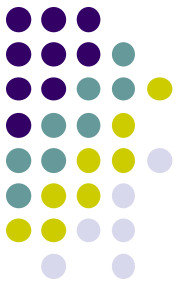
This message contains
“not only protecting
yourself but also **protecting
others.**”

Such a message is very
effective in Japan.
i.e. **peer pressure**



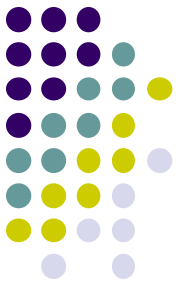
3. Effectiveness of the measures

The number of people significantly decreased during the first “Soft Lockdown.”



Closing a department store

(Source: Yomiuri newspaper)

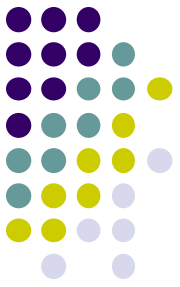


Staggered class and shield on the desk at an elementary school (Source: Yomiuri newspaper)



Wearing a mask

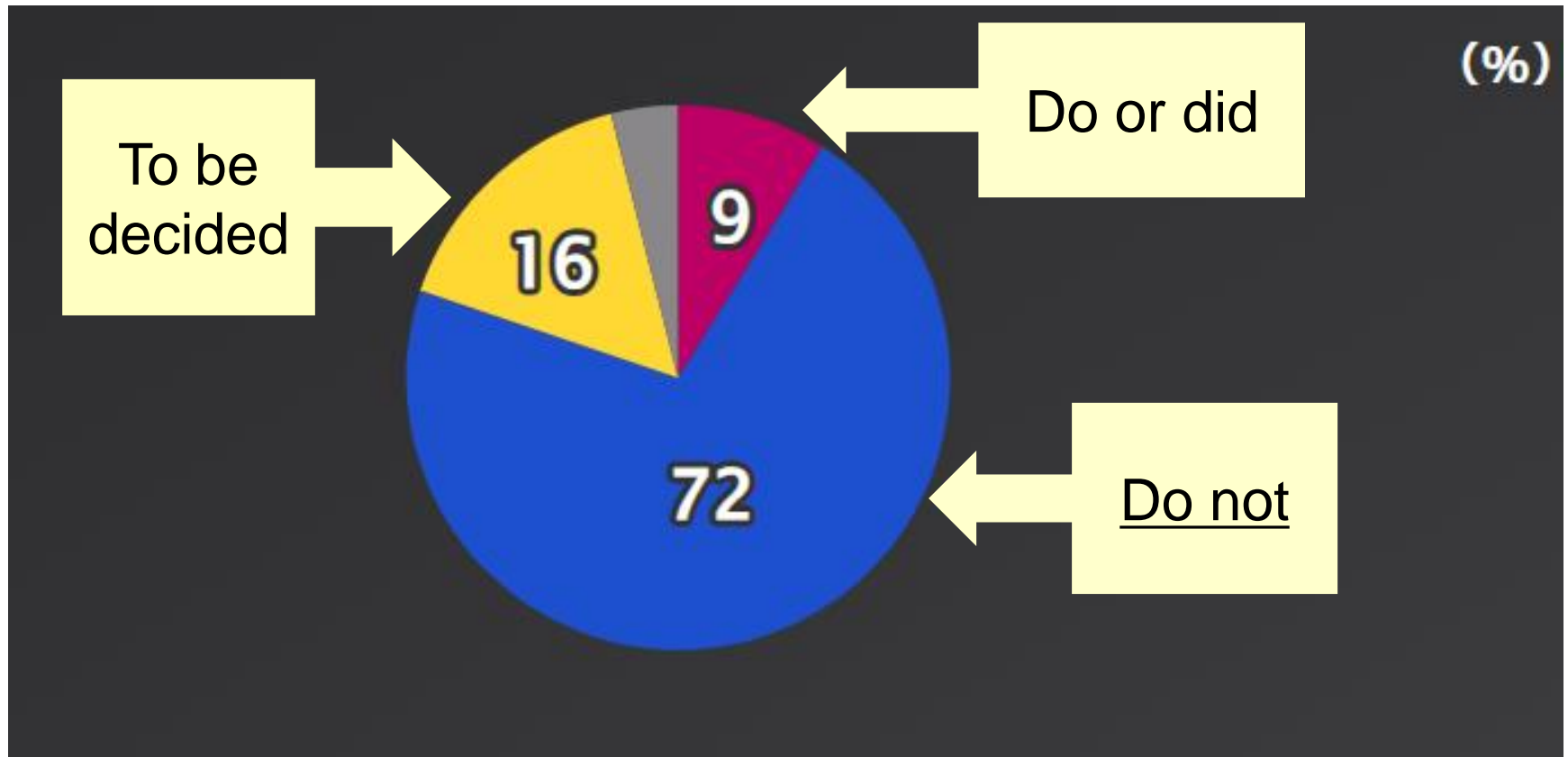
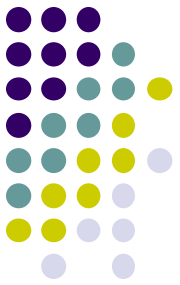
(Source: Yomiuri newspaper)

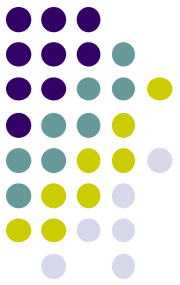


Whether to travel in summer 2021

Telephone poll by NHK during the period of August 7-9, 2021

<https://www.nhk.or.jp/senkyo/shijiritsu/>





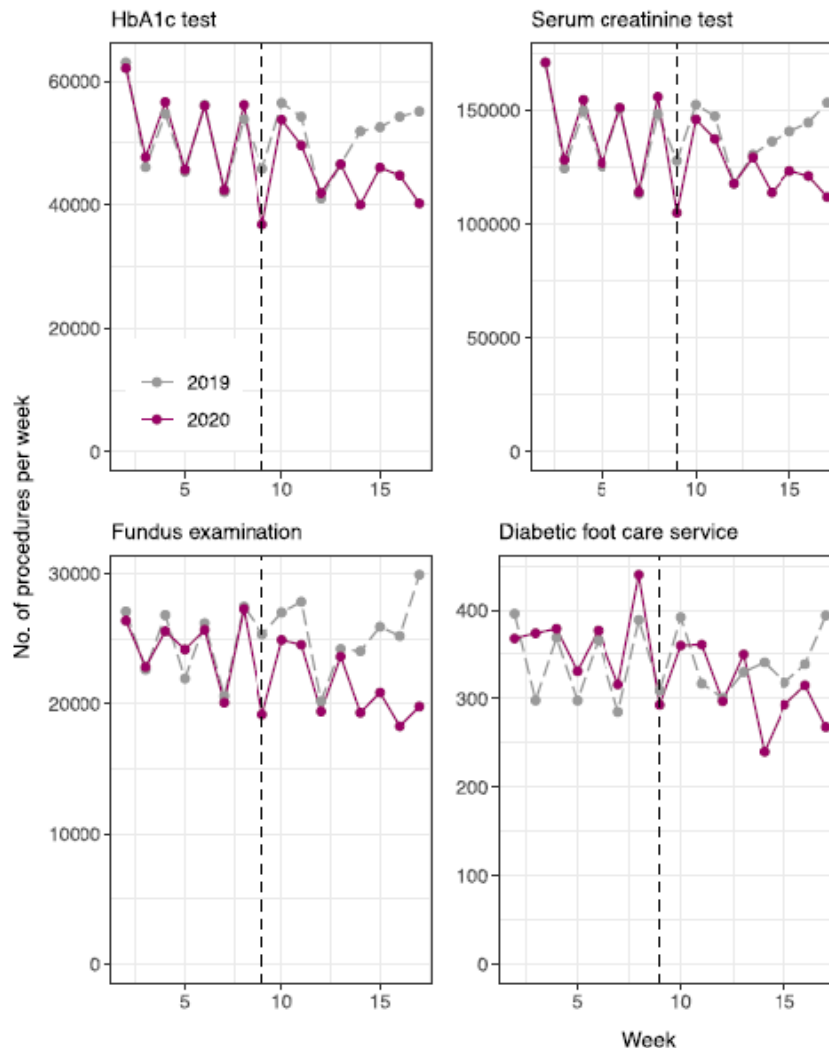
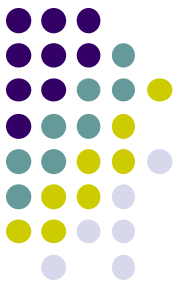
4. Broader social impacts of Covid-19

(1) Impact on health

(2) Impact on labor market and economy

Trends in Diabetes Care during the COVID-19 Outbreak in Japan: an Observational Study

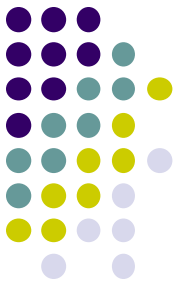
(J Gen Intern Med. doi: 10.1007/s11606-020-06413-w)



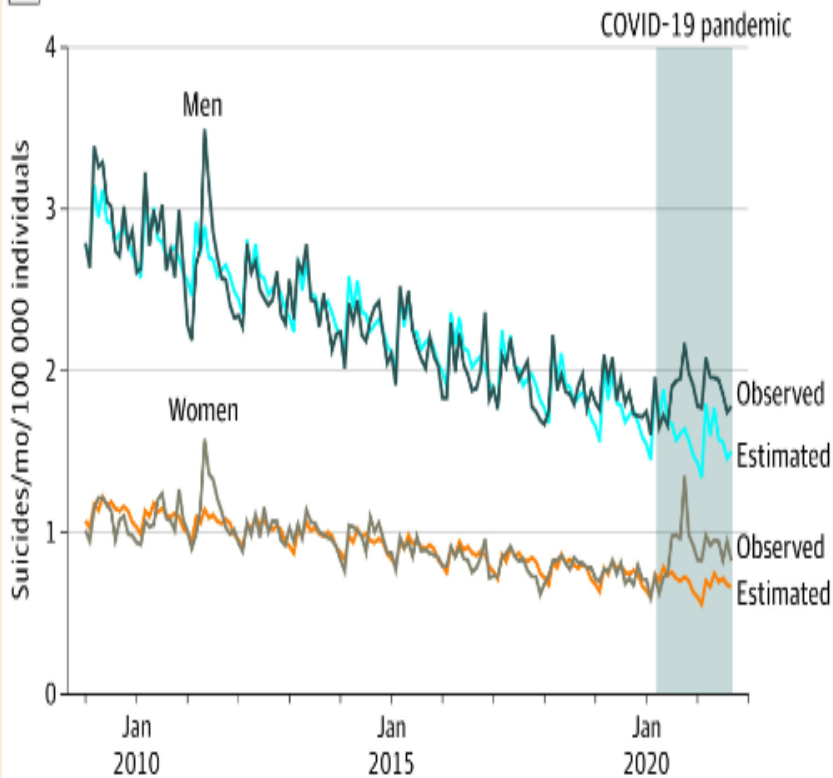
During the COVID-19 epidemic in Japan, the number of services for diabetes care, such as routine HbA1c test, eye exam, and foot care, significantly declined. These findings suggest the possibility of long-term impacts on the development of diabetes complications.

Suicide Incidence Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic

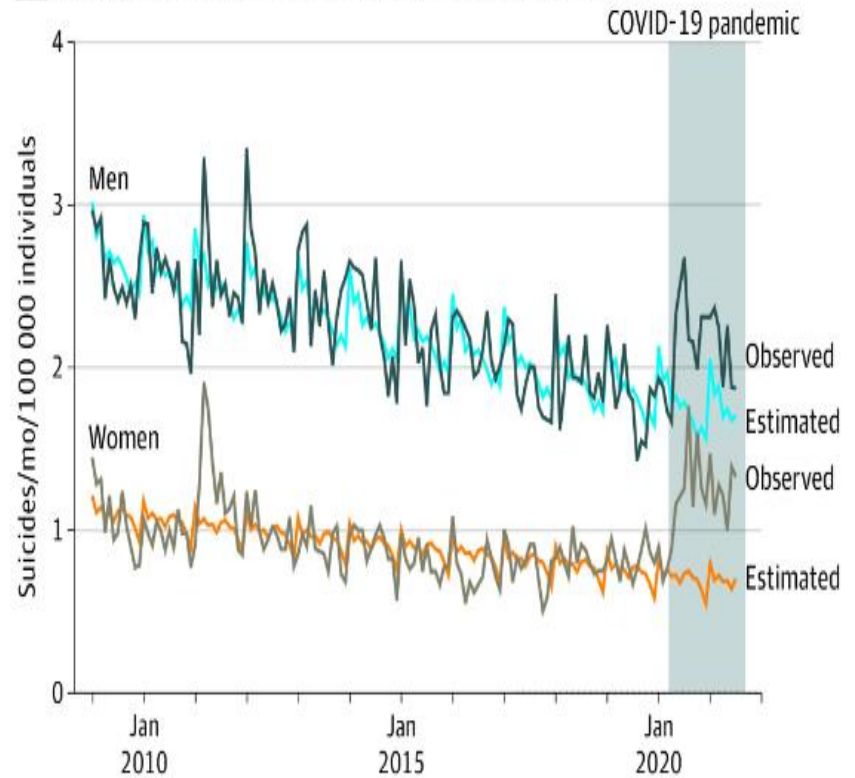
(Horita N & Moriguchi S. JAMA Netw Open 2022
doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.4739)



A Estimated and observed suicide incidence

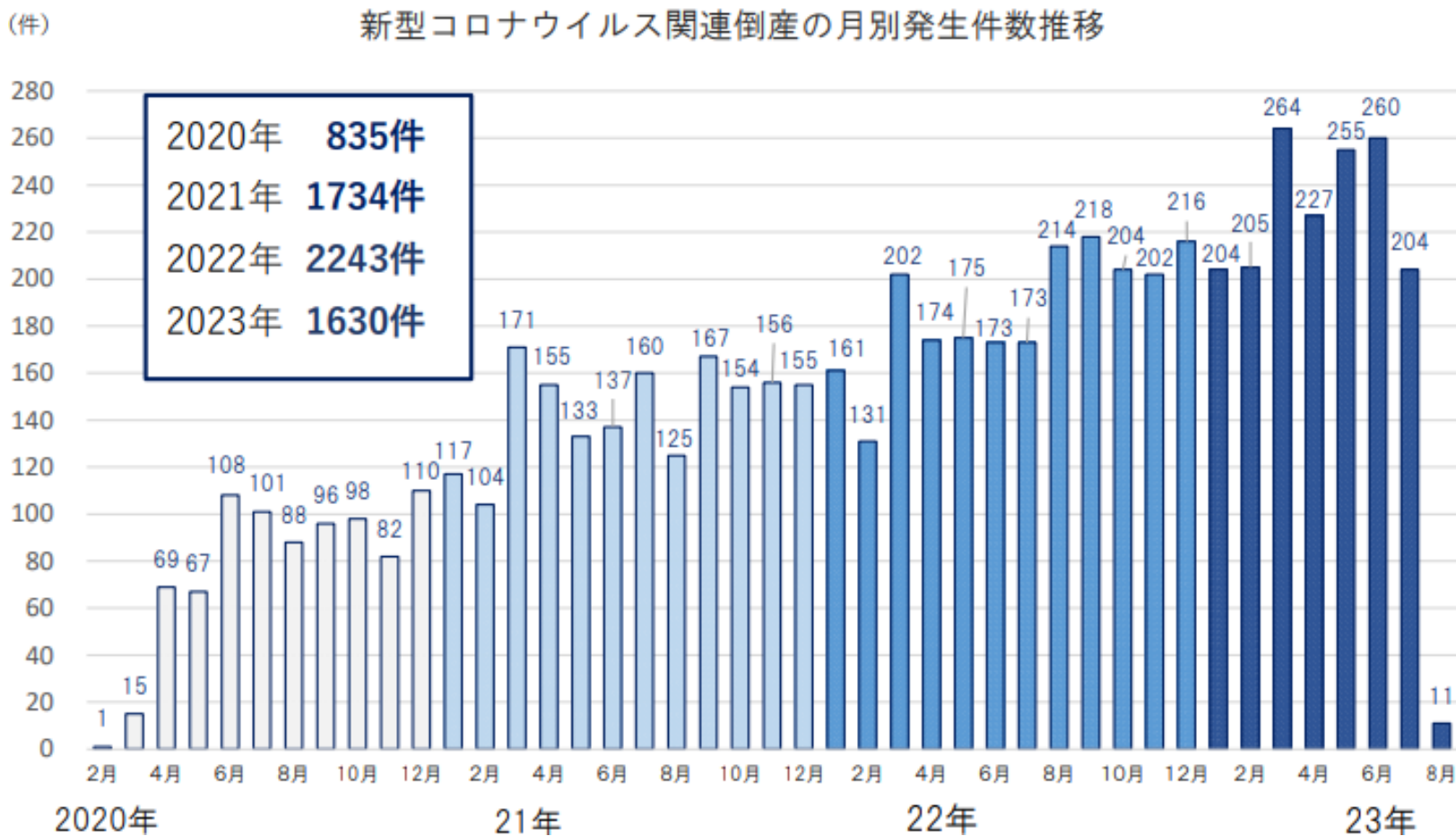


C Estimated and observed suicide incidence among ages 20-29 y



Number of COVID-19 related bankruptcies in Japan between Feb. 2020 and Aug. 10, 2023

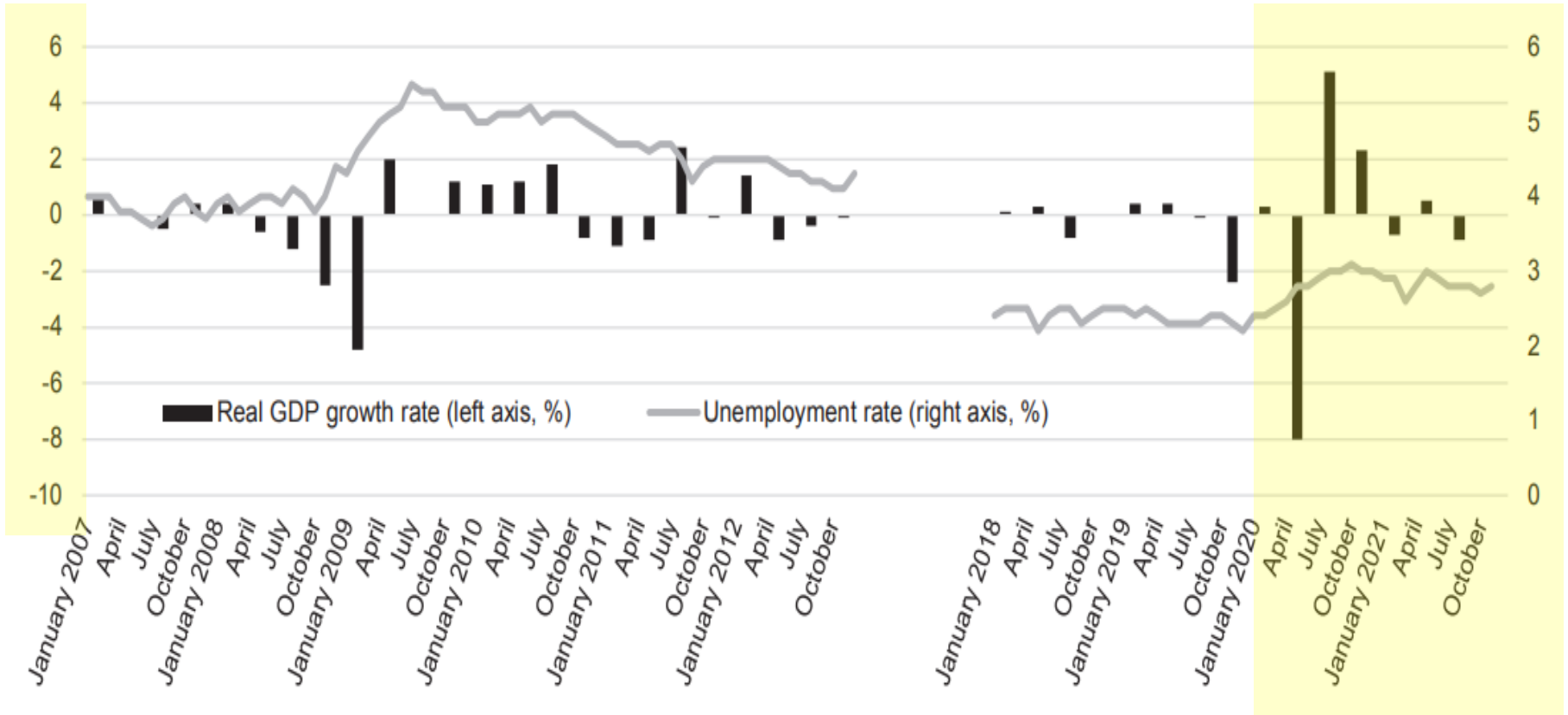
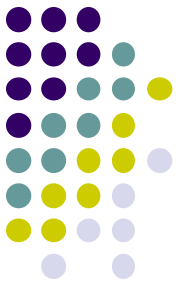
Restaurants/Bars, Construction industry, Food wholesalers, Hotels, and Apparel industry were most damaged during the COVID-19 pandemic



(Source: Teikoku Databank Ltd. <https://www.tdb.co.jp/tosan/covid19/pdf/tosan.pdf>)

Covid-19's Impact on the Labor Market in Japan

The real GDP growth rate (quarterly) recorded a decline of 8.0% in the second quarter of 2020. However, the highest unemployment rate during the pandemic was only 3.1% in October 2020

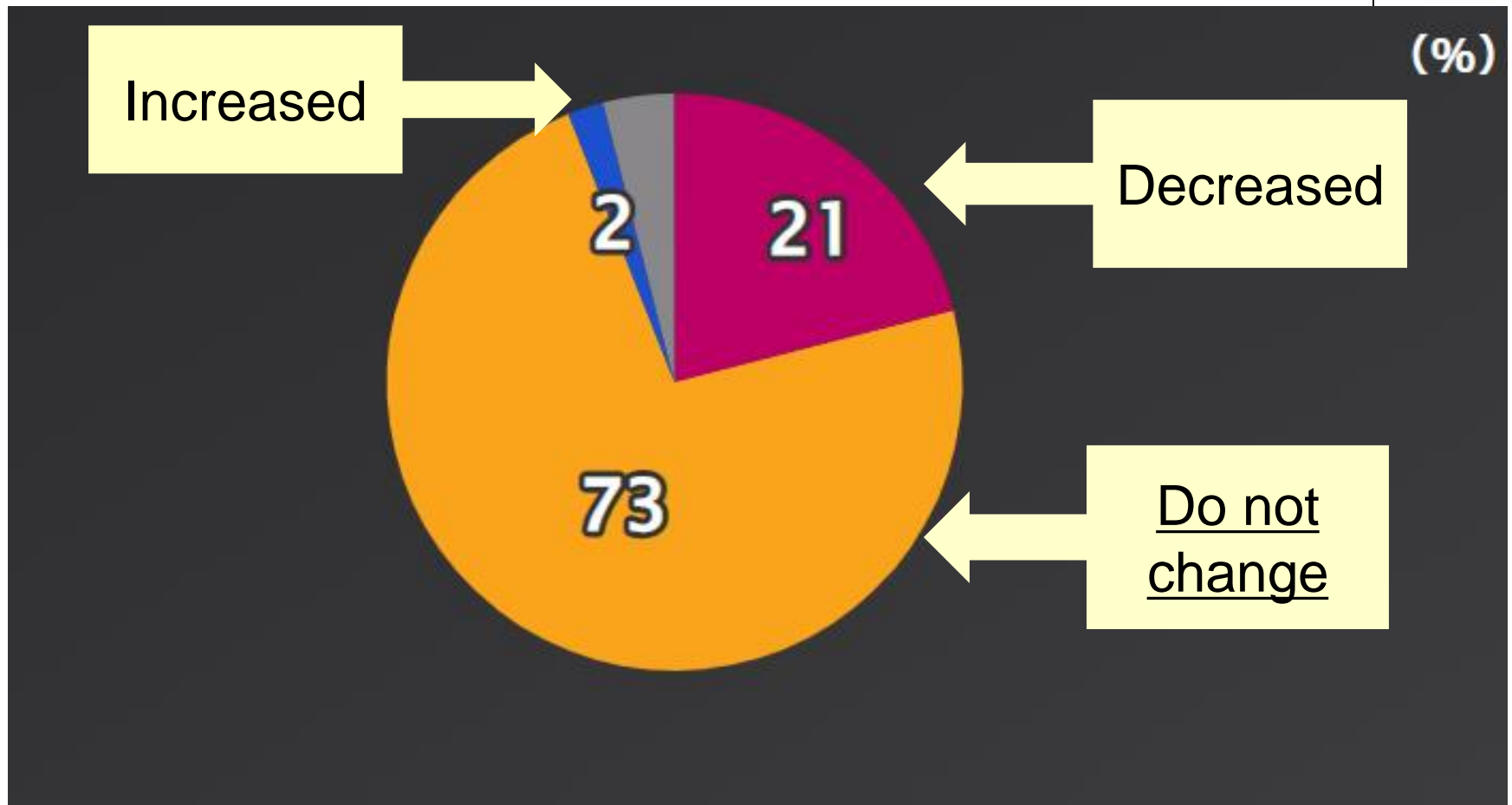
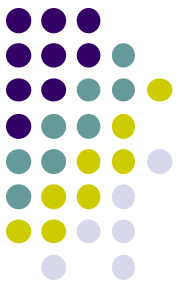


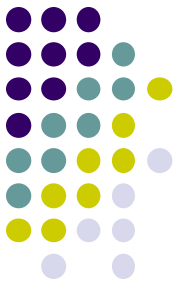
(Cited from Fig 2 of Takahashi's work published in *Japan Labor Issues* (Nov. 2022) <https://www.jil.go.jp/english/jli/documents/2022/40-01.pdf>)

Income change due to Covid-19 in May 2021

Telephone poll by NHK during the period of May 7-9, 2021

<https://www.nhk.or.jp/senkyo/shijiritsu/>

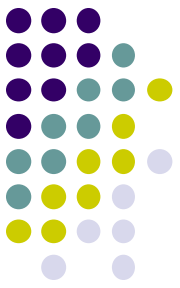




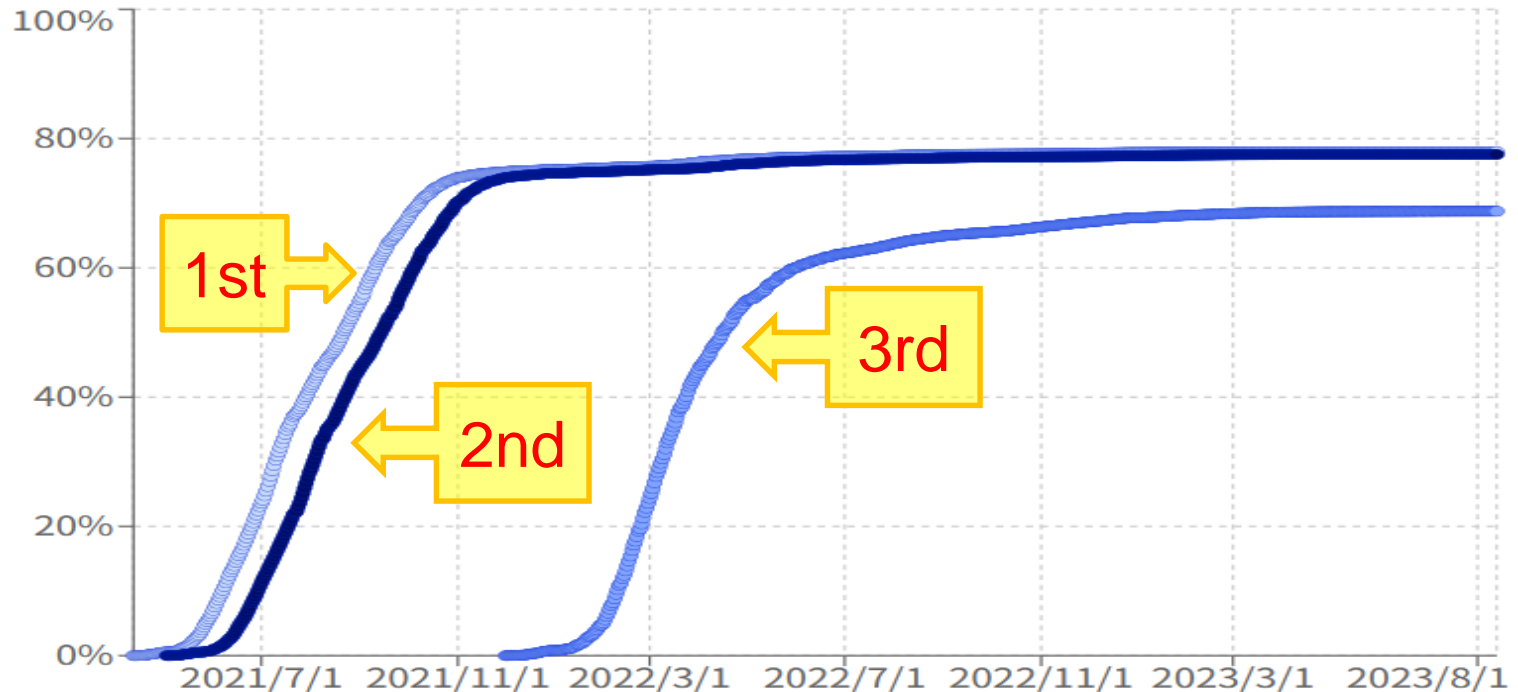
5. Recovery from the pandemic

Vaccine coverage rate (the 1st, 2nd, 3rd rounds)

First round of vaccines for the general public, in order from the elderly, started in April 2021. Subsequent rounds were performed every 6 months.



ワクチン接種率の日次推移



1回目 2回目 3回目

Vaccination Record System (Digital Agency, Japan)

<https://info.vrs.digital.go.jp/dashboard/>

Decreases in severity rate and fatality rate of Covid-19

(Government's Covid-19 Advisory Board.)

<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/10900000/001027743.pdf>

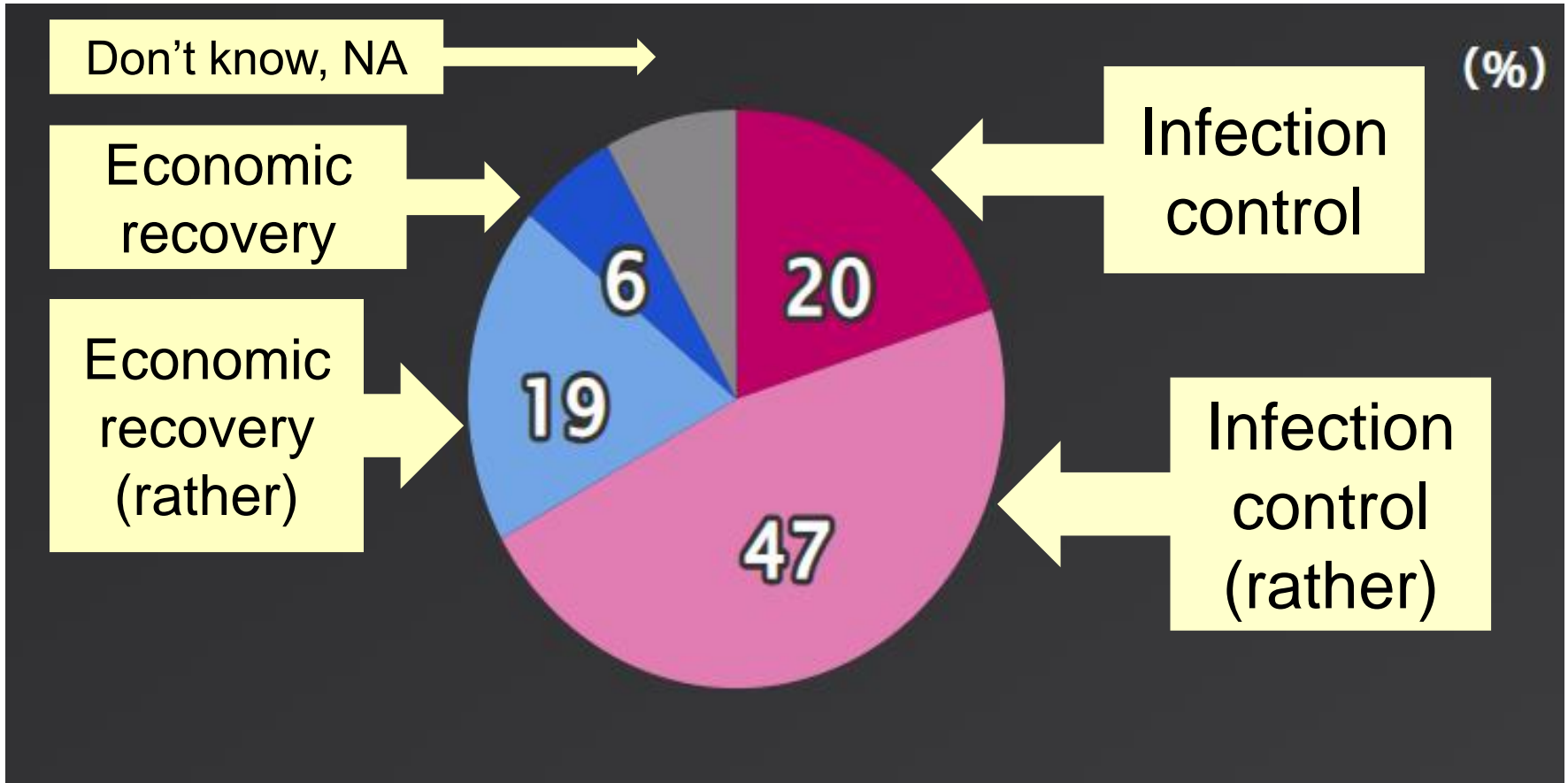
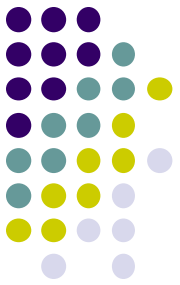


		Severity rate (95% CI)			Fatality rate (95% CI)		
		under 60	60-79	80-	under 60	60-79	80-
新型コロナウイルス		重症化率 (95%信頼区間)			致死率 (95%信頼区間)		
		60歳未満	60・70歳代	80歳以上	60歳未満	60・70歳代	80歳以上
	2021年7～10月	0.56% (0.47-0.65)	3.88% (3.12-4.77)	10.21% (7.65-13.27)	0.08% (0.05-0.12)	1.34% (0.90-1.91)	7.92% (5.66-10.70)
	2022年1～2月	0.03% (0.02-0.04)	1.22% (1.03-1.43)	5.04% (4.51-5.62)	0.01% (0.00-0.01)	0.70% (0.56-0.87)	4.57% (4.06-5.12)
	2022年3～4月	0.03% (0.02-0.04)	0.79% (0.63-0.99)	3.50% (2.91-4.17)	0.01% (0.00-0.01)	0.43% (0.31-0.58)	3.12% (2.56-3.76)
	2022年5～6月	0.01% (0.01-0.03)	0.34% (0.21-0.51)	1.66% (1.18-2.26)	0.00% (0.00-0.01)	0.14% (0.07-0.27)	1.53% (1.08-2.12)
	2022年7～8月	0.01% (0.01-0.02)	0.26% (0.22-0.31)	1.86% (1.68-2.06)	0.00% (0.00-0.01)	0.18% (0.15-0.23)	1.69% (1.51-1.88)

Infection control or economic recovery in July 2020

Telephone poll by NHK during the period of July 10-12, 2020

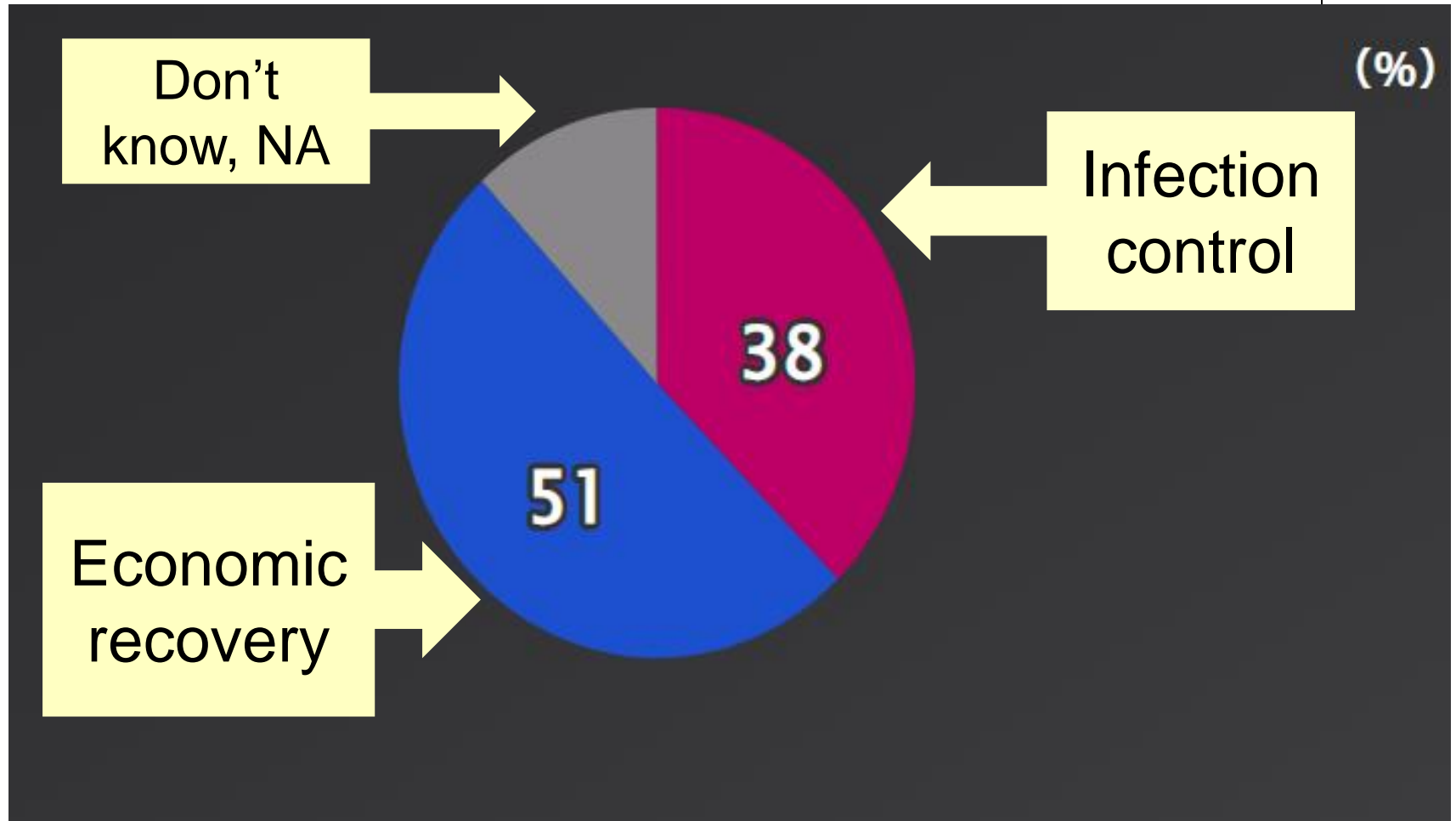
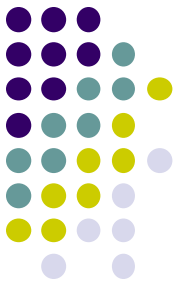
<https://www.nhk.or.jp/senkyo/shijiritsu/>



Infection control or economic recovery in May 2022

Telephone poll by NHK during the period of May 6-8, 2022

<https://www.nhk.or.jp/senkyo/shijiritsu/>





6. Final remarks

- Government measures and people's personal preventive efforts have worked.
- However, countermeasures have also caused widespread social damage.
- Comprehensive evaluation of balancing saving lives and livelihood is necessary but yet to be made.

Mask wearing in summer 2023

Telephone poll by NHK during the period of August 11-13, 2023

<https://www.nhk.or.jp/senkyo/shijiritsu/>

