# CHERRY PICKING (AND HOW TO AVOID IT)

ALBERTO PULIAFITO

# Without data, you're just another person with an opinion

Yes, but with a selection bias, you're someone with awful data and very bad conclusions

«I see some who are mightily given to study and comment upon their almanacs, and produce them to us as an authority when anything has fallen out pat; and, for that matter, it is hardly possible but that these alleged authorities sometimes stumble upon a truth amongst an infinite number of lies. ... I think never the better of them for some such accidental hit. ... [N]obody records their flimflams and false prognostics, forasmuch as they are infinite and common; but if they chop upon one truth, that carries a mighty report, as being rare, incredible, and prodigious»

Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) - Essay on Profecies

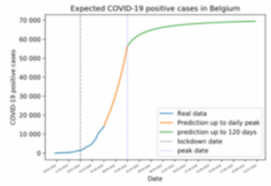
PREDICT COVID19

TREND MODEL TEAM PREDICTIONS

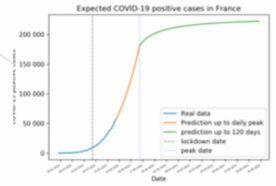
Generate a prediction graph, based on our model, from COVID-19 case numbers

## World Predictions

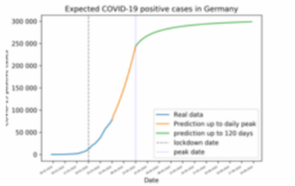
Austria Cases




Belgium Cases



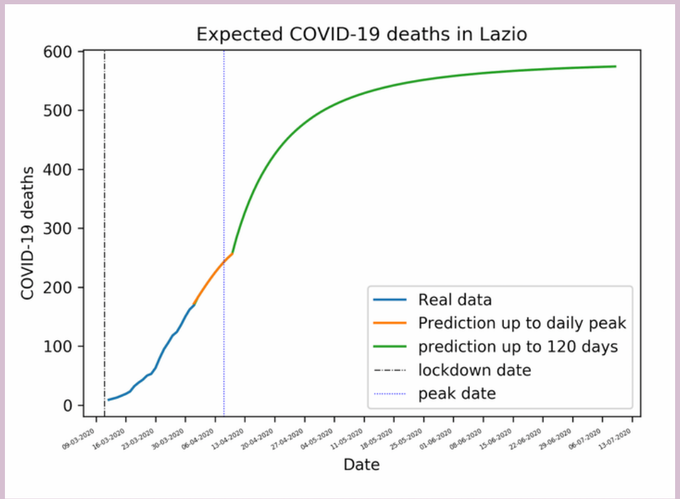

France Cases




Germany Cases

Iran Cases

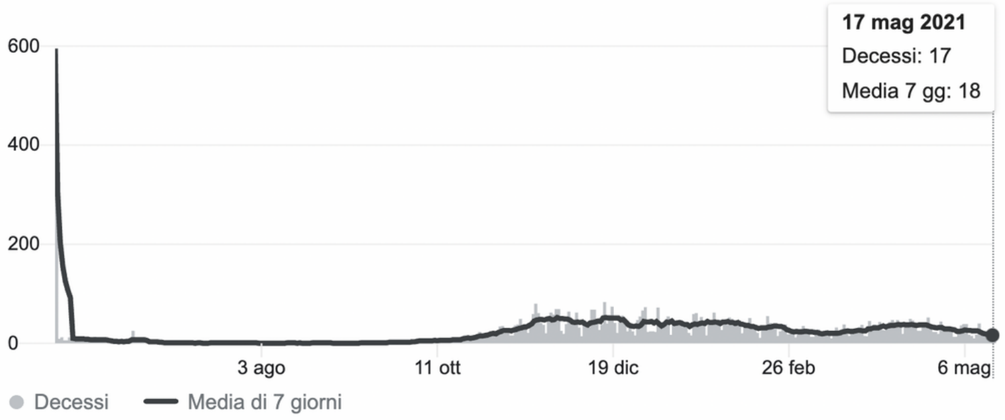
Italy Cases




## Nuovi casi e decessi

Da JHU CSSE COVID-19 Data · Ultimo aggiornamento: 2 giorni fa

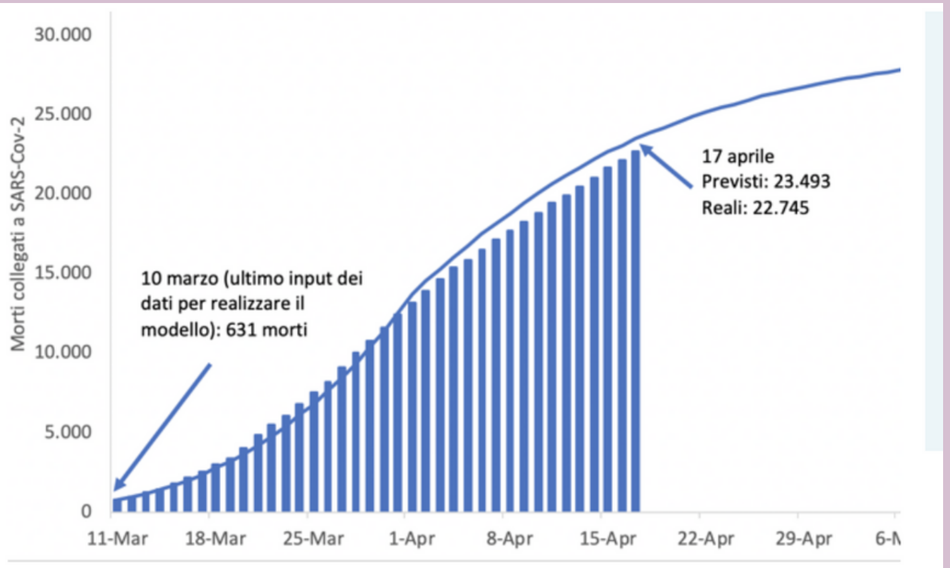
Decessi | Italia | Lazio | Dall'inizio




Ciascun giorno mostra i decessi segnalati dal giorno precedente · Informazioni su questi dati

IL MODELLO PREDITTIVO

# Coronavirus, lockdown e stop alle industrie servono davvero? Lo studio italiano




Sarebbero solo i primi 17 giorni successivi all'applicazione delle misure di contenimento a determinare l'entità della diffusione del contagio nella pandemia di Covid-19, che sembrerebbe dipendere dunque esclusivamente dai focolai divampati per caso nei primi giorni (come quello successo all'ospedale di Codogno o la partita Atalanta–Valencia) e non dalle differenze nel rigore del lockdown. Di conseguenza, qualsiasi misura restrittiva applicata dopo i primi 17 giorni (come la chiusura delle industrie o i divieti alla libertà di movimento dei cittadini) inciderebbe poco o nulla sull'andamento dei contagi e sul numero finale delle vittime.

# 1

# Avoid wishful thinking

# Don't be fascinated by who is telling the opposit of anyone else

2

3

Sometimes, counter-intuitive idea means that the idea's wrong!

# 4

# Look for the counterfactual

Slow News.

# Rapresentatisation avoid selection bias

5

6

Be sure that you can trust your source. Know your source agenda

# 7

# Find different dataset

# Look at the full picture

8

Slow News.

9

# Figure out exactly what kind of data you need

Slow News.

# 10

# Be a journalist, practice the art of doubt

«**If your mother tells** you **she loves you**, kick her smartly in the shins and make her prove it».
or, if you prefer,
«If your data lead you to something that is exactly what you dreamt to prove, squeeze them properly and put them to the test».