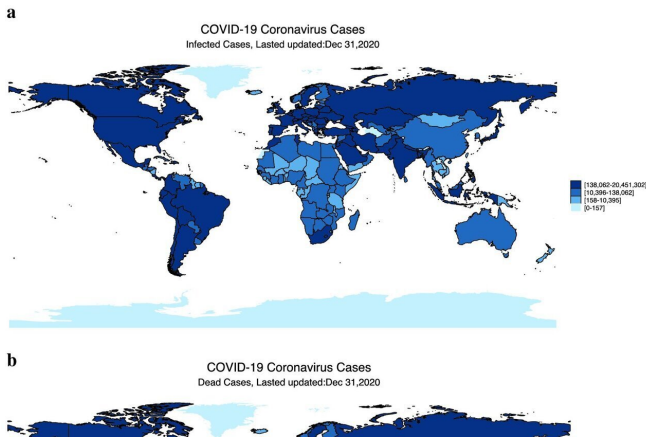


Female leadership attributed to fewer COVID-19 deaths

15 June 2022



The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths across the globe. (a) Shows the distribution of the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases across the globe based on the four quintiles of total confirmed infected cases as of December 31, 2020: (1) 0 to 157, (2) 158 to 10,395, (3) 10,396 to 138,062, and (4) 138,062 to 20,451,302. The darker the color, the higher the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country. For more details, please see Supplementary Information D. (b) Shows the distribution of the number of deaths across the globe based on the four quintiles of total deaths as of December 31, 2020: (1) 0 to 1, (2) 2 to 133, (3) 134 to 2237, and (4) 2238 to 354,316. The darker the color, the higher the number of COVID-19 deaths in that country. Credit: *Scientific Reports* (2022). DOI: 10.1038/s41598-022-09783-9

Countries with female leaders recorded 40% fewer COVID-19 deaths than nations governed by men, according to University of Queensland research.

Associate Professor Kelvin Tan from UQ's Business School says the statistic is a key finding of a study into the impacts different country characteristics, such as leadership, have had on COVID-19 infection and [death rates](#).

"Countries where women were at the head of

government outperformed [countries](#) with male leadership, with an average 39.9% fewer confirmed COVID-19 deaths," Dr. Tan said.

"This figure can be attributed to female leaders taking quick and decisive action, a broader view of the wider impact on society and being more receptive to innovative thinking.

"We found [female leaders](#) tend to act promptly and decisively and are more risk-averse towards the loss of human life, which play an essential role in pandemic prevention and outcomes," he said.

The study analyzed the pandemic response of 91 nations between January and December 2020 and determined that certain country characteristics shaped COVID-19 outcomes.

Dr. Tan said many countries adopted similar approaches to contain the spread of COVID-19, but there were drastic differences in morbidity and mortality, even among those with similar socio-[economic conditions](#) and political backgrounds like Australia and New Zealand.

"As of 31 December 2020, although the population of Australia was only five times that of NZ, Australia had reported around 13 times more infections and 36 times the number of deaths than the numbers reported by New Zealand," he said.

The study found gender ratio, population density, urbanization and [political corruption](#) all intensified the severity of a country's pandemic experience.

Conversely, female [leadership](#), education, religious diversity and [public trust](#) in government were found to reduce rates of infection and death.

"We've identified a set of predetermined, country-specific characteristics that have significantly influenced the outcomes of the pandemic and we hope policymakers use them to manage risk during

future health emergencies," Dr. Tan said.

"Our findings highlight the importance of prevention, rather than treatment, in reducing COVID-19 morbidity and mortality."

The research is published in *Scientific Reports*.

More information: Dianna Chang et al, The determinants of COVID-19 morbidity and mortality across countries, *Scientific Reports* (2022). DOI: [10.1038/s41598-022-09783-9](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-09783-9)

Provided by University of Queensland

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