

Cabbage and COVID-19

Dear Sir,

The recent report by Bousquet and colleagues within your pages¹ builds up on the hypothesis that fermented foods including cabbage, cucumber and other vegetables could be associated with a lower COVID-19 mortality due to their alleged antioxidant effect.²

Diseases, just like species, evolve in time and space, and studying their distribution is a fundamental aspect of epidemiology.³ Given these authors showcase several population approaches by applying geographical epidemiology to COVID-19 indicators, it would be of interest to repeat their statistics conducted during the first wave of COVID-19, again with the current estimates during the ongoing second wave, or later ones. Totally different COVID-19 mortality scenarios are observed,

sometimes within weeks. For instance, any of their reported positive associations within regions in Italy compared to France (Figure 1)⁴ would in turn show negative associations now, there and elsewhere.⁵ Please provide such re-analysis. Actually, COVID-19 death and infection rates change in time within a country or region, while dietary habits remain relatively constant. All in all, we consider it is a practical exercise to teach our medical students on an eventual ecological fallacy.^{6,7}

At any rate, by applying new tools and electronic health at the individual level, perhaps incorporating diet assessments to ongoing portable meters might shed light on their hypothesis.⁸ By the way, in their concluding remarks, COVID-19 might not be the first disease of the Anthropocene.^{9,10}

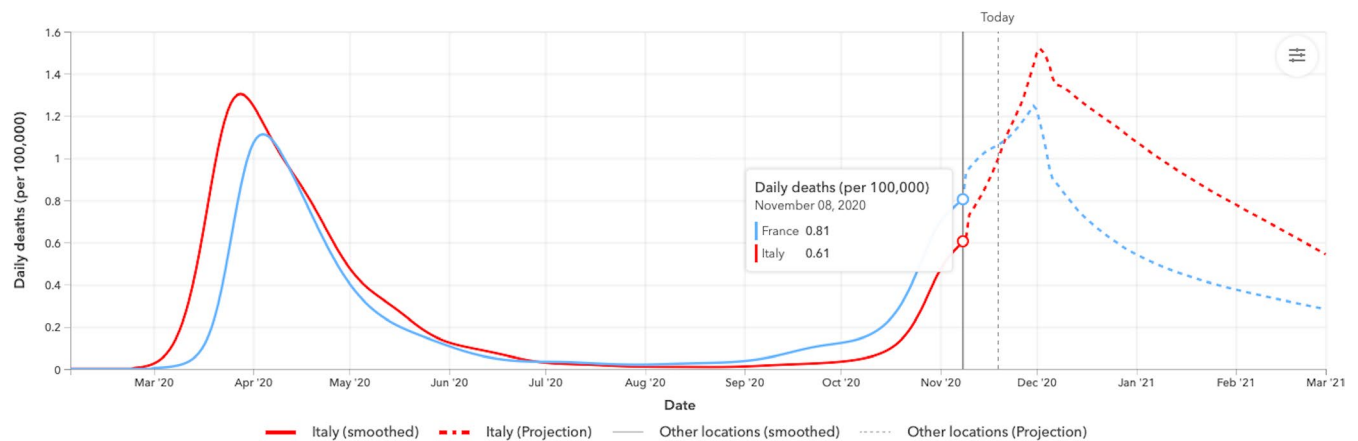



FIGURE 1 Trends in COVID-19 daily deaths in Italy and France up to 6 October 2020 and projected up to 1 January 2021

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have nothing to disclose.

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