Title: COVID-19 in Italy: an Analysis of Death Registry Data

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Abstract: We analyze daily death registry data for a sample of 1,161 Italian municipalities in the seven regions most severely hit by COVID-19. We find that virus might have killed 0.1% of the local population in just over a month and that its mortality is vastly underreported in official statistics, plausibly by a factor of two. But there are also good news for policy-makers: in the Veneto region, which has embraced mass testing, contact tracing, and at-home care provision, COVID-19-induced mortality is respectively three and six times smaller than in neighboring Emilia-Romagna and Lombardia.

Dataset: daily death registry data for a sample of 1,161 Italian municipalities in the seven regions most severely hit by COVID-19 (Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, Lombardia, Marche, Piemonte, Toscana, and Veneto), matched to Census data. Overall, the dataset covers a population of almost 15 million inhabitants, roughly 25% of Italy’s total.

JEL classification: I10, I18, I30

Keywords: COVID-19, Italy, pandemic, epidemic, mortality, registry data, municipality-level data, Lombardia, Veneto, epidemic management

Link to paper