National Narratives – Singapore   **Updated as at 30th Nov 2020**

Singapore has made good progress in containing COVID-19, and Alvin Fu, FIA shares how a populous city brings the virus under control. Alvin heads up AIA, the largest employee benefits insurer in Singapore.

Highlight of Disease Status:

Population as at Mid 2020[1]	5,685,800
Population Density per Sq km	7,810
First Official Case	23-Jan-20
Lockdown	7 April 2020 to 1 June 2020
Number of Days	55
Did Lockdown reduce New Cases?	Yes
Sufficient Capacity in Healthcare System	Yes
Cumulative Cases as at 30 Nov 2020	58,213
New Cases in Nov 20	210
New Cases in Nov 20 Per 000 Population	0.04
Case Fatality Ratio	0.05%

Singapore's Initial Response

As early as 2nd January 2020, Singapore was aware of the situation in Wuhan, China. The Singapore Ministry of Health (MOH) took precautionary steps to alert medical practitioners as well as to expand temperature screenings at Changi Airport.

On the 23rd January 2020[2] Singapore had its the first imported case. A Chinese national from Wuhan was reported by Singapore Ministry of Health. Thereafter, Singapore took steps to expand its temperature screening at all entry points, to introduce travel declarations and to make a 14 days leave of absence mandatory for teachers and students returning from mainland China. As at 31st January 2020, Singapore had a total of 16 imported cases from Wuhan[3] with no evidence of community spread.

In February and March 2020, small clusters of local transmission were formed. On the 4th February 2020[4] the first local cluster of four women who had not travelled to Wuhan was identified. They worked at Yong Thai Hang medical shop which serves mainly Chinese tourists. On the 7th February as

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[1] https://www.singstat.gov.sg/find-data/search-by-theme/population/population-and-population-structure/latest-data

[2] https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/wuhan-virus-pneumonia-singapore-confirms-first-case-12312860
https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/confirmed-imported-case-of-novel-coronavirus-infection-in-0singapore-multi-ministry-taskforce-ramps-up-precautionary-measures

[3] https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/three-more-confirmed-imported-cases-of-wuhan-coronavirus-infection-in-singapore-31-jan

[4] https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/confirmed-cases-of-local-transmission-of-novel-coronavirus-infection-in-singapore
https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/coronavirus-spore-reports-first-cases-of-local-transmission-4-out-of-6-new-cases-did-not

more local community cases surfaced, the Ministry of Health raised the nation's Disease Outbreak Response System Condition ('DORSCON') from yellow to orange[5]. Orange is the second highest level and indicates that the disease is severe, spreads easily but is being contained[6].

With the elevated status of DORSCON Orange, government ministries issued various advisories. This included deferment of large-scale events, mandatory temperature screening, working in split teams as well as the activation of 900 clinics[7] to help detect and manage COVID-19 infections. As at 31st March 2020, Singapore had 926 cases of which 240 fully recovered, 3 died and the rest were in hospital.[8]

Lockdown Imposed

As at 2nd April 2020, there were 1,049 cases, of which 533 were imported whilst 516 were local transmission. Given the rise in the number of local transmissions, Singapore imposed a lockdown (called "Circuit Breaker") between 7th April 2020 to 1st June 2020. This resulted in the closure of schools, workplaces and places of worship in order to limit the spread of COVID-19. Non-essential healthcare services such as non-emergency medical treatment[9] were also disallowed in order to free capacity in the healthcare system to cope with the COVID-19 cases. This resulted in lower hospital admission and outpatient utilisation during the period.

Whilst this was effective in reducing the virus spread, it also sent the Singapore economy into a recession. Singapore's GDP for 2nd quarter 2020 declined by 12.6[10]%

Epidemic progression by case type

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[5] https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/risk-assessment-raised-to-dorscon-orange

[6] gov.sg | What do the different DORSCON levels mean (www.gov.sg)

[7] https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/additional-pre-emptive-measures-to-reduce-risk-of-community-transmission

[8] https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/12-more-cases-discharged-47-new-cases-of-COVID-19-infection-confirmed

[9] https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/continuation-of-essential-healthcare-services-during-period-of-heightened-safe-distancing-measures

[10] https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-14/singapore-slumps-into-recession-with-41-2-fall-in-quarterly-gdp

On the 5th April 2020, the situation worsened with two foreign worker dormitory clusters[11]. Due to close living conditions in these dormitories, the disease spread like fire on dry grass. Singapore saw clusters after clusters of new cases in May and June 2020. As at 30th June 2020[12], Singapore had a cumulative total of 43,907 cases, of which 41,446 were dormitory residents.

Local community cases remained small and on 2nd June 2020 the Singapore "Circuit Breaker" was lifted and rules were relaxed slightly as part of the 'Phase 1 Safe Reopening' plan from 2nd June to 18th June[13].

Phase 2 from the 19th June to the time of writing at 30th November saw the resumption of most business activities with telecommuting as the default mode of working, social gatherings of up to 5 persons, and safe distancing of 1 metre. Conferences and sports events are also being piloted up to 200 persons.

Current Situation

As at 15th October 2020, Singapore appeared to have wrestled the infection within control with only 1 new case of a dormitory resident and no community cases. Singapore recorded a total of 57,892 cases, of which 57,764 fully recovered, 28 died and the rest were hospitalised.

Between 11th November and 30th November 2020, there were only 4 new cases[14] of community infection. The rest of the cases were imported cases from citizens returning to Singapore.

The government has been promoting the use of a TraceTogether App which uses bluetooth to track people who have come into contact with a COVID-19 positive person more rapidly. The nation is waiting for an increase from the current 51% to 70%[15] adoption of TraceTogether by its residents before it enters into Phase 3 which is a further relaxation of safe distancing rules. This is likely to happen in the first quarter of 2021.

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[11] https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/23-more-cases-discharged-120-new-cases-of-COVID-19-infection-confirmed

[12] https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-a-30-jun.pdf

[13] https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/moving-into-phase-two-of-re-opening

[14] https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/no-new-cases-of-locally-transmitted-COVID-19-infection-18nov-update

[15] Phase 3 unlikely by end of year unless more use TraceTogether, experts say, Singapore News & Top Stories - The Straits Times