



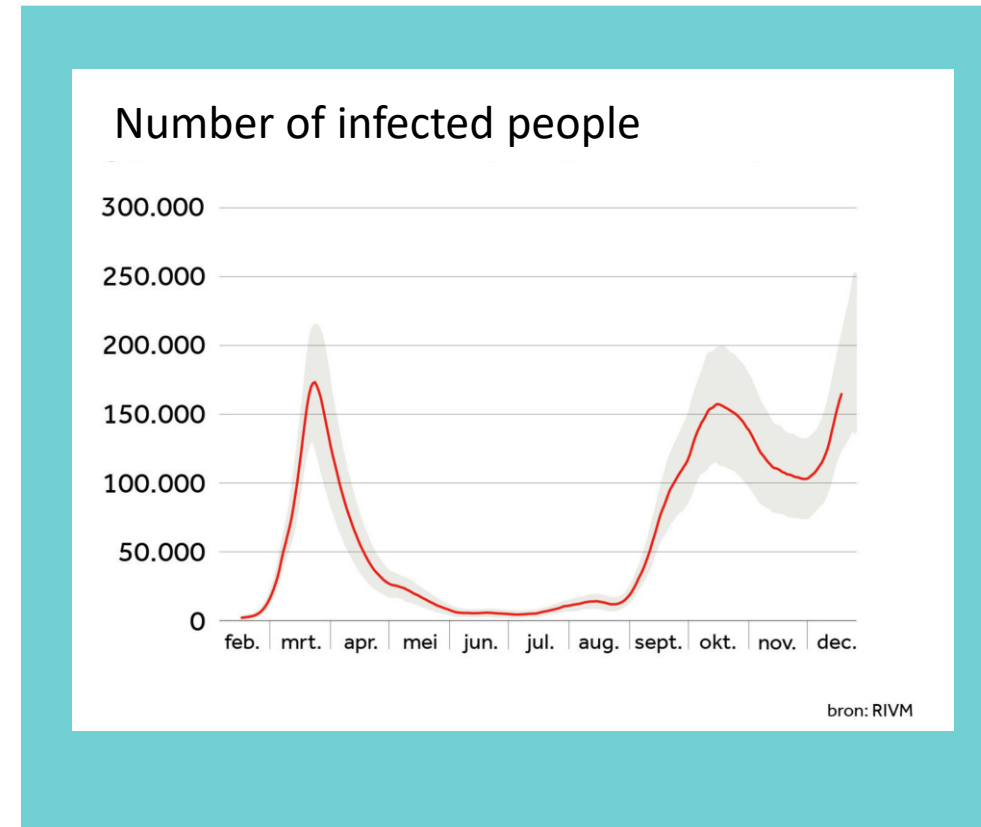
MCH Handbook: Ensuring maternal and child health care amidst the COVID 19 pandemic in The Netherlands

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Covid-19 epidemic in the Netherlands



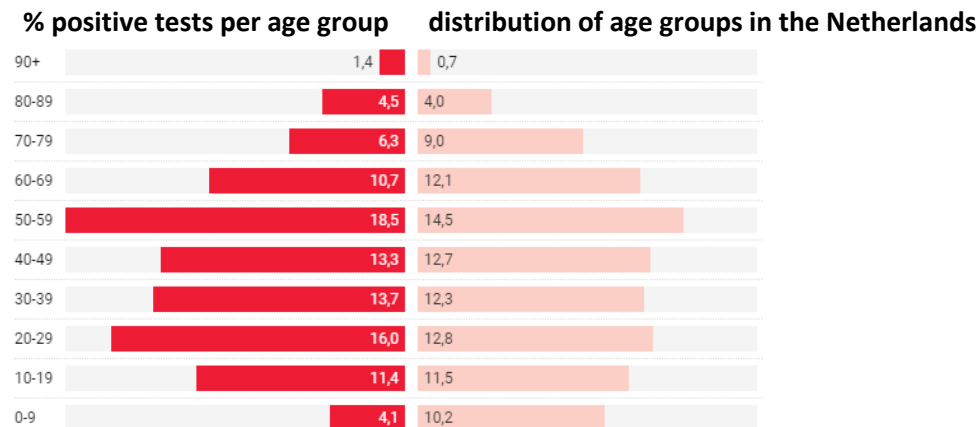
- First case 27 february 2020
- First 'wave' of the epidemic and lockdown: March-May 2020
- Currently second wave and again lockdown since December till 2nd March(?).



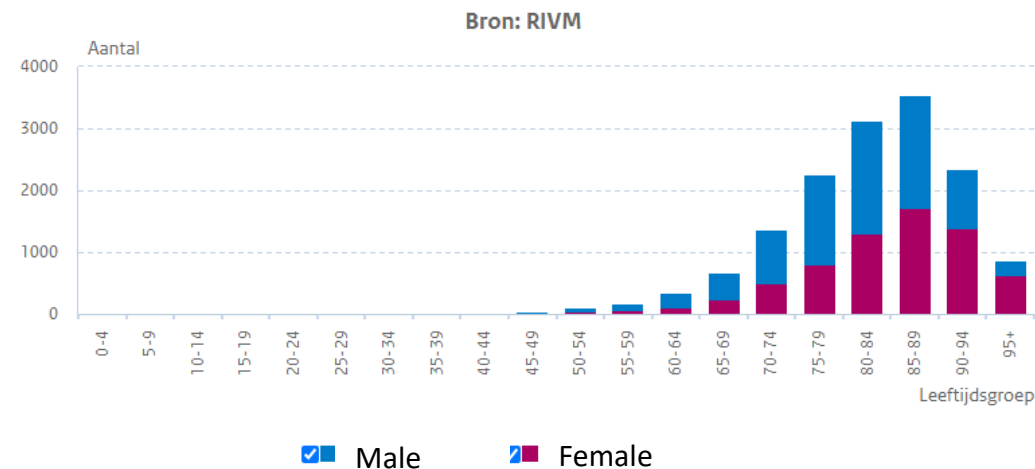


Covid-19 epidemic in the Netherlands

- 1.034.795 Cases / 15.017 Deaths
(871 per million people)
(feb 17, 2021)
- Pressure on the health system,
esp. for IC units, but no collaps
- Vaccination started in january 2021



Age and sex of deceased patients

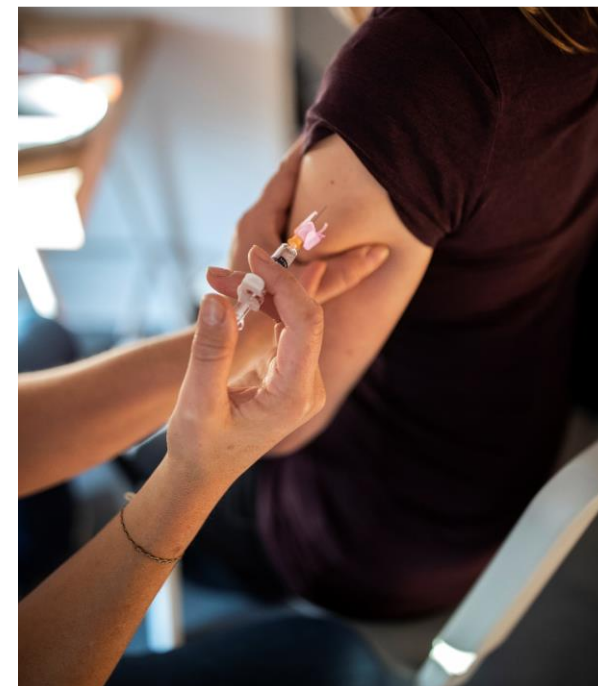




Role of public health service

The role of the public health services (GGD) in the containment of the COVID 19 crisis:

- Containing the disease as well as possible and keep its effects on (public) health as limited as possible.
- Cooperation with national organizations
- Weekly consultation between the Directors of the Public Health services and the Minister.
- Testing and contact tracing have been a big task. But also has the public health service a role in advising on how to deal with prevention measures (and its effect on public (mental) health). Such as e.g. schools, childcare, sports clubs, etc.
- The public health services are responsible for vaccinating everyone from 18 years and older, without medical indication.

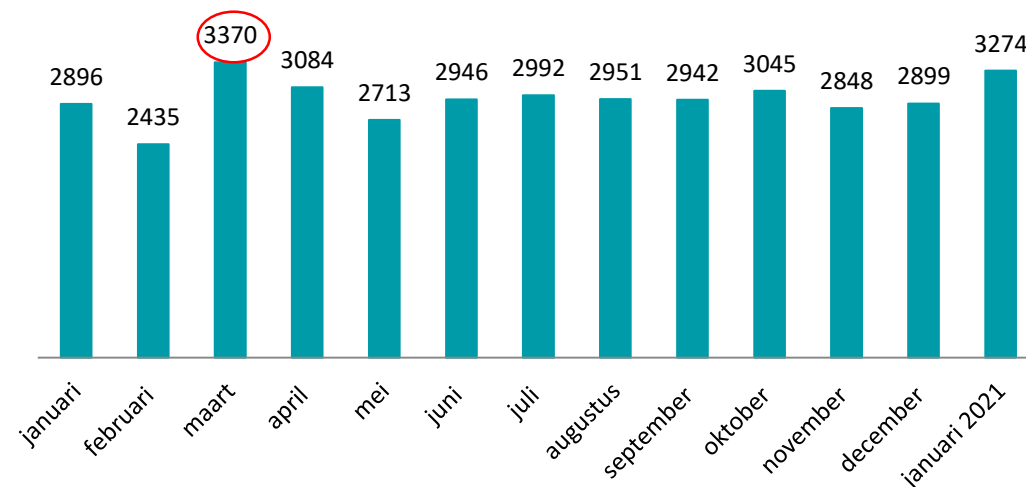




Implications for Maternal and Child Healthcare

- Maternal healthcare: less consultations with midwife, less contact with partners, limitation of maternity visits
- Digital consultations and digital pregnancy classes (but in the first wave less options)
- Youth Healthcare services: only for < 14 months old. Older children: tele-consultation or on indication at facility
- Screenings and vaccinations continue (in the first wave it stopped for 4 weeks)
- Increase in use of GrowthGuide chatservice for parents (<6 yrs)

Number of chat sessions per month





Implication for parents (to be) and their children

- Lockdown (schools closed, working from home) is a burden for mental health of children and parents
- More reported domestic violence; increase of mental health problems esp. among youth
- Expected delay in school performance for children in areas with lower ses (less support in homeschooling)
- Opening day care centers and primary schools for vulnerable children and for children of parents with crucial professions

- Less frequent consultations of general practioners and dentists
- Underdiagnosis and delayed treatment (patients' delay as well as doctors' delay)



Role of the MCH Handbook



Lots of misinformation – > **MCH handbook serves as a trustworthy source**

Through the GrowthGuide app message service we are able to send direct messages to parents(to-be) and help them finding valid information.

*The messages were continuously updated with the latest corona measures

*The website content was enriched with specific texts for parents; professionals and young people about COVID19

GrowthGuide Chat for parents expanded:

– increased staff occupation; 3 new regions joined the chatservice from april 2020.



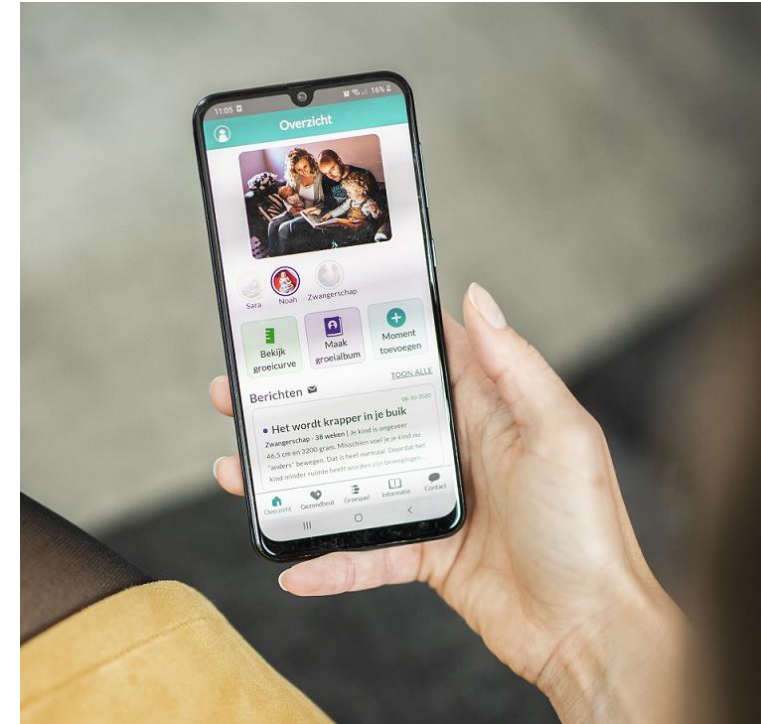
Example of the messages in the GrowthGuide app



“The 22-week vaccination for pregnant women will also continue in this period of Covid19. But do you have complaints of a cold, sore throat, cough or fever? Or does someone else in your family have a fever? Then stay at home and postpone the appointment. More information about the maternal whooping cough vaccination can be found [here](#).”

“Do you have questions about feeding, sleeping, crying or the development of your baby? Ask the youth nurse during the weighing consultation hour of the baby welfare clinic. During Covid19 restrictions, the Youth Health Care Services try to continue weighing consultations. You are currently requested to make an appointment in advance for the weighing consultation. And to visit the clinic with a maximum of 1 person and to stay at home in case of health complaints.”

“How do you explain tot your young child what corona is and why we have certain rules and restrictions. On this website ([link](#)) you find stories, video’s and information for young children.”



Important points



- GrowtGuide mobile application message service provides opportunities for reaching parents (to-be) with tailored and topical information
- Digitalization of Youth Healthcare services appears to be accelerating – which increases the demand for the GrowthGuide app and GrowthGuide chat services
- Scale up of the GrowthGuide means more budget and more possibilities for improving the app, connecting with e-health modules and improving chat services

