



Why Has the UAE Been Praised for its COVID-19 Response?

The editor-in-chief of one of the world's most prestigious scientific journals has praised the UAE government for its response to coronavirus. Richard Horton, who has occupied the top job at **The Lancet journal** for the last 25 years, showed particular appreciation for the country's "strong leadership" and an approach which values the opinion of scientists highly.

To date, the UAE has witnessed over 115,000+ total cases and just 463 deaths from coronavirus, with over 107,000+ people making full recoveries. With the virus appearing to peak in mid-May, the government has implemented a stringent programme of tests and safety measures geared towards guaranteeing it does not make a resurgence.

An impressive response

The UAE's response to the crisis was as swift as it was decisive. The first confirmed case to hit Emirati shores occurred on 29th January 2020, causing the government to draw up an immediate response plan. The nation's main cities went under a strict lockdown regime, as teams of trained professionals sprayed urban spaces with disinfectant solutions to remove traces of the virus from public areas.

Face masks, which [have been proven to slow the spread of COVID-19](#), were made compulsory for anyone leaving their home and continue to be mandatory to this day. But above and beyond these conventional measures, which most countries around the world have implemented to some degree, the UAE has gone even further.

Technological breakthroughs

It became only the second nation (behind South Korea) to open drive-through testing centres, for example, while it also pioneered the use of a laser diagnostics test, which analyses saliva samples and returns results within mere minutes. UAE authorities were also responsible for establishing a PCR test lab on an industrial scale in just two weeks, which is capable of conducting thousands of tests on a daily basis.

As for treating the disease, the UAE became the first country to adopt nebulisers to administer stem cell therapy treatment, which has been instrumental in alleviating the symptoms of sufferers and discharging them from hospital more efficiently. The UAE is also the first nation to have hosted a Phase III clinical trial for a coronavirus vaccine.



Favourable comparisons

When weighing up the UAE's response in comparison to other countries around the world, Horton was full of praise for the Emirati government's approach. "This comes down to a political leadership that is sensitive to the science and that is attuned to the risks," [he explained](#). "The political leaders (in the UAE) were listening to the scientists and were able to pivot very quickly to protect its citizens."

Horton's words also contained a veiled criticism of the response of certain other countries, including President Trump's handling of the crisis in the USA. "The connection between science and government is almost non-existent," he remarked disparagingly.