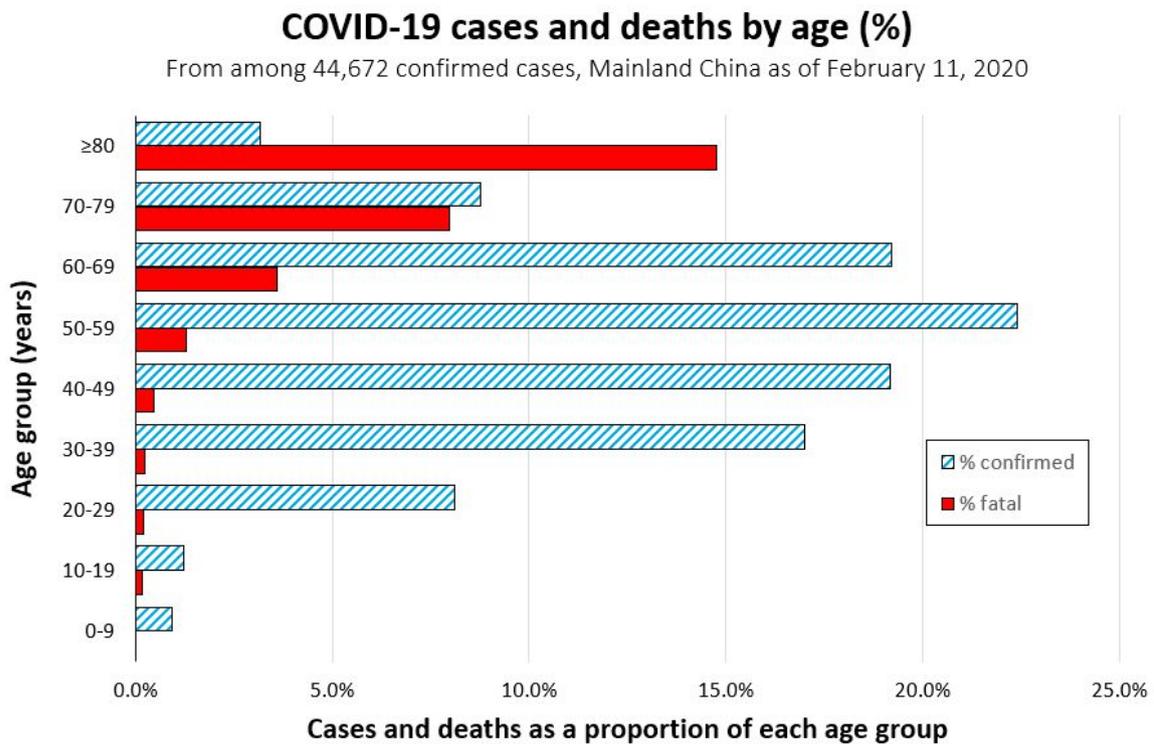


A public letter to the developers of "Mask Alimi"

--a Facebook post made by Minkyu Kim on 11th March 2020

Today, I was introduced to the existence of the "Mask Alimi" service through my personal social media. The rapid spread of coronavirus infection-19 (Corona 19) has affected many regions at home and abroad, leading to the need for masks and disruptions in supply and demand of masks. I understand that the developers were aware of the problem and produced the service. However, this service does more harm than good in public health. I will explain the reason as follows.

1. More masks are needed for the elderly.



Data from Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia Emergency Response Epidemiology Team
The Epidemiological Characteristics of an Outbreak of 2019 Novel Coronavirus Diseases (COVID-19) — China, 2020
China CDC Weekly Vol.2
Prepared by Ian M Mackay, virologydownunder.com
Data up to: 11FEB2020
Last update: 25FEB2020 AEST

[Figure 1] COVID-19 Fatal Rate by Age Group (February 28) - China Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

According to a recent study of 44,672 confirmed cases by the China Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CCCCDC), the fatality rate among people in their 70s and 80s is 8.0% and 14.8%, while those in their teens, 20s and 30s are 0.2%, the lowest among all age groups. The number of confirmed cases is also the highest in the 50s, and the lower the age, the faster the confirmed rate decreases.

국내 '코로나19' 현황

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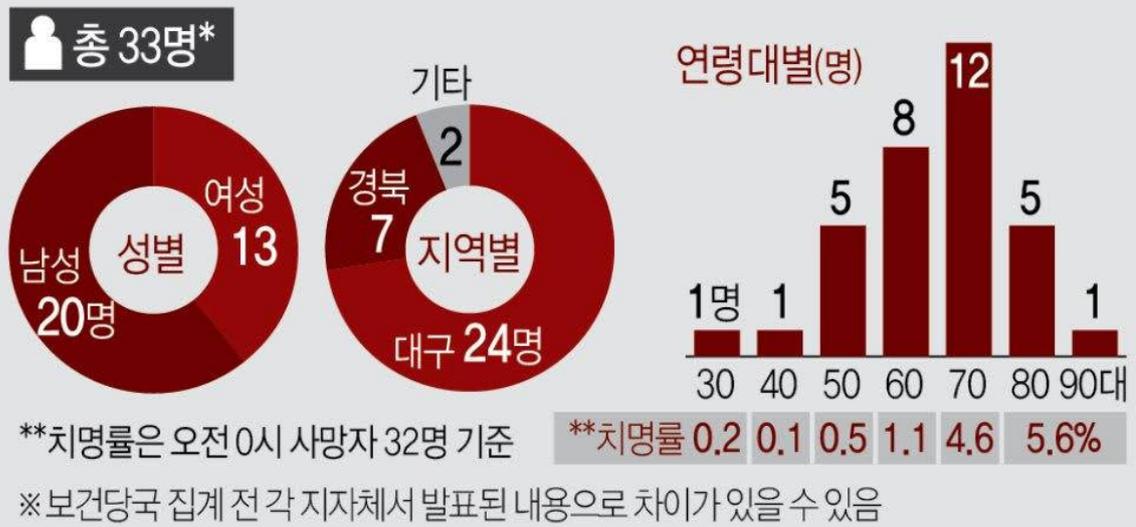


검사 현황



사망자 현황

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/ 20200304

트위터 @yonhap_graphics, 페이스북 tuneY.kr/LeYN1

[Figure 2] Status of COVID-19 in Korea (March 4) - Yonhap News Agency

This is the same trend in Korea. As of midnight on March 4, the fatality rate among people in their 70s and 80s was 4.6 percent and 5.6 percent, the highest among all age groups, while teens and 20s had not had a single death toll so far.

꼭! 코로나바이러스감염증-19 예방 기억해야 할 행동수칙

국민 예방수칙



흐르는 물에 비누로
꼼꼼하게 손씻기



기침이나 재채기할 때
옷소매로 입과 코 가리기



씻지 않은 손으로
눈·코·입 만지지 않기



발열, 호흡기 증상자와의
접촉 피하기

특히 임신부, 65세 이상, 만성질환자 외출 시 꼭 준수



의료기관 방문 시
마스크 착용하기



사람 많은 곳
방문 자제하기

[Figure 3] Part of the Korean Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Code of Conduct

Accordingly, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) recommends wearing masks only when visiting medical institutions, when there are symptoms, when pregnant women, 65 years of age or older, or when people with chronic diseases go out, and has not recommended wearing masks to the public who have no symptoms even to this day when the risk alert for infectious diseases is in the "serious" stage. This is consistent with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, which do not recommend wearing a mask without symptoms. Considering this age gap in the need for masks, masks should be given top priority to people with symptoms, pregnant women, the elderly, chronic patients, etc. when the supply of masks is low.

2. The elderly are alienated from access to smartphone/PC information.



[Figure 4] Essential media in daily life by age group

According to the "2018 Broadcasting Media Usage Behavior Survey" released by the Korea Communications Commission on January 24, 2019, more than 90% of essential media that can still receive information in daily life for people in their 70s and older were found on TV, and only 6.2% of smartphones. This contrasts with more than 90% of teens who said smartphones and PCs/laptops were essential media. Although the penetration rate of smartphones has risen sharply over the past decade, and it has been distributed on a large scale to older people in their 60s and older, the usage rate of smartphones as a medium for accessing information has not yet been high.

The "Mask Alarms" service is based on Web applications and is accessible only through PCs and smartphones. The effects of widespread use of this service can be predicted based on the above facts. As the relatively low-risk, low-aged group has easier access to inventory of market masks, and preoccupies purchases, the high-risk group will be forced out of the competition. In short, there is a situation where only young people can buy masks, and the elderly cannot get them.

In its handbook "Managing Epidemics", published in 2018, the WHO clearly states that the mechanism of the market economy does not guarantee fair distribution of resources based on public health needs. I don't want to see your service lead the market of mask purchase competition in a more unfair direction. The most important thing in managing infectious diseases is the proper distribution of quarantine resources. If the tools that effectively reduce the number of infections and deaths are not distributed and inefficient tools are given resources, national quarantine will fail.

Starting next week, the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety will implement policies to ensure public distribution of resources, including limiting purchases per person and implementing a five-part system. However, as long as there is still a small supply compared to the daily demand of the people, your service will affect the competition for purchase, whether small or large.

Your service may not be a service to save more people. As a result, we would like to request a service interruption.

One of the developers, Lee Doo-hee, wrote on her personal social media, "Coding is important for both logical and thinking, but the influence on reality is the most important factor." I hope developers will always try to understand new technologies in their relationships with society and "good development" by looking at how they will affect reality.

Thank you for reading this.

Sincerely, Min-kyu Kim