**Sidebar 1: The new virus in Israel: a young-old country**

Compared with other developed countries, Israel's population is still young in years, with relatively high birth rates and a lower proportion of older persons (65 years +) who make up just over 11.5 % of her population. Still, the absolute number of older people in the country is growing rapidly (ref 1-1). Life expectancies at every age are among the highest in the world, with increasing numbers of people living into very old age (85 + years).

Israel has a top notch, highly socialized national health system (ref 1-2) offering mostly free care from cradle to grave. Community and institutional care are both widely available, but of particular relevance to the COVID-19 pandemic, Israel institutionalizes a lower percentage of her older persons than do many other developed countries at 23.6 persons 65+ per 1000 population (OECD average 47.2; lowest Greece at 4.5; highest Luxemburg at 82.8) (ref 1-3). In Israel, a large proportion of frail older persons who in other countries might otherwise have been institutionalized, are cared for at home often with the help of a legal foreign worker. This shielding practice of keeping such a high proportion of Israel's frail older persons cosseted in their own homes may in part explain her (still) relatively low death rates from COVID-19.

**References for sidebar 1**

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  2. Clarfield A. Mark, Manor O, Bin Nun G, Shvarts S, Azzam ZS, Afek A, Basis F, Israeli A. Health and health care in Israel: an introduction. Lancet 2017; 389:2503-13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)30636-0>
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