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<https://www.swr.de/swraktuell/rheinland-pfalz/mainz/forscher-corona-ende-100.html> -- translation by Sandra Archer

Forecast by researchers from Mainz and Hamburg

End of corona pandemic possibly not before September

Scientists at the universities in Mainz and Hamburg do not expect the corona pandemic in Germany to end before August or September

In a model calculation presented Monday, scientists around Mainz's virologist Prof. Bodo Plachter, came to the conclusion that at times well over one million German citizens could be ill with Covid-19. In the event that imposed contact bans and school closures are lifted after Easter, they expect the epidemic to peak in June, with around 1.3 million people falling ill at the same time.

Scientists speak of "rough prognosis"

If strict measures were to be continued for another two months, experts expect a slightly lower number of people to fall ill (1.2 million), and a postponement of the peak until July. According to this model, the number of new cases would approach zero in August or September.

The figures are "rough predictions", explained the scientists, as some key questions relating to the coronavirus pandemic have not yet been clarified. There are still no reliable figures on how many infected people do not show any symptoms of the disease. It is also not yet possible to say exactly how high the proportion of infected people in the total population will be at the end of the epidemic.

More optimistic scenario

For its calculations, the interdisciplinary research group also developed an "optimistic scenario" based on available figures on the epidemic course in the Chinese province of Hubei and in South Korea.

According to this model, in which only 0.6 percent of the population is reported to be ill, the peak of the epidemic in Germany will be reached in May, both - when the contact ban is lifted or extended. However, most pandemic forecasts predict a figure of six percent – i.e. ten times as many people will call in sick. With approximately 83 million German citizen, that would mean that almost five million people would be ill by the end of the pandemic.

Nevertheless a huge challenge for the health system

"Even if this optimistic scenario is correct, our health care system would face major challenges," explained one of the authors of the model calculation, Klaus Wälde, Professor of Economics in Mainz. In any case, Germany is currently only at the beginning of the epidemic.