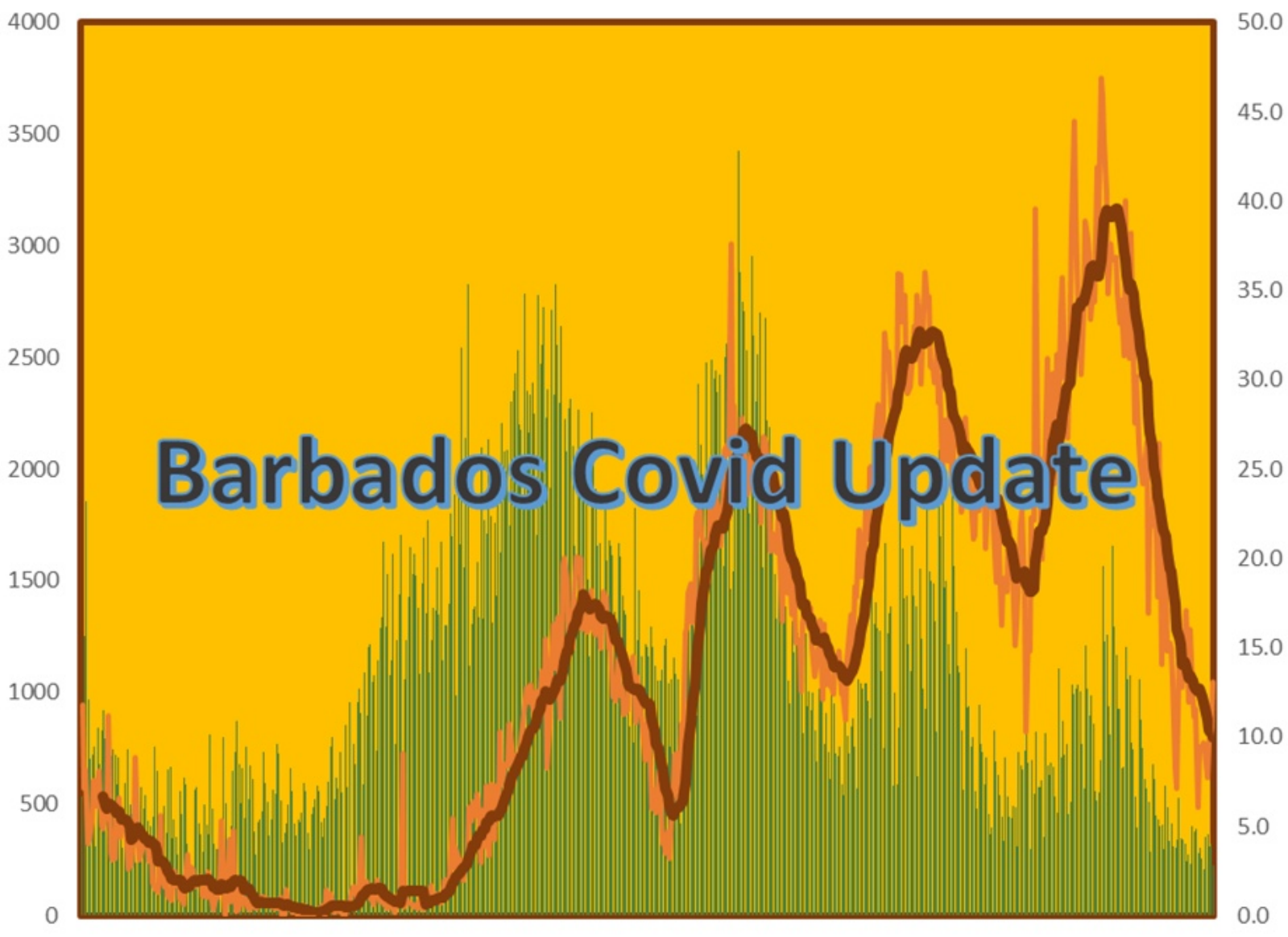


Barbados Covid Update



Barbados Covid Update to End-September

At the end of September, when the Barbados Ministry of Health discontinued daily issuance of data on the Covid situation, the fifth wave of infections had abated. Unlike the previous three waves, the fifth wave has ended with a percentage of positives, around ten percent, which is lower than at the end of the previous two waves (Figure 1). We cannot be confident that the true rate of Covid infection is as low as ten percent, because many infected persons, probably a majority, are not becoming seriously ill and are not going to be tested. The number of tests recorded in the last week of September was less than 400 per day, about a quarter of the volume of daily tests in April and May this year. Only a single death has been recorded since September 13. However, there were 24 persons sufficiently ill to warrant hospitalization (Figure 2), and that number had increased to 25 on October 14, when the first fortnightly report was issued.

Figure 1.

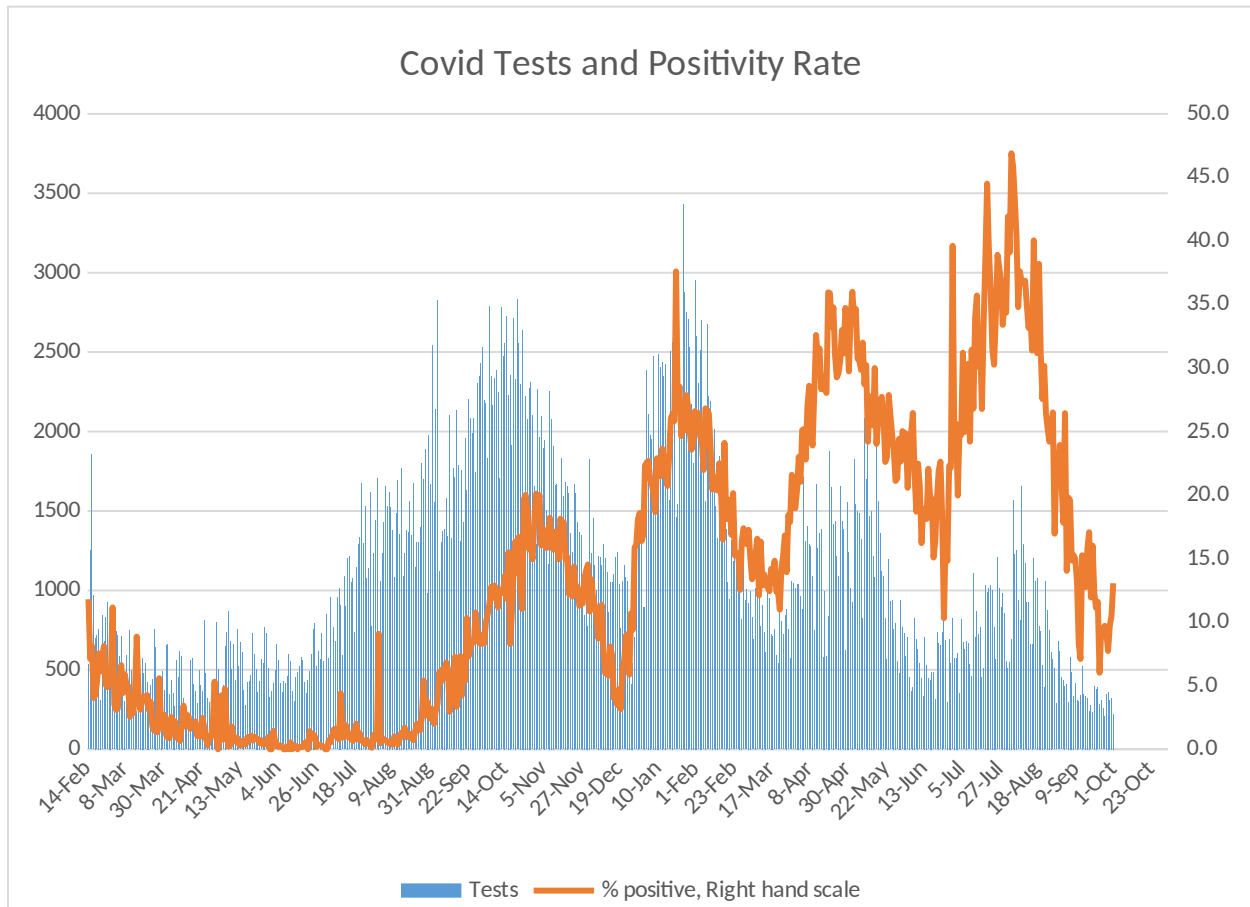
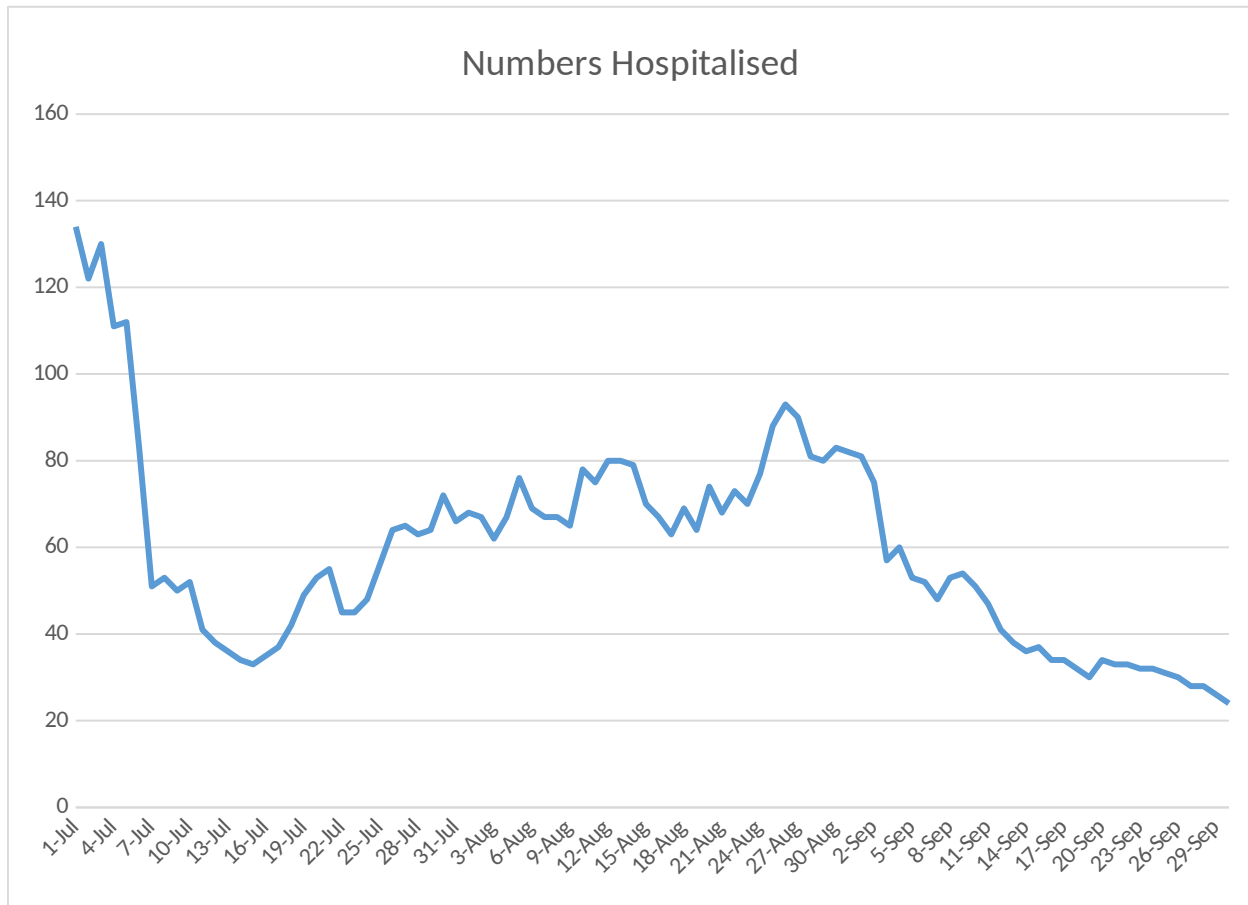


Figure 2.



The Ministry of Health has warned that the Covid pandemic is not over, even though their action in discontinuing daily bulletins would suggest otherwise. Their warning has been echoed by Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the World Health Organisation. It seems that the end of anxiety about Covid-19 is not yet in sight. A recent article published in the *New Yorker* magazine, entitled “[How many times will you get Covid?](#)” reads in part as follows:

It’s now clear that not only will just about everyone contract the coronavirus, but we’re all likely to be infected multiple times. The virus evolves too efficiently, our immunity wanes too quickly, and, although covid vaccines have proved remarkably durable against serious illness, they haven’t managed to break the chain of transmission.

...In the U.S., covid is still on pace to kill more than a hundred thousand people per year; many of us share the reasonable worry that some future reinfection will be the one that causes longer-term harm to our health and quality of life. Has our battle with covid-19 come to such a standstill that a slow burn of disruption, debility, and death will continue for years to come?.....

Fundamentally, our risk of reinfections depends on three main factors: how much our immunity has waned, how much the virus has changed, and how much of it we encounter. Our collective immunity increases with infections, reinfections, and vaccines.

People who are reinfected by the virus are much more likely to suffer a range of medical problems in subsequent months, including heart attacks, strokes, breathing problems, mental-health problems, and kidney disorders, according to a major new analysis of U.S. veterans. ...

“Without mitigation measures, it’s inevitable that most people will get reinfected,” [Ziyad] Al-Aly [chief of research and development at the US Veterans Administration St. Louis Health Care System] said. “That’s the price we pay for moving toward normal. It’s an exorbitant price.”