National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Epidemiological report of SARS-CoV-2 on the Dutch Caribbean CAS- and BES-islands:

Week 14 (March 30th - April 5th, 2021)

Produced by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment of the Netherlands - RIVM
6 April 2021, 19:00 pm AST

For general information on surveillance of COVID-19 on the CAS-BES-islands, see the next page.

Summary

The incidence of SARS-CoV-2 infections continues to rise on Curaçao. On Aruba and Bonaire, the daily number of new infections appears to be dropping. Between March 30th and April 5th, 2021, 2,870 new COVID-19 cases have been reported on the CAS- and BES-islands: 387 on Aruba, 127 on Bonaire, 2,326 on Curaçao, and 30 on Dutch St Maarten. Due to the Easter Holidays, Dutch St Maarten did not report any data between April 1st and April 5th, 2021, and the number of new infections is likely to be higher than reported here.

On Aruba, the incidence rate has decreased to 304 cases per 100,000 persons. The highest number of new cases is reported among persons aged 45 to 64 years old. On April 5th, Aruba reported 538 active cases, of which 67 were tourists. The positivity rate lowered to 5.0% as compared to 8.2% in the previous week. There are no recent updates of the circulation of variants on Aruba, which up to now shows 114 cases of the VOC 202012/B.1.1.7 (UK) variant, 3 cases of the Brazilian P.1 variant, 2 cases of the VOC B.1.351 (South African) variant, and 8 cases of the VOI B.1.429/B.1.427 (California).

With 602 cases per 100.000 residents, Bonaire reported a substantially lower incidence rate as compared to last week. The majority of new cases is reported among persons aged 30-39 and 50-59 years old. The positivity rate has lowered to 36.2% as compared to the previous week. Both Aruba and Bonaire are reporting a lower testing rate among their populations. The number of active cases on Bonaire has lowered to 225. Surveillance of variants on Bonaire shows the proportion VOC has increased from 75.0% in week 7 to 92.9% in week 9. As of March 18th, 2021, Bonaire has gone into lockdown to reduce transmission. Schools have been closed until April 12th.

The situation on Curaçao has become alarming. Surveillance of circulation of variants on Curaçao shows the proportion of VOC B.1.1.7 has increased substantially by week 10 (proportion VOC: 93.5%). The incidence rate has increased to 1,339 cases per 100,000 persons and the number of active infections has increased rapidly to 4,489. The majority of new infections is reported among persons aged 30 to 39 years old. The number of admissions on both the ward and the ICU has risen steeply resulting in a pressing shortage of human resource capacity and hardware needed for treatment of critically ill patients. Healthcare professionals from the Netherlands are being brought in, and more vaccines have been sent to the island. As of March 24th, Curaçao has gone into a lockdown for a minimum period of two weeks. The night curfew has been imposed from 19:00 to 5:00 and Dutch nationals have been urged to return to the Netherlands. As of April 5th, Curaçao is allowing all residents aged 18 or above to get vaccinated.

COVID-related mortality has increased on Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao. Since last week, Bonaire reported 4 new deaths, Aruba 8, and Curaçao 19. Since the start of the epidemic, 90 persons have died due to or with COVID-19 in Aruba, 27 in Dutch St Maarten, 52 in Curaçao, and 14 in Bonaire.

With hospital admissions increasing, Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao are seeing a rise in COVID-morbidity. Admitted patients are requiring ICU-care more rapidly, as compared to the first wave last year. Additionally, hospitals are reportedly seeing younger patients than in the first wave, where the majority of COVID-19 patients was 60-plus years old. The situation on Curaçao is considered alarming but controllable. Currently there are 89 patients admitted to the general hospital ward, and 37 patients to the ICU. Logistical capacity for receiving patients has been scaled up and the shortage of medical supplies, including ventilators, is being supplemented by the Dutch government. Additionally, healthcare personnel from Dutch St Maarten and the Netherlands has been brought in temporarily. Aruba has been seeing a larger amount of patients requiring

hospitalization in the past few weeks. As of April 3rd, they are also caring for patients from Curaçao. Currently there are 24 patients on the general ward, and 13 patients admitted to the ICU. In Bonaire, there are a total of 22 patients admitted to the general hospital ward, of which 11 to the general ward and 5 to the ICU on Bonaire, in this way occupying the total capacity of the local hospital. Due to limited hospital capacity, 1 Bonairean patient is receiving care in Aruba and 5 in Colombia.

Though the incidence rate is relatively low as compared to the leeward islands, the number of new SARS-CoV-2 infections in Dutch St Maarten has been rising over the past two weeks. On April 5th, 35 active cases were registered on the island and the incidence rate had increased to 54 cases per 100,000 persons. As of April 3rd, Dutch St Maarten has enforced travel restrictions to Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao. There are no recent updates of the epidemiological situation on Dutch St Maarten and of the circulation of variants, which up to now shows 1 case of the VOI B.1.429 (Californian) variant, 1 case of the Brazilian P.2 variant, and 2 cases of the B.1.526 (New York) variant with E484K mutation, none of which constitue a VOC. Both St Eustatius and Saba have not reported active COVID-19 cases since January 28th.

Information on surveillance of COVID-19 on the CAS- and BES-islands

The Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands entails the countries Curaçao, Aruba, and Dutch St Maarten (CAS-islands), as well as the overseas municipalities Bonaire, St Eustatius, and Saba (BES-islands). Surveillance data of SARS-CoV-2 cases is collected on each island in collaboration with local medical professionals, laboratories, and public health departments. These surveillance data are shared by the CAS- and BES-islands through daily updates and stored in the SARS-CoV-2 IHR Daily Overview Dutch Caribbean; an overview of the spread of SARS-CoV-2 on the CAS- and BES-islands.

This report has been generated using surveillance data registered at the RIVM between March 22nd 2020 and 5 April 2021. Sometimes surveillance data is reported to the RIVM one or multiple days later than documented on the islands. The data presented in this report are based on the date of registration at the RIVM. Because islands retrospectively correct surveillance data, the crude estimates in this report may differ slightly from the data shared by each island. The data reported here may lag behind in case more recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM by respective islands.

Everyone with symptoms of COVID-19 can get tested. However, it is plausible that not all individuals with a SARS-CoV-2 infection are tested. The actual numbers of cases can therefore be higher than the numbers reported here. The CAS- and BES-islands also register when individuals with a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result have recovered. These data are used to report the current number of active cases in Table 3. The number of active cases refers to the number of individuals who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 and who have not yet recovered at the time of producing this report.

Disclaimer

Though this weekly report has been produced with the utmost care, it could possibly contain errors. Feedback on this overview is welcome.

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1 Overview of reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on the CAS- and BES-islands

Table 1: Number of laboratory confirmed cases with a positive test result for SARS-CoV-2 over the past 2 weeks, as reported to the RIVM by the CAS- and BES-islands

Island	Date: from-until	Number of performed tests	Number of laboratory confirmed tests with positive test result	Positivity rate %
Aruba[1]	22-03-2021 - 28-03-2021	5683	488	8.6
	29-03-2021 - 04-04-2021	5979	379	6.3
Bonaire	22-03-2021 - 28-03-2021	639	254	39.7
	29-03-2021 - 04-04-2021	371	137	36.9
Curaçao[2]	22-03-2021 - 28-03-2021	7322	1561	21.3
	29-03-2021 - 04-04-2021	10634	2332	21.9
Saba[3]	22-03-2021 - 28-03-2021	-	0	-
	29-03-2021 - 04-04-2021	-	0	-
Sint Eustatius	22-03-2021 - 28-03-2021	12	0	0
	29-03-2021 - 04-04-2021	37	0	0
Sint Maarten[4]	22-03-2021 - 28-03-2021	-	-	-
	29-03-2021 - 04-04-2021	-	-	-

[1] This estimate concerns a crude positivity rate for Aruba. The Directie Volksgezondheid Aruba reports a corrected positivity rate through: https://www.facebook.com/desparuba.

[2] The Public Health Department on Curaçao estimates a corrected positivity rate. Therefore, estimates presented here may differ from positivity rates reported by Curaçao.

[3] A '-' value indicates insufficient data was reported to the RIVM to report in this table.

[4] The positivity rate for Dutch St Maarten has been estimated using public data of the weekly number of tests analyzed. Therefore, estimates presented here may differ from positivity rates reported by Dutch St Maarten.

Table 2: Number of laboratory confirmed cases with a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result, number of hospital admissions[1] and number of deceased cases, cumulative and for the previous week, on the CAS- and BES-islands, as reported to RIVM

	Cumulative			Previous week[2]	
Island	Number of cases	Hospital admissions	Deceased patients	Number of cases	Deceased patients
Aruba	9681	477	90	387	8
Bonaire	1442	34	14	127	4
Curaçao	10066	309	52	2326	19
Saba	6	1	0	0	0
Sint Eustatius	20	0	0	0	0
Sint Maarten	2164	135	27	30	0
Totaal	23379	956	183	2870	31

[1] The number of hospital admissions cannot be displayed for the previous week due to a delay in reporting these data. The current number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients is reported in Table 3.
[2] These have been reported to the RIVM between March 30th and April 5th, 2021.

Table 3: Current number of active SARS-CoV-2 cases and status of COVID-19 hospital admissions on the CAS- and BES-islands, as reported to RIVM[1,2]

Island	Number of active cases	Number of hospitalized patients on general hospital ward	Number of patients hospitalized in the ICU
Aruba	538	24	13
Bonaire	225	17	5
Curaçao	4489	89	37
Saba	0	0	0
Sint Eustatius	0	0	0
Sint Maarten	35	0	0
Totaal	5287	130	55

[1] These have been reported to the RIVM between March 30th and April 5th, 2021.

[2] The number of active cases is defined as the number of COVID-19 infected persons who have not been confirmed to have recovered from COVID-19 infection at the time of reporting these data to RIVM. These data may lag behind when islands have limited public health capacity to confirm recovery among infected cases.

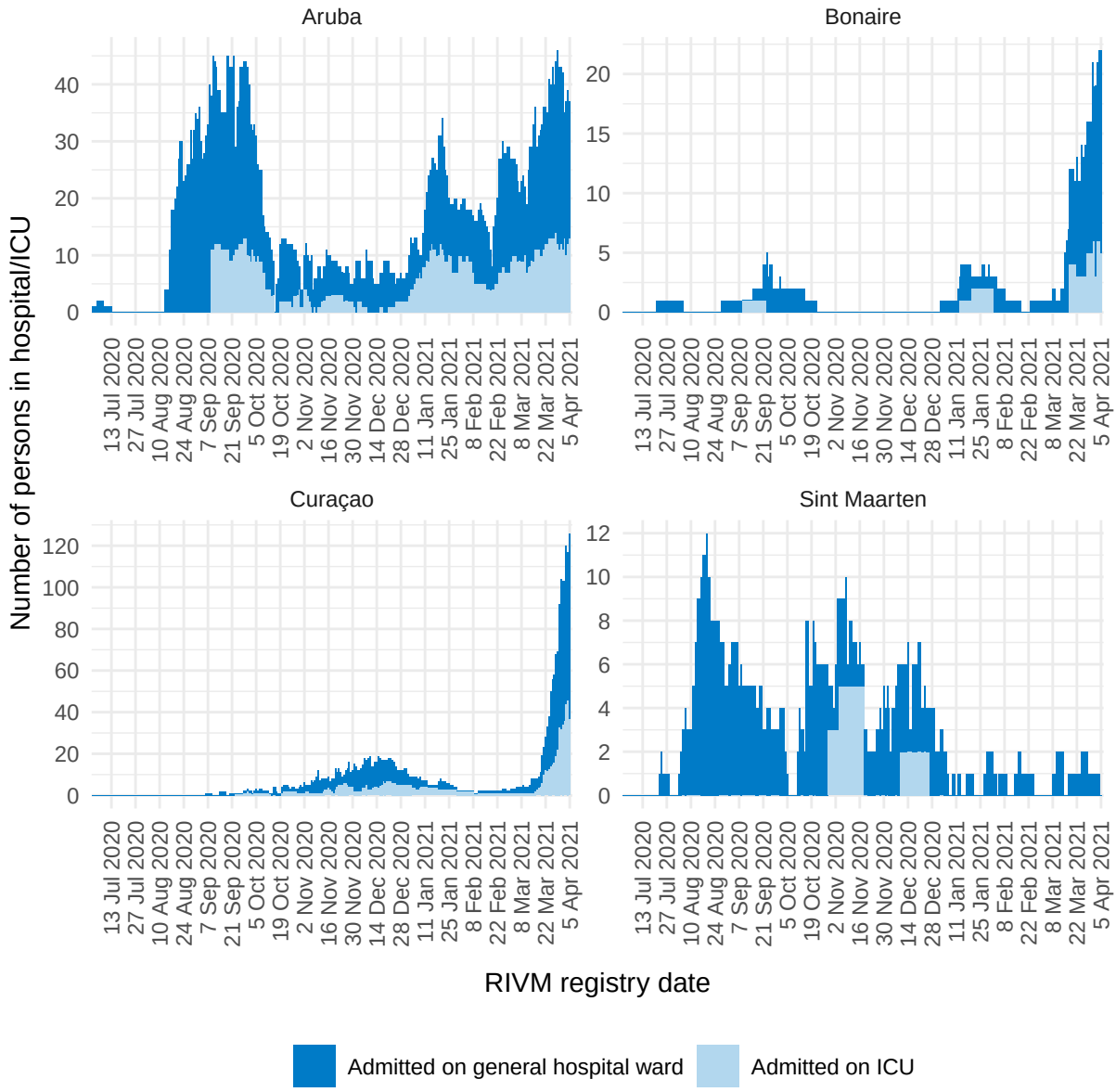

Figure 1: Progression of COVID-related hospital occupation over time [1,2,3,4,5]

[1] This figure presents the number of reported persons who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 during or before admission on the general hospital ward and/or ICU.

[2] The light blue data represent the ICU-occupation over time, per island. The dark blue data represent the occupation of the general hospital ward over time, per island.

[3] Due to the low number of hospitalised patients on Saba en St Eustatius, these islands have not been included in this graph.

[4] Based on the most recent data registered for Bonaire, the admission status is unknown for 234 persons who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 since January 1st, 2021. These cases have not been included in this graph.

[5] The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

Table 4: SARS-CoV-2 incidence rate per 100,000 residents on the CAS- and BES-islands[1], as reported to RIVM

	Incidence per 100,000 residents	
Island	Previous week[2]	Previous two weeks[3]
Aruba	241.4	612.5
Bonaire	473.8	1530.5
Curaçao	1248.4	2241.1
Saba	0.0	0.0
Sint Eustatius	0.0	0.0
Sint Maarten	42.8	99.8

[1] The calculated incidence rates include the estimated number of undocumented migrants on each island, see Table 5.

[2] The incidence rate per 100,000 persons, for the previous week, has been calculated from March 30th until April 5th 2021.

[3] The incidence rate per 100,000 residents, for the previous two weeks, has been calculated from March 23rd until April 5th 2021.

Table 5: Number of residents and acreage of the CAS- and BES-islands[1]

Island	Capital city	Residents	Acreage	Political status
Aruba	Oranjestad	106.800	180 km^2	Country within the Kingdom of The Netherlands
Bonaire	Kralendijk	20.900	288 km^2	Dutch municipality
Curaçao	Willemstad	164.100	444 km^2	Country within the Kingdom of The Netherlands
Saba	The Bottom	1.915	13 km^2	Dutch municipality
Sint Maarten	Philipsburg	44.000	34 km^2	Country within the Kingdom of The Netherlands
Sint Eustatius	Oranjestad	3.138	21 km^2	Dutch municipality

[1] Each island counts a substantial population of undocumented migrants. The reported incidence rates include the estimated population of undocumented migrants. On Aruba, Curaçao, and Dutch St Maarten the population size is estimated around 20,000 migrants. On Bonaire the population size is estimated around 1,000 migrants. These data are relevant to include as these populations are difficult to reach for local public health services and often have less access to curative care.

2 SARS-CoV-2 progression over time

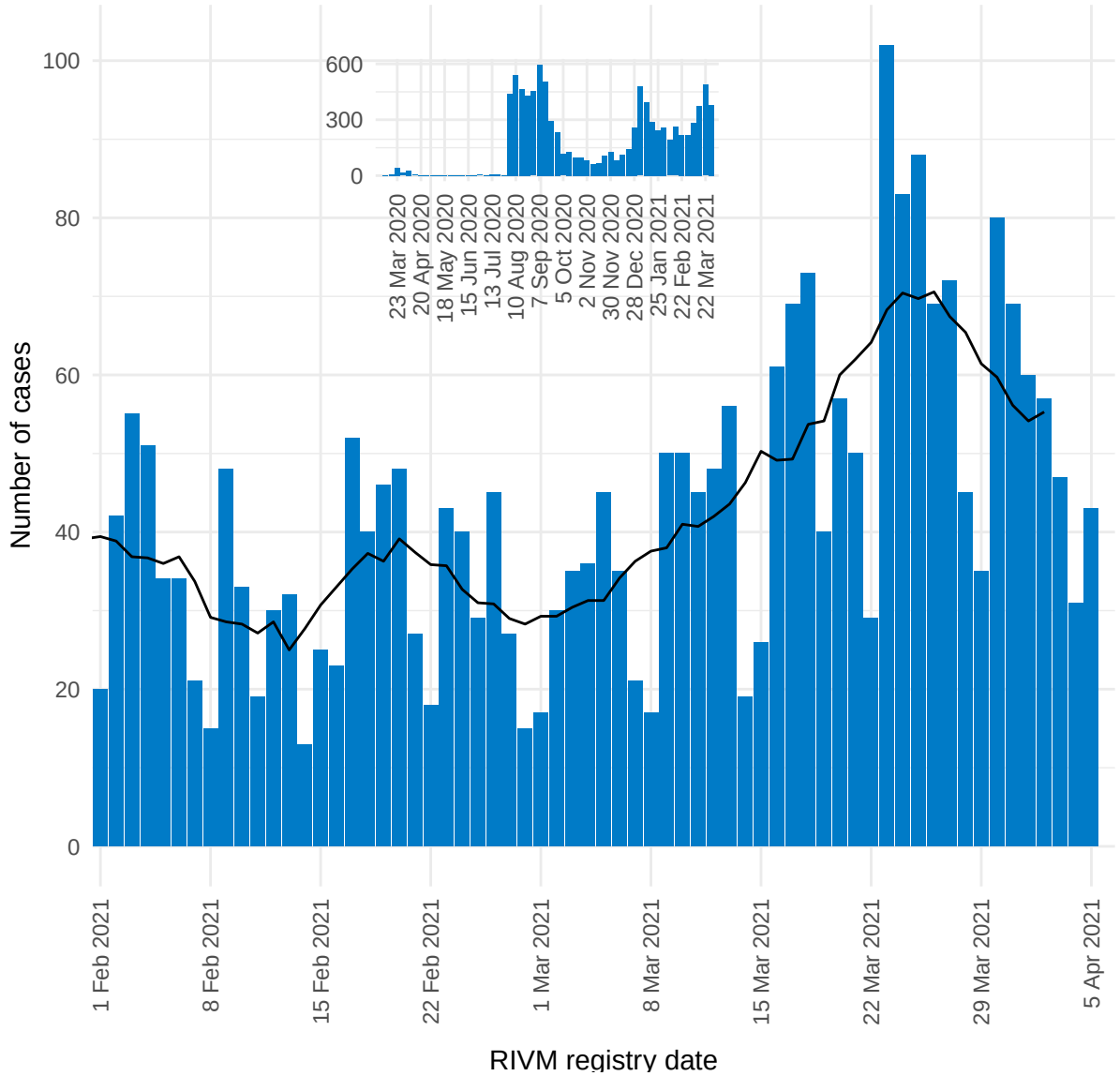

Figure 2: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Aruba, presented by RIVM registry date[1,2].

[1] This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

[2] The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

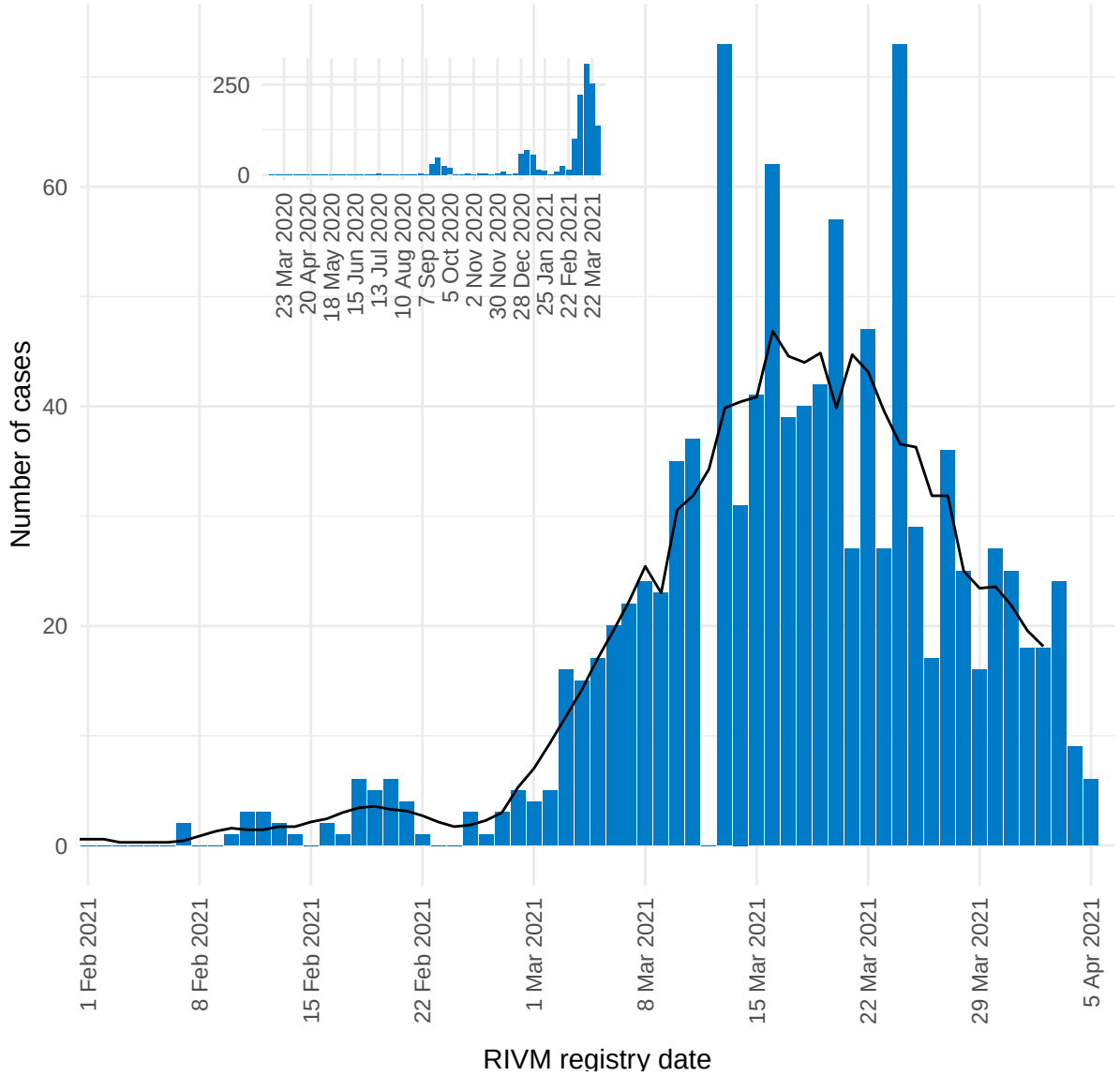

Figure 3: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Bonaire, presented by RIVM registry date[1,2].

[1] This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

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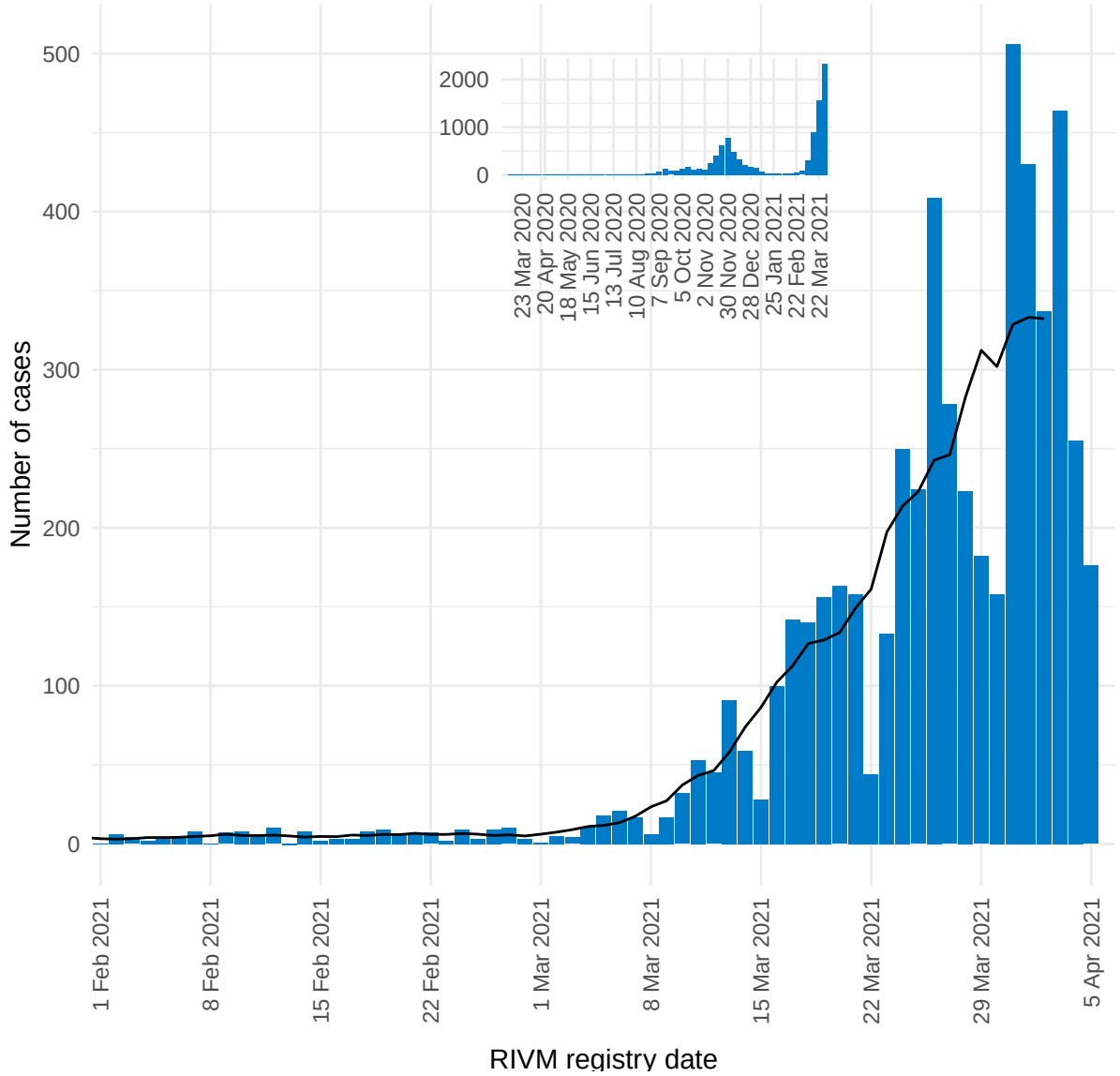

Figure 4: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Curaçao, presented by RIVM registry date[1,2].

[1] This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

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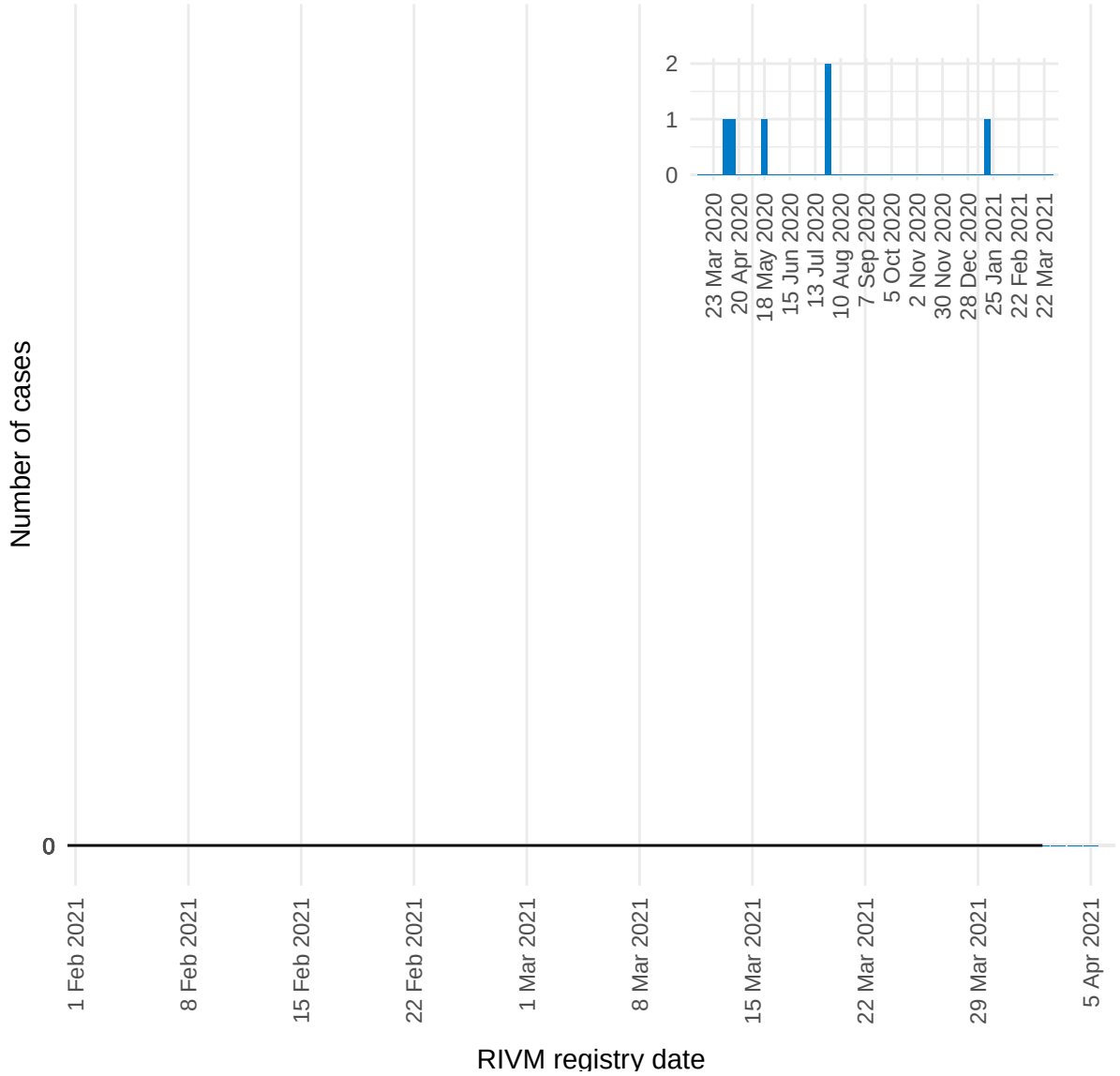

Figure 5: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Saba, presented by RIVM registry date[1,2].

[1] This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

[2] The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

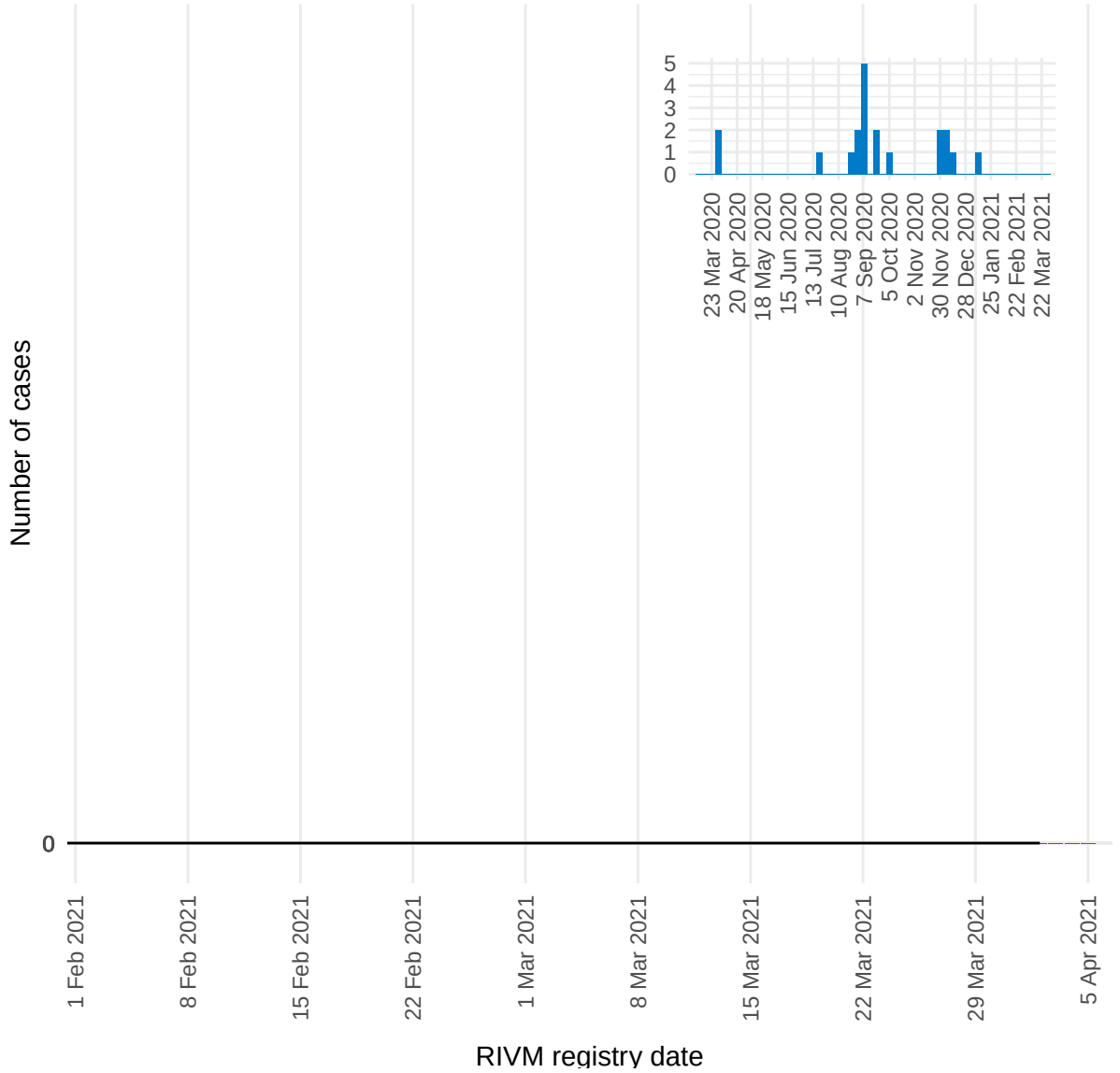

Figure 6: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on St Eustatius, presented by RIVM registry date[1,2].

[1] This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

[2] The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

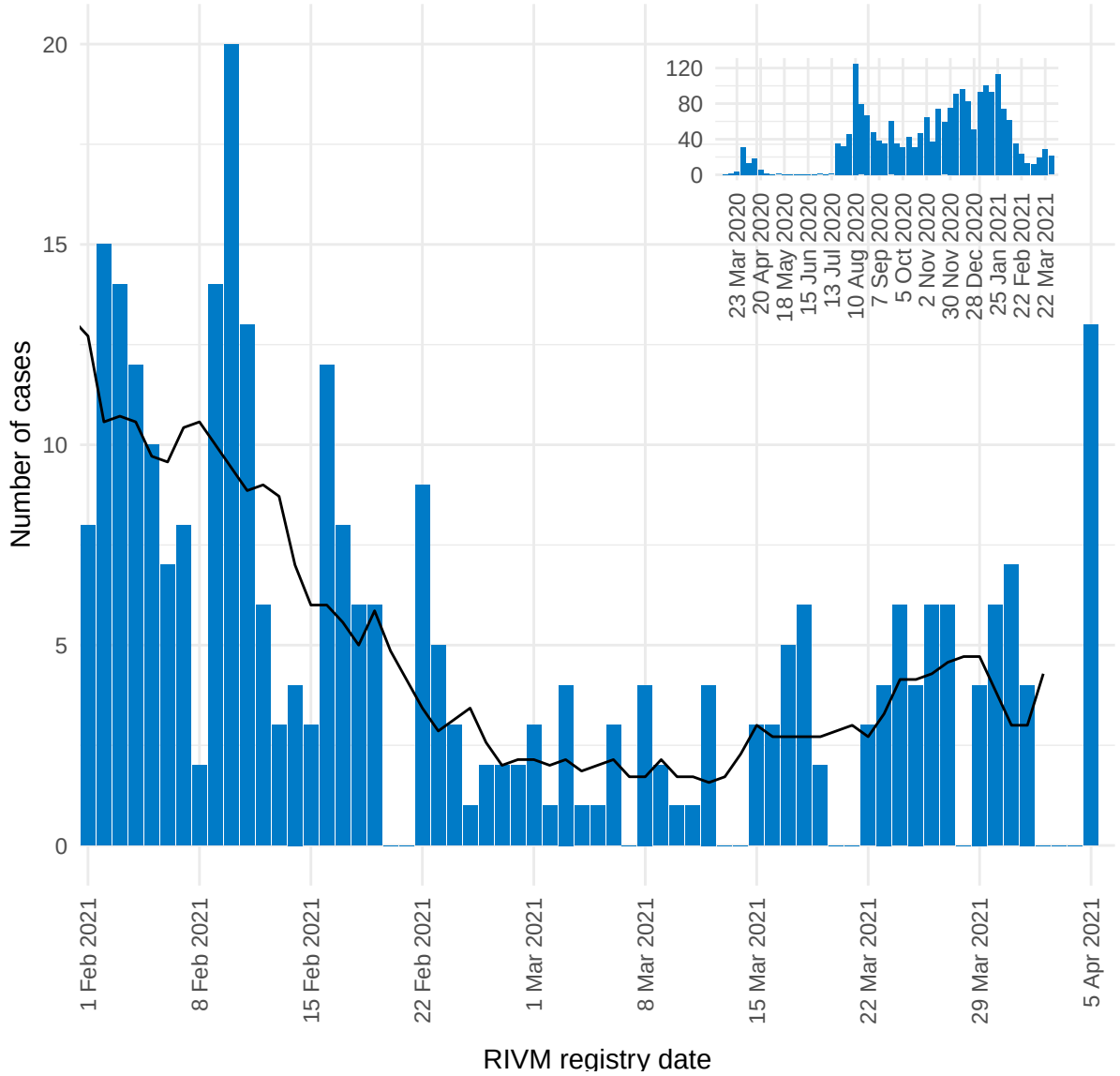

Figure 7: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Dutch St Maarten, presented by RIVM registry date[1,2].

[1] This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

[2] The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

3 SARS-CoV-2 three week average incidence rate progression over time

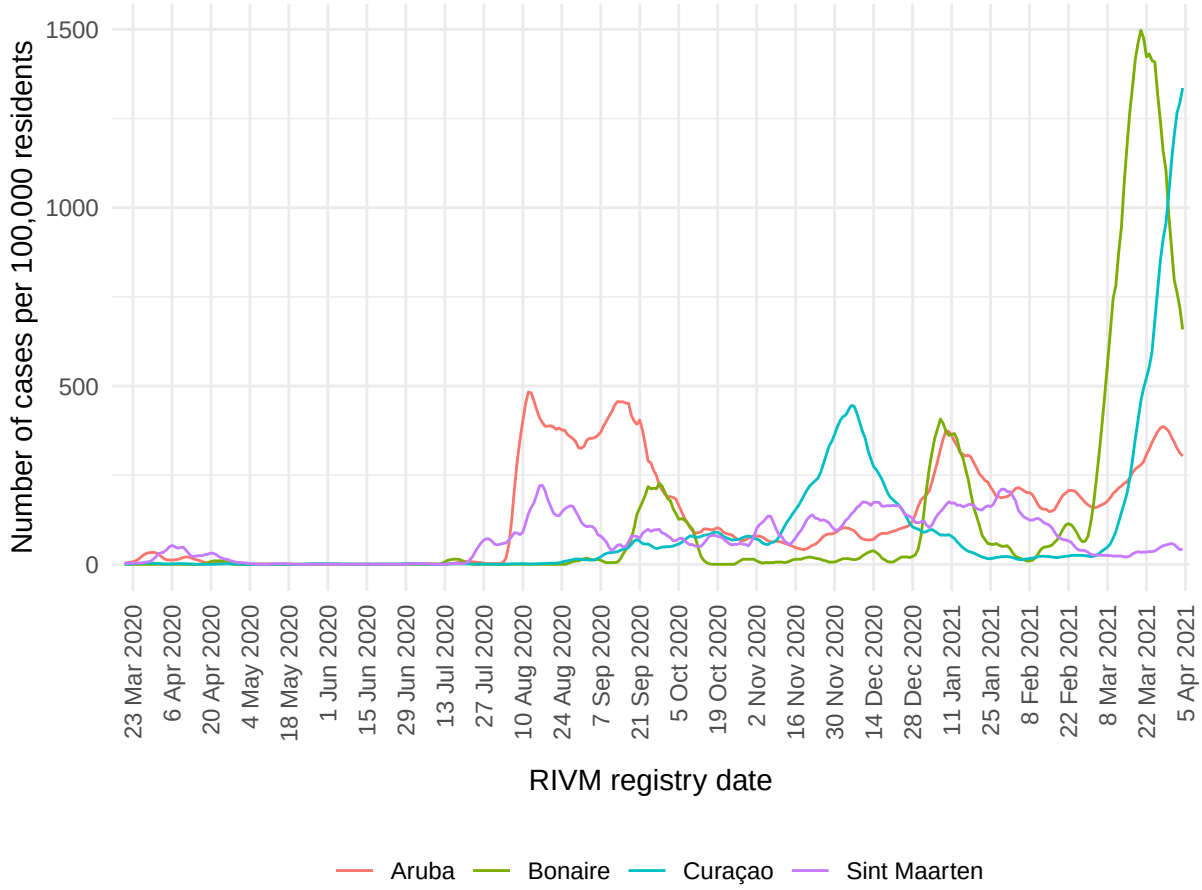

Figure 8: Three week average number of reported cases per 100,000 residents by RIVM registry date, on Curaçao, Aruba, Dutch St Maarten, and Bonaire[1,2].

[1] This figure displays the 3-week average incidence rate per island per 100,000 residents, including the population of undocumented migrants on each island. Each line on the vertical axis indicates a weekly average of the incidence rate (defined as the number of new cases per 100,000 persons per week, over the total population) over a period of three weeks. For example: the reported value on January 4th 2021, is the weekly average of the incidence rate between December 28th, 2020 and January 11th, 2021.

[2] Due to the small number of reported cases on Saba and St Eustatius, these islands have not been included in this figure.