

# Day-Level Forecasting for Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

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## ABSTRACT

Coronavirus (COVID-19) recently spread quickly all over the world. Most infected people with the coronavirus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness, but elderly people and those with chronic diseases are more likely to suffer from serious disease, often leading to death. According to the Egyptian Ministry of Health, there are 96,336 confirmed infected cases with coronavirus and 5,141 confirmed deaths from the current outbreak. Accurate forecasting of the spread of confirmed and death cases as well as analysis of the number of infected and deaths are crucially required. The present study aims to explore the usage of support vector machine (SVM) in the prediction of coronavirus infected and death cases in Egypt, which helps in the decision-making process. The forecasting model suggest that the number of coronavirus cases grows exponentially in Egypt and more efforts shall be directed to increase the public awareness with this disease. The proposed method is shown to achieve good accuracy and precision results.

## KEYWORDS

Coronavirus, Coronavirus Infected and Death Cases, Data Analysis, Data Forecasting

## INTRODUCTION

The support vector machine (SVM) algorithm has showed high efficiency in solving classification issues in medical fields. SVM is data-driven and model-free that is discriminative for prediction in particular cases where sample sizes are small. This technique has been used to improve methods for predicting disease in the clinical setting (Battineni, G., et al., 2019). Support Vector Machine is a discriminative classifier that can be defined by a separating hyper-plane. It is the generalization of maximal margin classifier which comes with the definition of hyper-plane (Islam, M., 2017). SVM is characterized by an optimal hyper-plane to classify new examples and datasets (Gholami R & Fakhari N, 2017).

As COVID-19 is declared as an international epidemic in mid of March 2020 and more than 125000 confirmed cases have been recorded around the world, so day level forecasting about COVID-19 spread is crucial to measure the behavior of this new virus globally (WHO, 2020).

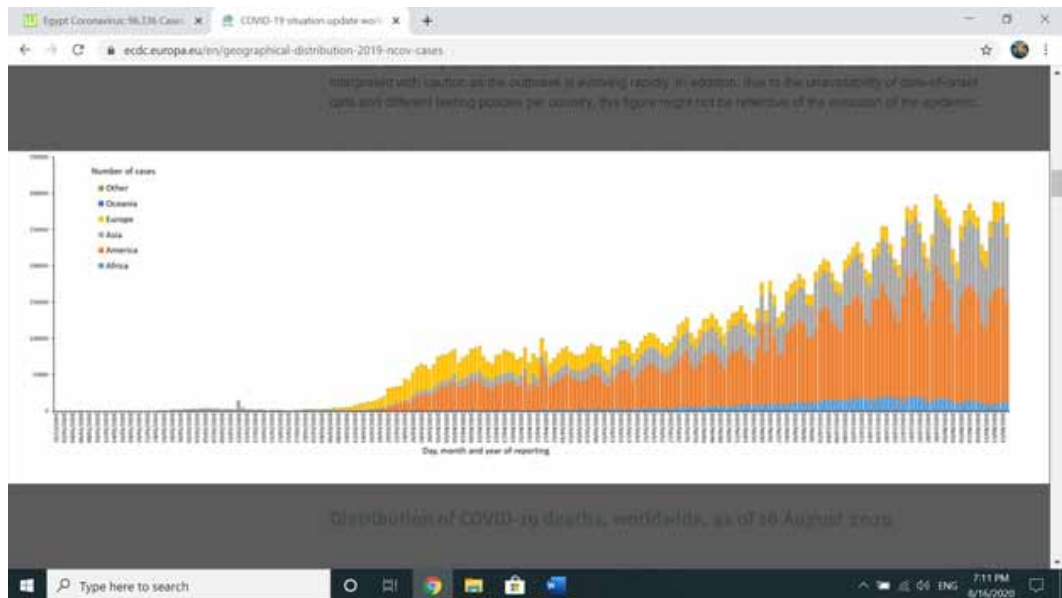
Corona virus is spreading around the world, causing panic to all men, for regional distribution of COVID-19 cases worldwide see Figure 1. It causes serious breathing-related symptoms particularly for elderly people and those suffering from chronic illnesses. For the past 6 months, diagnosing Corona virus disease is too complicated as it takes a long time to get results for COVID-19 tests based on the signs and symptoms. There is still no approved antiviral drug for treating COVID-19 until now.

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Figure 1. Geographic distribution of COVID-19 cases worldwide, as of 16 August 2020 (ecdc)



From figure 1, the total numbers of infected cases of corona virus over the world is constantly increased during the past six months.

In Egypt, according to the Egyptian ministry of health, the infected cases of Corona virus are shown in figure 2. And the death cases of Corona virus are shown in figure 3.

Figure 2. Total Corona virus Cases in Egypt, as of 16 August 2020 (worldometers)

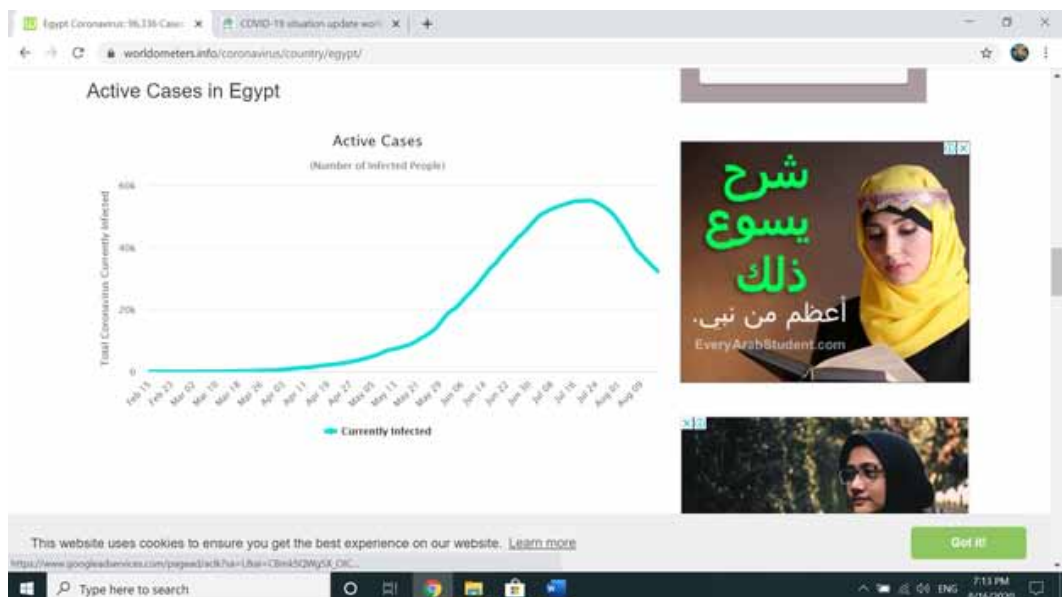
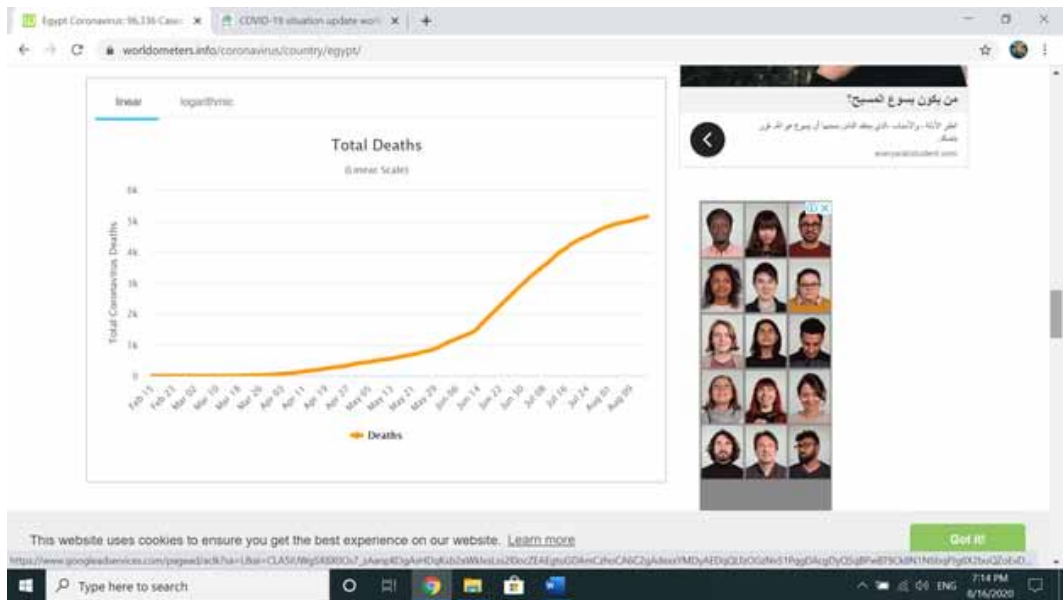


Figure 3. Total Corona virus death Cases in Egypt, as of 16 August 2020 (worldometers)



From figures 2 and 3, we notice the total numbers of corona virus in Egypt start with low infected and death cases during the first three months from mid-February to mid-May then total number of infected and death cases increase quickly with high numbers from mid-May to late July then total numbers start to decrease during August.

Corona virus causes a real health crisis around the world, beside its social, economic and political effects, and to help in solving this problem and avoiding infection and planning the healthcare system for possible potential up-comings, there is an urgent need to construct forecasting model providing future forecasts of the possible number of daily cases and daily deaths. In some case The accuracy of traditional forecasting is not high because it depends primarily on the availability of data but, in disease outbreaks such as current corona virus outbreak, there are no data at all at first and then limited as time goes by, there are concerns that the data may not be reliable.

Despite the inaccuracies associated with medical forecasts, forecasting is still valuable in enabling us to better understand the current situation and to plan ahead. This paper presents a computational competent and realistic forecasting model for infected and death cases in Egypt, which can help the policy makers and the medical system in preparation for the new patients. Also help to face the general population fears about the impact of corona virus and increase the public awareness.

Various models for COVID-19 infected and death cases predictions have been implemented, since the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan City in December of 2019. The prediction models have shown a wide range of diversity due to the non-identifiable in model calibrations using the confirmed-case data is the main cause for this diversity. As governments in any countries needs to know the upcoming infected as to help the public health agencies making decisions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

SVM algorithm has a role in all major industries such as banking, healthcare, transport and media. In these days, healthcare subject is advancing quickly with information and difficulties in patient outcomes. As healthcare is affecting not only the developed countries but also European countries economically, the availability of coronavirus medical data and the forecasting of health and economic

situation are needed. It is not possible by using conventional techniques to analyze this situation and solve the problem. SVM works relatively well when there is a clear margin of separation between classes. It is more effective in high dimensional spaces. SVM is effective in cases where the number of dimensions is greater than the number of samples. Therefore, SVM technique is coming up to solve these issues as it is suitable for available data volume, information type, and outcomes related to requirements (Ichikawa D, et al., 2016).

The transmission mechanism and major factors influencing the COVID-19 spread, such as the number of basic regenerations, the incubation time and the average number of cure days is examined in (Li et al., 2020). The research forecasted the evolution of current epidemic data in South Korea, Italy, and Iran, indicating the recrudescence as to help these countries to control this epidemic and give some references for future research. Other studies are needed to forecast COVID-19 cases in other countries.

A study used data on the number of cases exported from Wuhan internationally to forecast the national spread of COVID-19, accounting for the effect of the metropolitan-wide quarantine of Wuhan and surrounding cities using Markov Chain Monte Carlo method. The study assumed that if the transmissibility of COVID-19 were similar everywhere, therefore, that epidemics are already growing exponentially in multiple major cities of China (Wu et al., 2020). The assuming that the transmission process of COVID-19 is analogous in all countries cannot be accepted, so this makes the forecasting of COVID-19 cases evolution is important.

Logistic model, Bertalanffy model and Gompertz model were applied to fit and analyze the situation of COVID-19. The forecasting results of the three mathematical models are different for different parameters and regions. From their results the Logistic model's fitting effect may be the best of the three models. Based on the three models, the total number expected to be infected in Wuhan is fifty thousand people in three months (jia et al., 2020).

A study to examine Auto-Regressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) model for the prediction of confirmed COVID-19 infection cases in India was applied (Tandon et.al., 2020). Another study was developed for forecasting future COVID-19 cases in India to identify the best predictive models for confirmed cases on a regular basis in countries with a large number of reported cases worldwide and second, to forecast confirmed cases using such models in order to be more equipped for health systems (Dehesh et al., 2020). The forecasting results showed that the confirmed cases are expected to be increased. As needed data is not available in the present circumstance, the ARIMA predicting model is valuable in predicting future cases if the manner of virus spread didn't change abnormally.

A prediction model is developed to predict the continuation of the COVID-19 assuming that the data used is reliable. The forecasting results declare a continuing increase in the confirmed COVID-19 cases with considerable uncertainty. The results present the timeline of a live forecasting and provides objective forecasts for the confirmed cases of COVID-19 (Petropoulos & Makridakis, 2020).

Another study used the SIR and SEIR models for Covid-19 cases prediction, the study showed that SIR model performs much better than an SEIR model in representing the information contained in the confirmed-case data. The results indicated that predictions using complex models may not be accurate compared to using a simpler model (Roda, W., C., 2020).

Several techniques have been implemented to predict infected and death Covid-19 cases but none of the techniques are able to provide an accurate result till now. Therefore, this paper presents SVM technique which is related with learning computations to investigate the data utilized for regression analysis and classification to Covid-19 cases prediction.

## **PSEUDO CODE OF THE PROPOSED MODEL**

1- Collecting Covid 19 data.

- 2- Data contains daily infected cases and daily death cases.
- 3- Using Weka time series forecasting packet.
- 4- Applying simple time series forecasting algorithms:
  - a. Support vector machine (SVM) algorithm.
  - b. Linear regression algorithm.
  - c. Random Forest algorithm.
- 5- Forecasting confirmed and death cases of COVID-19.
- 6- For each month:
  - a. Produce 30-days-ahead point forecasts
  - b. Update forecasts every month.
- 7- Measuring the accuracy of forecasting results using:
  - a. Mean absolute error (MAE)
  - b. Root Mean Square Error (RMSE)
  - c. Mean directional accuracy (MDA)

## ANALYSIS AND FORECASTING

We focus on the daily figures with the two main variables of interest: confirmed cases, deaths. These data were provided by *Egyptian Ministry of Health* (<https://www.care.gov.eg/EgyptCare/Index.aspx> last accessed on 10/05/2020) as presented in figures 4 and 5. Data as features is described as daily infected cases and daily death cases. To forecast confirmed and death cases of COVID-19, we used Weka time series forecasting packet to adopt simple time series forecasting approach using support vector machine (SVM) algorithm. We produce 30-days-ahead point forecasts and prediction intervals and update forecasts every month.

Figure 4. Daily new cases of corona in Egypt as of 16 August 2020 (worldometers)

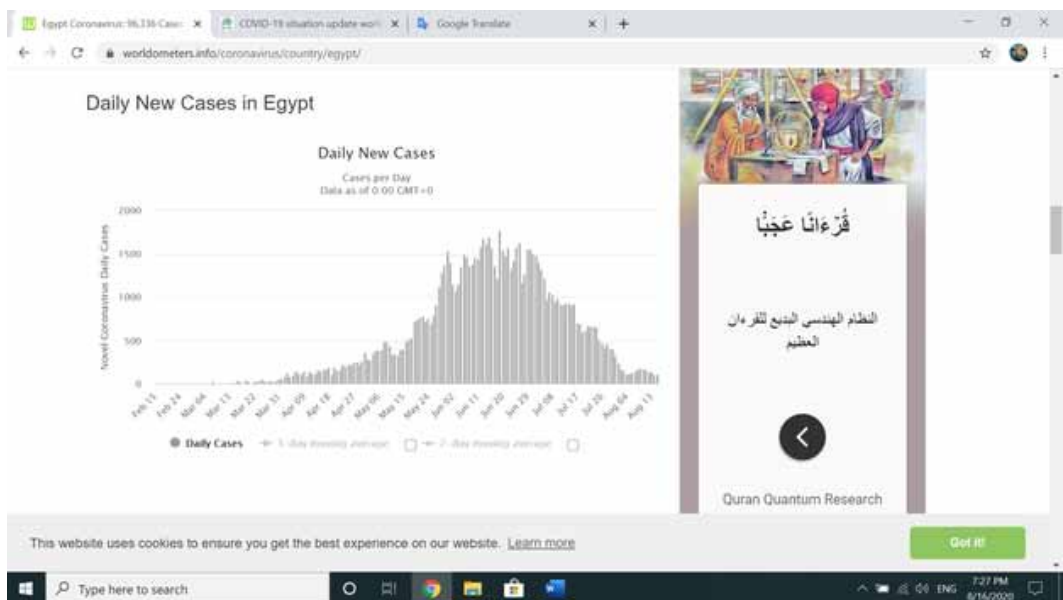


Figure 5. Daily deaths cases of corona in Egypt as of 16 August 2020 (worldometers)



From figures 4 and 5, we notice that daily numbers of infected and death cases in Egypt start with low numbers during the first four months from February to June, then daily numbers start increase quickly during late June to late July then daily numbers start to decrease again during August.

## SVM

One of the most important machine learning algorithms is SVM (Support vector Machine) which was presented in 1995 depending on statistical theory. The advantage of this method appears in small sample, nonlinear and high dimensional pattern recognition (Cortes & Vapnik, 1995). SVM fundamental is to handle complicated data classification by finding answer to the optimization problem (Haung, 2018). SVM main objective is to build a decision border called hyper-plane between two classes that allows labels prediction from one or more feature vectors. The closest data points from each of the classes are called support vectors. Given a labeled training dataset (Haung, 2018):

$$(x_1, y_1), \dots, (x_n, y_n), x_i \in \mathbb{R}^d \text{ and } y_i \in \{-1, +1\}$$

Where  $x_i$  is a feature vector representation and  $y_i$  the class label (negative or positive) of training compound.

SVM uses a linear model to apply nonlinear class boundaries by mapping input vectors  $x$  to high-dimensional feature space by certain nonlinear ones. In the original space, a linear model built into the new space may represent a nonlinear boundary of decision. An optimal separating hyper-plane is constructed in the new space. SVM is thus known as the algorithm which finds a special form of the linear model, the maximum hyper-plane margin. The maximum hyper-plane margin provides the maximum distinction between the classes of decisions. The training examples which are nearest to the hyper-plane of the maximum margin are called support vectors. All training examples are meaningless for determining the boundaries of binary classes (Kyoung, 2003).

## Linear Regression

Linear regression makes the assumption of linearity. This assumption makes the model easy to interpret but is often not flexible enough for prediction (Schonlau & Zou, 2020). Linear regression is explicit upright approach to predict quantitative response Y based on a sin regression predictor variable X. It assumes that there is approximately a linear relationship between X and Y (James et al., 2013). It can be expressed as  $Y \approx \beta_0 + \beta_1 X$ .

## Random Forest

Random Forest is a mathematically effective method that can implemented over large datasets. It has been used in many recent research projects and real-world applications in diverse domains (Belgiu & Drăguț, 2016). Also, Random Forest is a good approach for handling missing data including interactions and nonlinearity. There are many Random Forest algorithms to handle large and diverse data sets. Random Forest imputation is enhanced with increasing correlation. Performance was accepted under moderate to and high data missing (Tang & Ishwaran, 2017).

Random decision forests can handle nonlinearities for medium to large datasets which makes this method better than linear regression in prediction. Linear regression is not suitable when the number of independent variables is greater than the number of observations, while random forest can handle this case as not all predictor variables are used at once (Schonlau & Zou, 2020).

## Evaluation

Mean absolute error (MAE) “is a measure of errors between paired observations expressing the same phenomenon”. It measures accuracy of continuous variables MAE is calculated as (Chai & Draxler, 2014):

$$\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n |e_i| \quad (1)$$

Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) “is the standard deviation of the residuals (prediction errors)” (Petroopoulos & Makridakis, 2020):

$$\sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n e_i^2} \quad (2)$$

To simplify, we assume that we already have n samples of model errors n calculated as ( $e_i, i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ ).

Mean directional accuracy (MDA) “is a measure of prediction accuracy of a forecasting” It compares the forecast direction to the actual realized direction. It is defined by the following formula (Pesaran & Timmermann, 2001):

$$\frac{1}{N} \sum_t 1_{\text{Sign}} (A_t - A_{t-1}) == \text{sign} (F_t - A_{t-1}) \quad (3)$$

Where  $A_t$  is the actual value at time t and  $F_t$  is the forecast value at time t. Variable N represents number of forecasting points.

Figure 6. A comparative time series plot for actual infected cases and forecasted COVID-19 cases from 15 March 2020 to 16 August 2020 for training data.

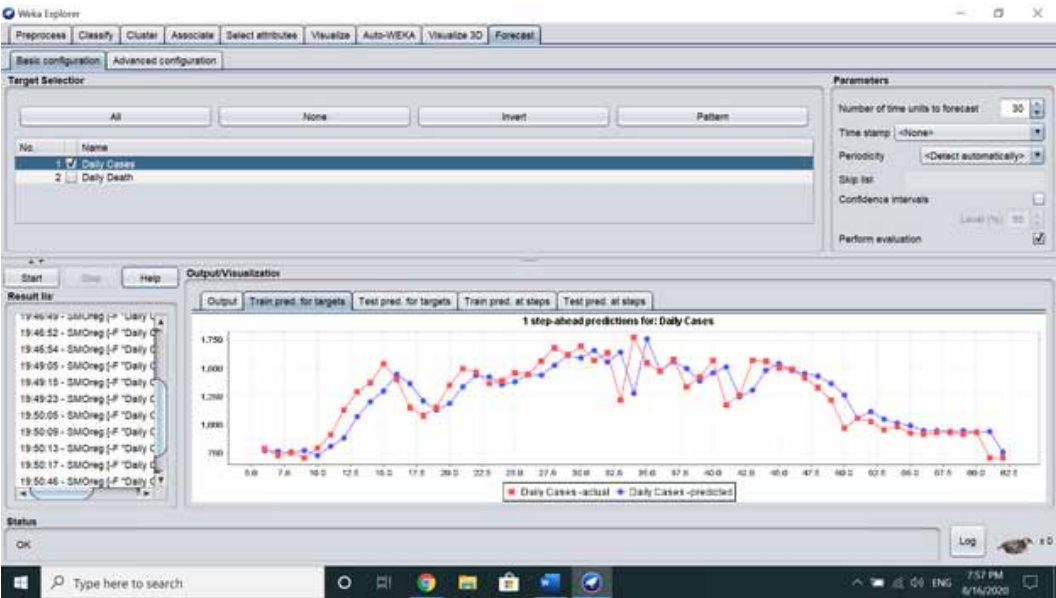


Figure 7. Evaluation metrics for forecasting of infected cases for training data

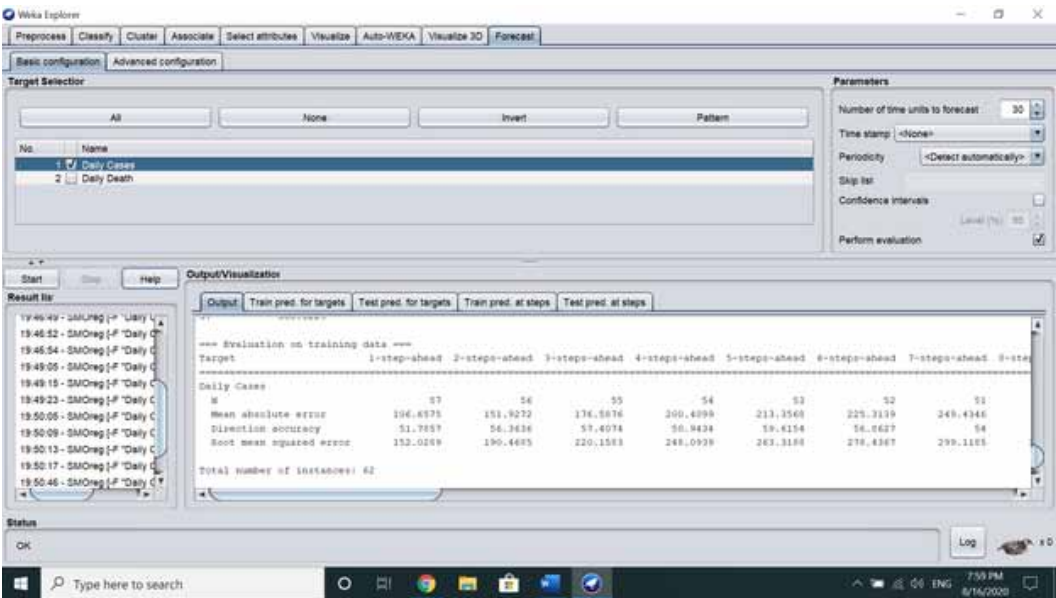




Figure 8. A comparative time series plot for actual infected cases and forecasted COVID-19 cases from 15 March 2020 to 16 August 2020 for testing data.

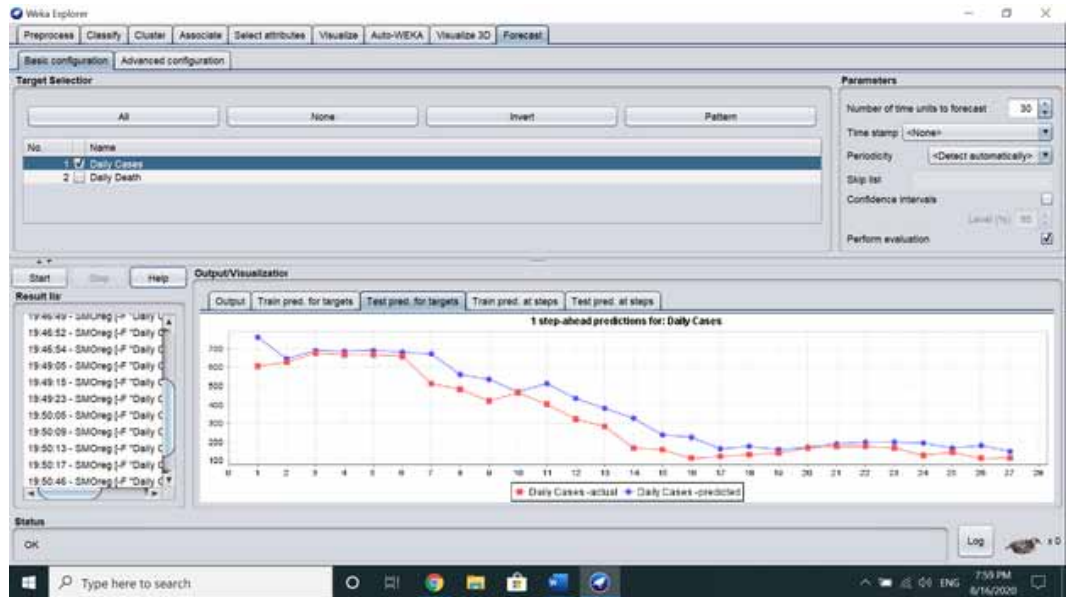
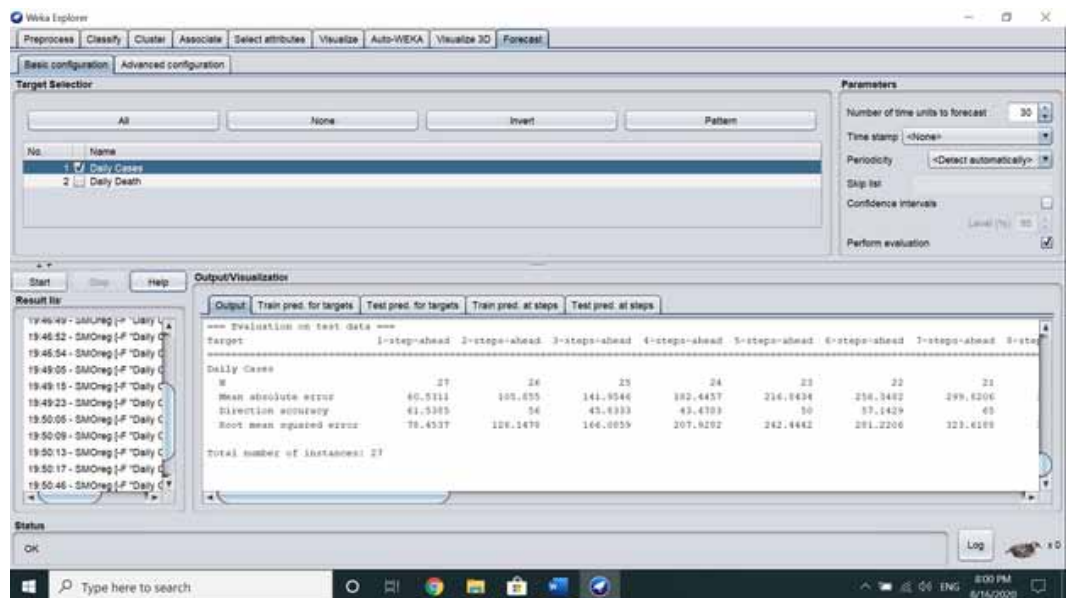


Figure 9. Evaluation metrics for forecasting of infected cases for testing data



## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

For comparing the actual and forecasted infected COVID-19 cases for training data, a time series graph is plotted starting from 15 March 2020 till 16 August 2020. The plot is represented by figure 6. The high similarity of forecasted data with actual data and the mean absolute error values and accuracy values as shown in figure 7 reveal very acceptable precision of the model in forecasting of infected corona cases.

Figure 10. A comparative time series plot for actual death cases and forecasted COVID-19 cases from 15 March 2020 to 16 August 2020 for training data.

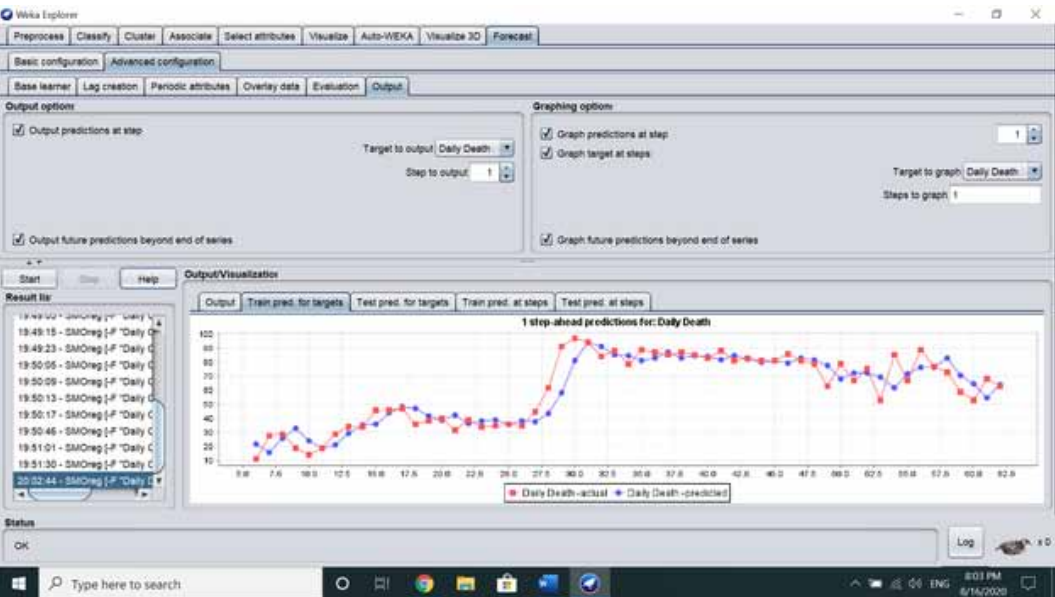


Figure 11. Evaluation metrics for forecasting of death cases for training data

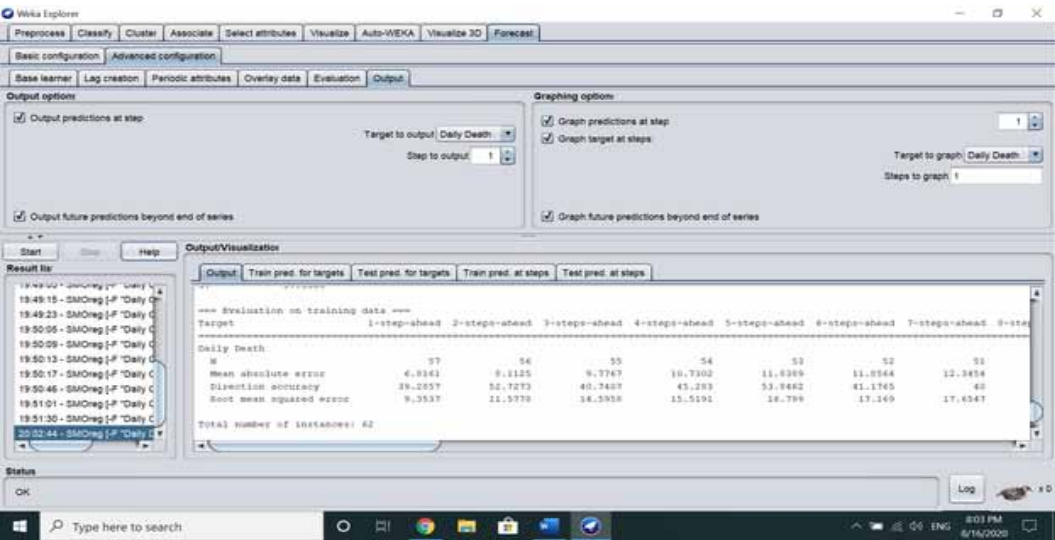


Figure 12. A comparative time series plot for actual infected cases and forecasted COVID-19 cases from 15 March 2020 to 16 August 2020 for testing data.

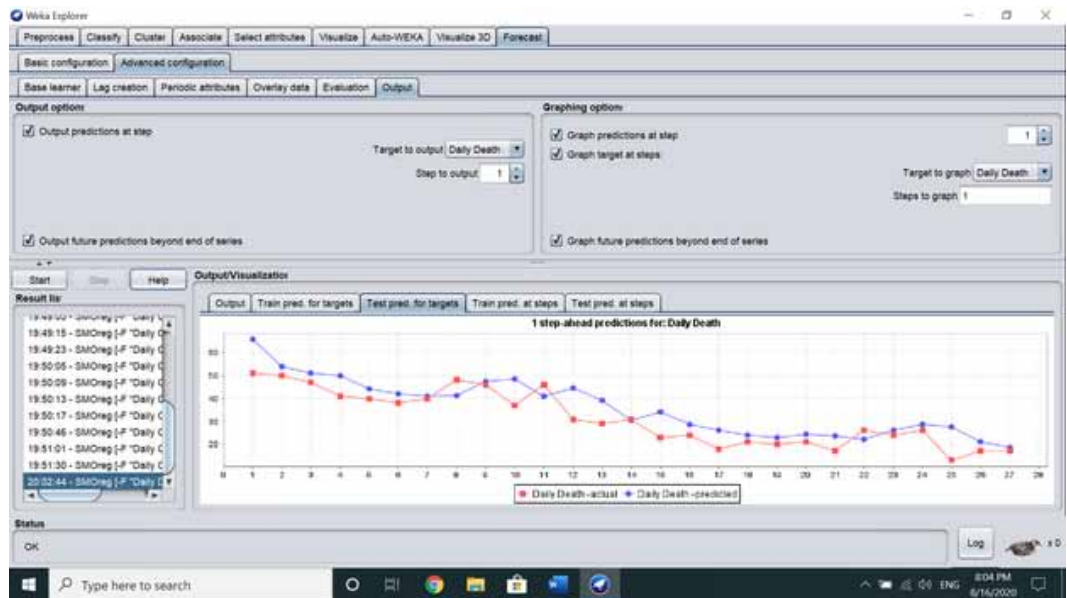
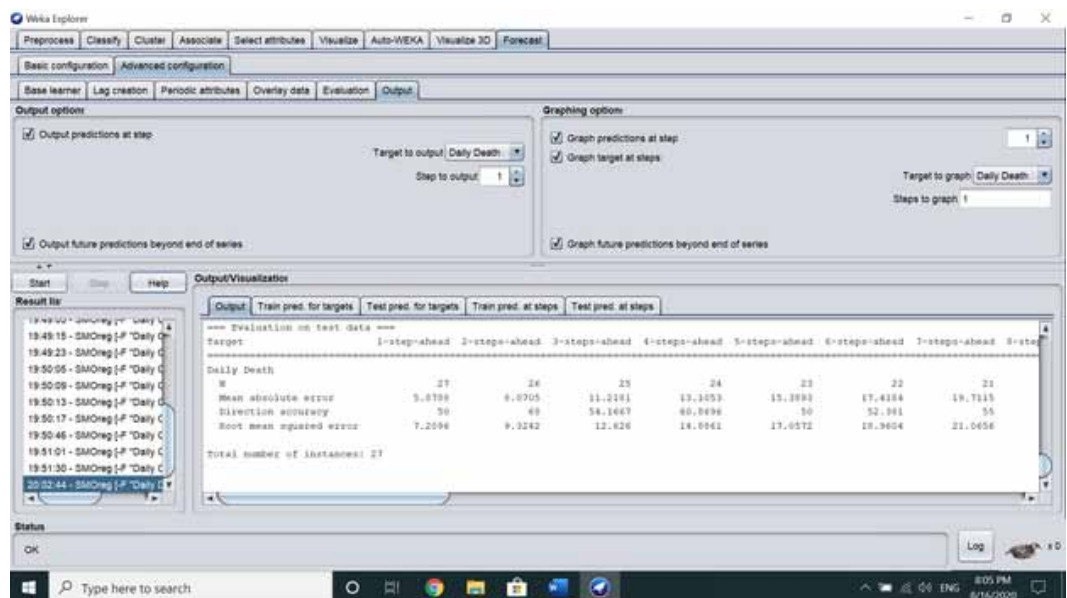


Figure 13. Evaluation metrics for forecasting of death cases on testing data



For comparing the actual and forecasted infected COVID-19 cases for testing data, a time series graph is plotted starting from 15 March 2020 till 16 August 2020. The plot is represented by figure 8. The high similarity of forecasted data with actual data and the mean absolute error values and accuracy values as shown in figure 9 reveal the high precision of the model in forecasting of infected corona cases.

Figure 14. Evaluation metrics for forecasting of infected cases on testing data using linear regression

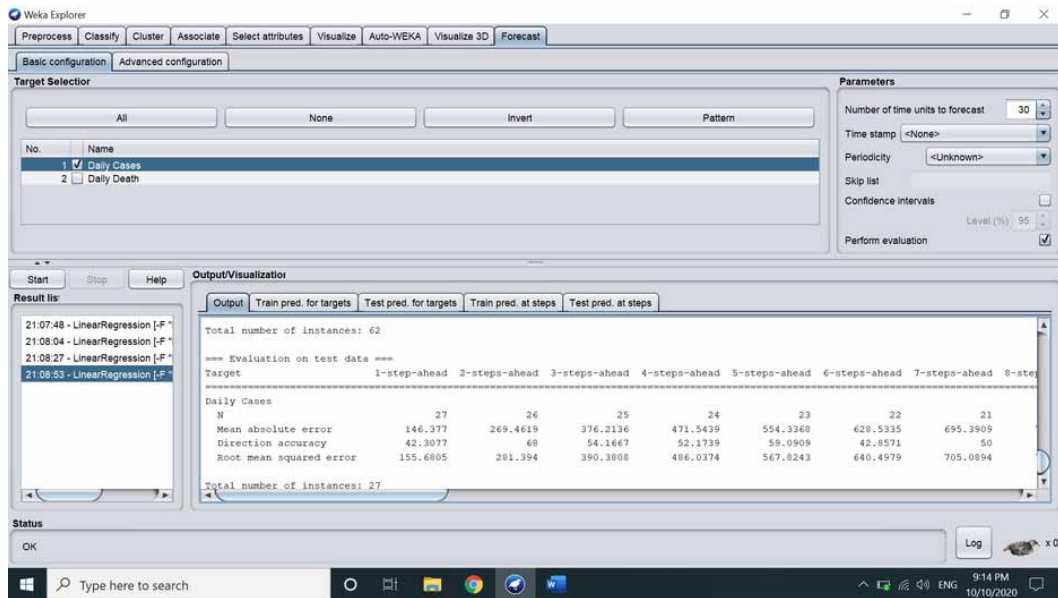
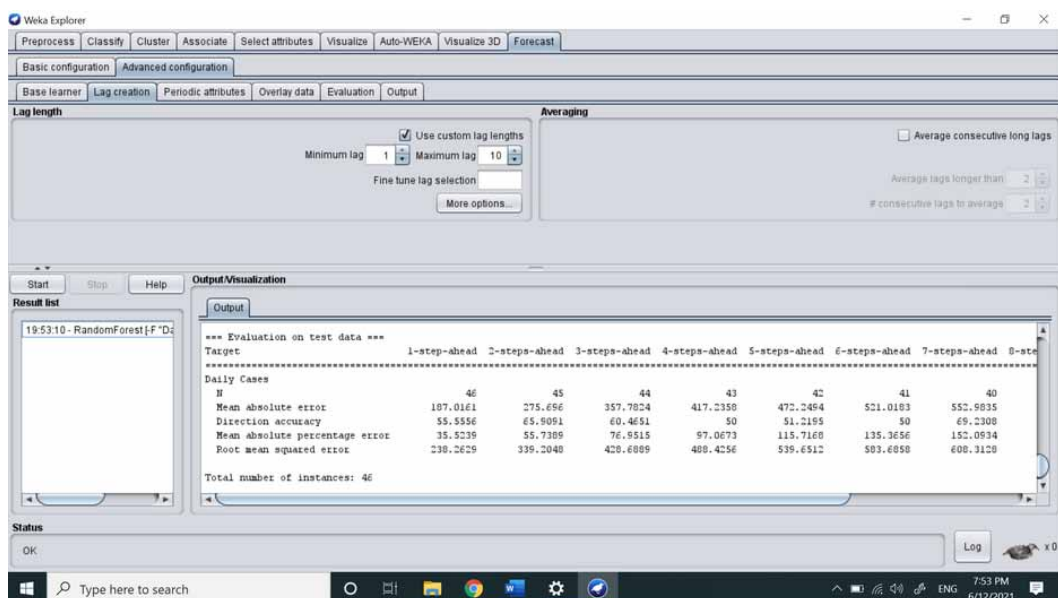


Figure 15. Evaluation metrics for forecasting of infected cases on testing data using random forest



For comparing the actual and forecasted death COVID-19 cases for training data, a time series graph is plotted starting from 15 March 2020 till 16 August 2020. The plot is represented by figure 10. The high similarity of forecasted data with actual data and the mean absolute error values and accuracy as shown in figure 11 values reveal the high precision of this model in forecasting of death corona cases.

For comparing the actual and forecasted death COVID-19 cases for testing data, a time series graph is plotted starting from 15 March 2020 till 16 August 2020. The plot is represented by figure 12. The high similarity of forecasted data with actual data and the mean absolute error values and accuracy as shown in figure 13 values reveal the high precision of this model in forecasting of death corona cases.

The forecasting results for Corona Virus infected and death cases using SVM are more accurate than linear regression forecasting results according to Mean absolute error and accuracy metrics. To show that, we select to present an example of forecasting results of Corona Virus infected cases for testing data using linear regression in figure 14 compared to forecasting results for infected cases using SVM (see figure 9).

The forecasting results for Corona Virus infected and death cases using SVM are more accurate than random forest forecasting results according to Mean absolute error and accuracy metrics. To show that, we select to present an example of forecasting results of Corona Virus infected cases for testing data using random forest in figure 15 compared to forecasting results for infected cases using SVM (see figure 9).

We applied two more algorithms in the prediction of coronavirus infected and death cases; Linear Regression Model and Random Forest forecasting to compare their results with SVM forecasting results. SVM model achieved more accurate forecasting results with less MAE. Next table shows MAE and accuracy metrics for the three algorithms. SVM prediction model achieved the least MAE with 60 and highest accuracy with almost 62%. Linear Regression Model achieved high MAE with 146 and least accuracy with almost 42%, While Random Forest Prediction Model achieved highest MAE with 187 and low accuracy with almost 56%.

**Table 1. Comparing the proposed model with the state-of-the-art**

	<b>SVM Prediction Model</b>	<b>Linear Regression Model</b>	<b>Random Forest Prediction Model</b>
Mean absolute error	60.531	146.337	187.016
accuracy	61.539%	42.308%	55.556%

The research question is what are the expected number of infected and death cases. From the experimental results, it can be concluded that the prediction results of infected and death cases of Corona virus based on the proposed model has accurate results. The mean error was high for the infected cases and was low for the death cases. Also, the mean error increases with the more prediction steps. The prediction model expects the numbers of infected and death cases will increase again after one month, So it is recommended that more medical equipment and efforts are needed to face the crisis of Corona virus and effective economic strategies are needed to deal with the effects of expected high spreading of the Corona virus disease. Also, more efforts shall be directed the increase the public awareness with this disease.

## **CONCLUSION**

COVID-19 is a new virus spread quickly declared as an international epidemic. This research recommends that all world countries must mandate restrictions on public gatherings to decrease the infected cases. From the experimental results, the forecasting results in death and infected cases of corona virus in Egypt are accurate and acceptable compared to other algorithms forecasting results. The forecasting model should be playing a big role in the decision-making process and help the medical system in preparation for the new patients. Also help to face the general population fears about the impact of corona virus and increase the public awareness apart from its effect on global supply chains and the economy.

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