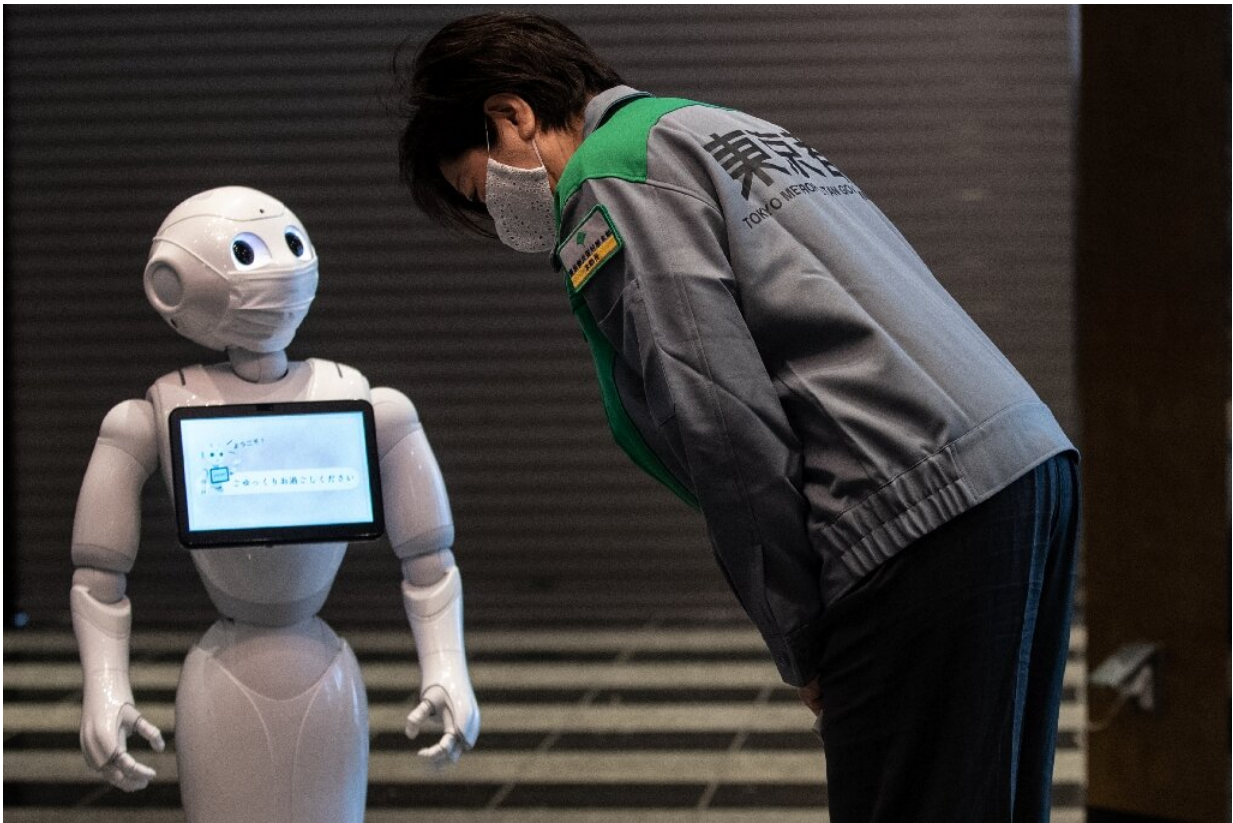


# 'I'm cheering for you': Robot welcome at Tokyo quarantine

May 1 2020

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Humanoid robot Pepper will offer support and advice to patients in coronavirus quarantine at a Tokyo hotel

Coronavirus quarantine can be lonely, but at one Tokyo hotel converted to accept patients with mild symptoms, a humanoid robot will be there to

offer support and encouragement—as well as admonishments and warnings.

"You can't fight the coronavirus on an empty stomach. Please eat well to get healthy," is among the messages that the pint-sized Pepper [robot](#) will be delivering to coronavirus patients waiting out their quarantine at one Tokyo establishment.

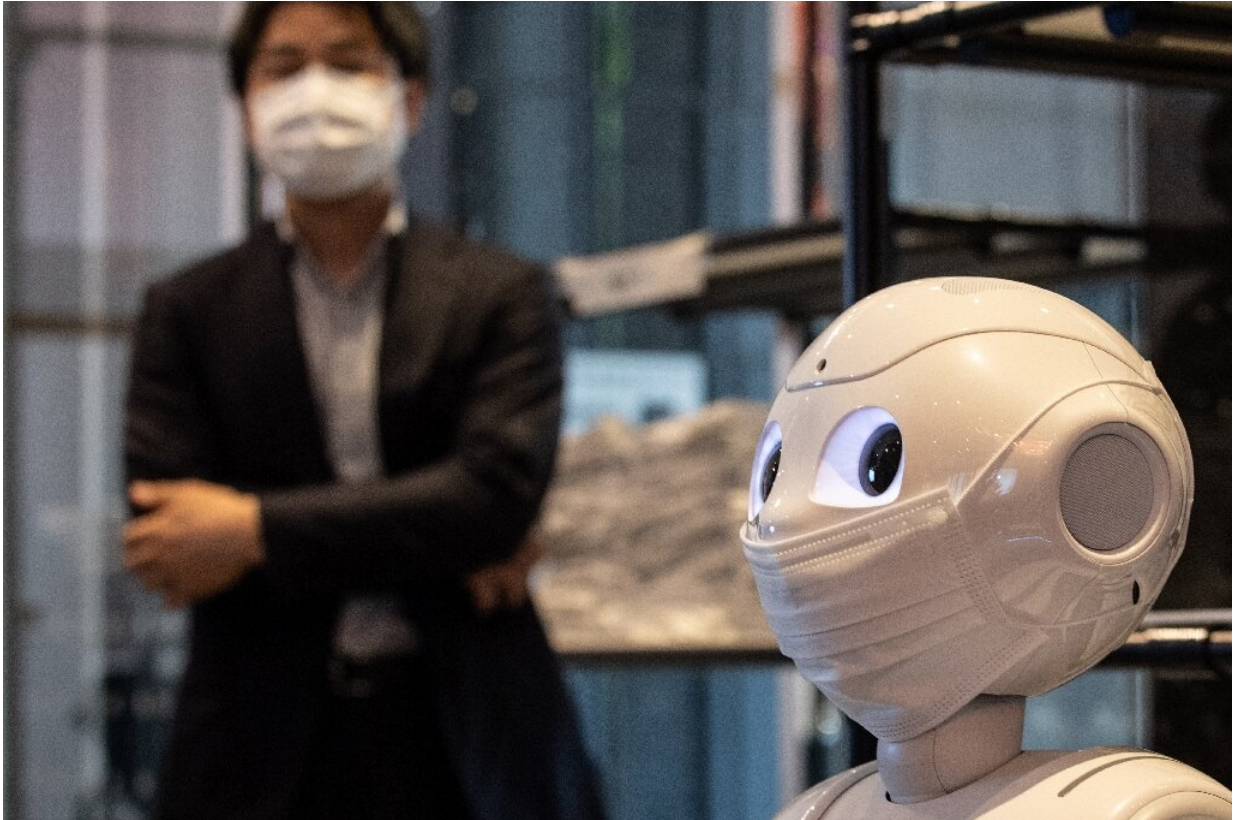
The local government has been working with hotels to secure rooms for patients with [mild symptoms](#), hoping to free up space in hospitals that are feeling the strain.

And at one facility, arrivals will be interacting with Pepper, a white, [humanoid robot](#) with round eyes and a tablet attached to its front, who will be sporting a [face mask](#) while in service at the [hotel](#).

"The patients are quarantined for two weeks, so we're using a reception robot to help the patients feel a bit more mentally comfortable," Tokyo government spokeswoman Naoko Kubota told reporters.

Tokyo's government has so far made deals with five hotels, securing around 2,800 rooms for coronavirus patients, though only 200 are currently in use.

"Since patients are infected with COVID-19, it is not possible to have a real person to interact with," said Kan Kiyota, marketing director of SoftBank, which makes the Pepper robot.



Pepper is also there to remind patients to eat healthily and not bring alcohol into quarantine

"This is where the robot comes in."

Pepper, and a back-up model, are expected to interact with patients at reception and during meals, offering reassuring messages including "We are all supporting you" and "I am cheering for you! Please get lots of rest while you are here and recover!"

But the approximately four-foot tall robot is also there to administer reminders including "Please do not bring alcohol into the building" and "The fastest way to recover is to eat a balanced meal, rather than your favourite dishes."

The hotel is also trialling a robot cleaner, which will operate in the lobby without human assistance.

Around the world, robots are being deployed to battle the coronavirus pandemic by disinfecting facilities, delivering food and carrying out health checks.

At the Tokyo hotel, flesh-and-blood doctors and nurses will be responsible for healthcare, including monitoring data that [patients](#) must submit twice a day on their temperature and blood oxygen saturation level.

Japan has so far seen a relatively small outbreak compared to parts of Europe and the United States, with nearly 14,300 infections recorded and 432 deaths.

But the country is under a nationwide state of emergency that is expected to be extended after an initial month-long period expires on May 6.

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