

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

15th Oct 2020

News Highlights

Second coronavirus vaccine approved in Russia after preliminary trials

Russia has already followed up its first Covid-19 vaccine with a second one, even as pharmaceutical companies around the world relentlessly conduct trials to produce a feasible jab. [President Vladimir Putin said on TV that the government planned to increase production of both the vaccines](#), despite Phase III trials having yet to be conducted for the new vaccine, named EpiVacCorona.

Boris Johnson resists national lockdown for now but rules out nothing

British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has introduced a three-tier system of localised measures to try and curb rising Covid-19 cases, resisting calls for a total national lockdown demanded by opposition leader Keir Starmer. [The localised approach means that bars and gyms may have to be shut for months in the Liverpool area](#), which falls in the highest tier of lockdown restrictions.

Blood test could help identify Covid-19 patients at greatest risk of critical illness

According to a new study, a blood test could identify patients with a high level of some cytokines, a group of proteins that are released in the blood in response to an infection. The study, [conducted by researchers at the University of Southampton, indicates that these patients are at an increased risk of serious illness because of over-production of the cytokines can lead to hyper-inflammation](#), an immune system response that can prove fatal

France, Germany reimpose restrictions as cases surge

France has imposed a night-time curfew in Paris, and eight other cities, as the country battles a rise in coronavirus cases. French President Emmanuel Macron announced the restrictions that come into effect Saturday and will last at least four weeks. [Chancellor Angela Merkel also tightened restrictions in Germany](#), closing bars and restaurants in high-risk areas and limiting private gatherings, even as the country recorded over 5,000 new daily infections for the first time since April.

Lockdown Exit

Will Zambia be first African nation to default during pandemic?

Zambia moved closer to becoming the first African nation to default on its dollar bonds since the onset of the coronavirus, making it a test case for nations worldwide battling to meet obligations to a range of lenders from bondholders to Chinese state banks. Holders of Zambia's \$3 billion of Eurobonds will vote next week on the country's request for a six-month interest-payment holiday. A core group of creditors have already rejected the proposal, prompting Zambia to say Tuesday it won't be able to service its \$3 billion of Eurobonds unless it gets the relief.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/10/14/bbwill-zambia-be-first-african-nation-to-default-during-pandemic>

World Bank approves \$12bn to increase COVID vaccine accessibility

The World Bank has approved \$12bn in financing to help developing countries buy and distribute

coronavirus vaccines, tests and treatments. The \$12bn “envelope” is part of a wider World Bank Group package of up to \$160bn to help developing countries fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the bank said in a statement late on Tuesday. Its implementation will be in support of efforts being led by the World Health Organization and COVAX, and will offer recipient countries a number of options with regards to acquiring and delivering vaccines. The World Bank said its new funding would help “signal to the research and pharmaceutical industry that citizens in developing countries also need access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines”.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/14/world-bank-approves-a-12b-aid-package-for-covid-19-vaccine>

Scientists Are Slamming The Great Barrington Declaration’s Call For “Herd Immunity”

As the Trump administration signals a willingness to build “herd immunity” by purposely allowing the coronavirus to spread, major scientific organizations are denouncing a plan they say would be life-threatening and practically impossible. That plan, laid out by three scientists in a controversial document called the “Great Barrington Declaration,” calls for only protecting “vulnerable” people and letting everyone else get infected with COVID-19. The authors discussed the strategy in a meeting with two top White House officials last week. This week, the head of the World Health Organization and more than a dozen groups representing thousands of infectious disease and public health experts fiercely pushed back in a series of formal denunciations. “Never in the history of public health has herd immunity been used as a strategy for responding to an outbreak, let alone a pandemic. It is scientifically and ethically problematic,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Monday.

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/stephaniemlee/herd-immunity-great-barrington-backlash-letter>

G20 agrees to additional 6-month debt suspension for poor nations

The Group of 20 nations, representing the world’s biggest economies, have agreed to extend the suspension of debt payments by an additional six months to support the most vulnerable countries in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic. The G-20 says the extension will provide ongoing relief for the \$14bn in debt payments that would have come due at the end of the year otherwise. Wednesday’s decision gives developing nations until the end of June 2021 to focus spending on health care and emergency stimulus programs rather than debt repayments.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/14/g20-suspends-poor-countries-debt-payments-for-another-6-months>

Global Covid report: young and healthy may not get vaccine until 2022, WHO says

Healthy, young people may have to wait until 2022 to be vaccinated against coronavirus, according to the World Health Organization’s chief scientist, who says health workers and those at highest risks be prioritised. It comes as Germany recorded its highest daily number of infections since the start of the pandemic. Soumya Swaminathan indicated that, despite the many vaccine trials being undertaken, speedy, mass shots were unlikely, and organising who would given access first in the event of a safe vaccine being discovered was still being worked on. “Most people agree, it’s starting with healthcare workers, and frontline workers, but even there, you need to define which of them are at highest risk, and then the elderly, and so on,” Swaminathan said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/15/global-covid-report-young-and-healthy-may-not-get-vaccine-until-2022-who-says>

Countries Rush to Hoard Food as Prices Rise and Covid Worsens

Jordan has built up record wheat reserves while Egypt, the world’s top buyer of the grain, took the unusual step of tapping international markets during its local harvest and has boosted purchases by more than 50% since April. Taiwan said it will boost strategic food stockpiles and China has been buying to feed its growing hog herd. The early purchases underscore how nations are trying to protect themselves on concerns the coronavirus will disrupt port operations and wreak havoc on global trade. The pandemic has already upset domestic farm-to-fork supply chains that provided just

enough inventory to meet demand, with empty store shelves across the world leading consumers to change their shopping habits. "Covid-19 has forced consumers to shift from just-in-time inventory management to a more conservative approach which was labeled just-in-case," said Bank of America Corp. analysts led by Francisco Blanch, head of global commodities. "The result is that consumers are holding more inventory as a precaution against future supply disruptions."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-10-14/a-just-in-case-world-is-rushing-to-hoard-food-as-prices-rally>

Qatar extends quarantine rules for travellers to December 31

Qatar has extended strict quarantine rules requiring travellers to isolate for up to 14 days upon their arrival in the country, local media reported on Tuesday. "For all arrivals – including nationals, residents and visa holders – quarantine requirements are now extended for all arrival dates up to 31 December 2020," The Peninsula newspaper reported, quoting the Discover Qatar website.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/13/qatar-extends-quarantine-rules-for-travellers-to-december-31>

'We have to act': France's Macron orders curfews to contain COVID

President Emmanuel Macron has ordered a nighttime curfew for Paris and eight other French cities to contain the rising spread of the coronavirus in the country. In a televised interview on Wednesday, Macron said residents of those cities would not be allowed outdoors between 9pm (19:00 GMT) and 6am (04:00 GMT) from Saturday, for at least four weeks, except for essential reasons.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/14/we-have-to-act-frances-macron-orders-curfews-to-contain-covid>

Exit Strategies

Reboot on the way for France's failed coronavirus tracking app

France is to reboot its StopCovid contact tracing app, which has proved a failure since going live four months ago, while coronavirus infections across the country continue to hit record highs. In an interview with France Info this week, Prime Minister Jean Castex revealed the government was working on a "new version" of the tracking tool, to be rolled out during school holidays on 22 October. Mocked on social networks, StopCovid has been downloaded 2.6 million times since June – a paltry figure compared to 18 million downloads for similar apps in Britain and Germany. And it has managed to identify just a handful of potential contact cases.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/reboot-way-frances-failed-coronavirus-165118469.html>

Regional Victoria 'step 3' coronavirus roadmap restrictions and lockdown rules explained

Regional Victoria has now moved to step three of the state's roadmap out of lockdown. Stage three restrictions were previously in effect across all of regional Victoria from Thursday 6 August. Metropolitan Melbourne entered stage four from Sunday 2 August. Step three has relaxed some restrictions on visitors, with the government introducing the idea of a "household bubble" to allow people to visit each other again. Similar to dining out, entertainment venues and events that are predominantly outdoors are now open. All students in regional Victoria will now be expected to return to onsite learning.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/14/coronavirus-victoria-stage-step-3-restrictions-lockdown-victorian-regional-vic-covid-19-rules-stage-three-explained-what-you-need-to-know>

Coronavirus spikes in two Australian states; easing restrictions delayed

Several coronavirus clusters have emerged in Australia's two most populous states, officials said on Wednesday, prompting the biggest, New South Wales (NSW), to delay easing some restrictions. The NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said she was concerned the state was on the cusp of another major community transmission, after 11 new cases were locally acquired and a cluster appeared in the southwest Sydney suburb of Lakemba. She said the easing of some social restrictions involving restaurants and weddings would now be put on hold.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/coronavirus-spikes-in-two-australian-states-easing-restrictions-delayed-idUSKBN26Z0CT>

Partisan Exits

White House embraces a declaration from scientists that opposes lockdowns and relies on 'herd immunity.'

On a call convened Monday by the White House, two senior administration officials, both speaking anonymously because they were not authorized to give their names, cited an October 4 petition titled The Great Barrington Declaration, which argues against lockdowns and calls for a reopening of businesses and schools. "Current lockdown policies are producing devastating effects on short and long-term public health," the declaration states, adding, "The most compassionate approach that balances the risks and benefits of reaching herd immunity, is to allow those who are at minimal risk of death to live their lives normally to build up immunity to the virus through natural infection, while better protecting those who are at highest risk. We call this Focused Protection."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/13/world/white-house-embraces-a-declaration-from-scientists-that-opposes-lockdowns-and-relies-on-herd-immunity.html>

Anti-lockdown campaigner part of fresh legal challenge to COVID-19 restrictions

In Australia, an anti-lockdown campaigner who was arrested last month over a reposting on social media of a planned mass gathering is part of another challenge to the legal basis of Victoria's coronavirus pandemic restrictions. A Supreme Court writ filed on Wednesday afternoon lists as plaintiffs Kerry Cotterill and Tony Pecora and, as defendants, the state's most senior health department bureaucrats, Chief Health Officer Professor Brett Sutton and Deputy Public Health Commander Finn Romanes. The challenge is at least the 11th case brought before the courts over the COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria, and argues that the Chief Health Officer's stay-at-home orders burdens individuals' freedom of political communication implied in Australia's Constitution.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/anti-lockdown-campaigner-part-of-fresh-legal-challenge-to-covid-19-restrictions-20201014-p5656r.html>

It is clear lockdowns are 'catastrophic disasters'

The Herald Sun Business Columnist Terry McCrann says it is clear travel bans made sense at the beginning of coronavirus until people got a sense of what was happening, but now it is clear lockdowns are "catastrophic disasters". "This characterization that it's lives versus money ... that people who argue against lockdowns are promoting money over lives is now showing to be conclusively wrong," Mr McCrann told Sky News host Peta Credlin.

https://www.skynews.com.au/details/_6200459941001

Andrews government could be 'liable for lockdown' under 'manslaughter laws'

In Australia, the Andrews government's taxpayer funded inquiry into the bungled hotel quarantine program has blown out to nearly \$6 million. In some cases, it is estimated per day \$30,000 is spent on each minister, department and official. Rule of Law Institute of Australia vice-president Chris Merritt said on top of the expense, there was a big issue regarding "whether the lockdowns were declared for an improper purpose". "If they were, they're unlawful". Mr Merritt said if the government locked down the state because it knew it was unable to implement an effective contact tracing system, then there could be major legal issues.

https://www.skynews.com.au/details/_6200317534001

'We've Got Someone Who Obviously Got An Education In America': New Zealand Deputy PM Roasts Covid Denier

New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters swiftly shut down a man asking him whether Covid-19 was a real threat during a campaign event. The questioner began making a lengthy speech

related to Covid-19 during a New Zealand First rally organized by Peters, who is the head of the political party and acts as deputy prime minister via a coalition government with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's Labour Party. "Where's your evidence that there is a virus that causes the disease?" the man asked. "We've got someone who obviously got an education in America," Peters said. "220,000 people have died in the United States. There are 8 million cases today. We've got 79,000 cases probably today in India, and here is somebody who gets up and says, 'The Earth is flat.' Sorry, sunshine, wrong place."

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/new-zealand-deputy-pm-roasts-covid-denier_uk_5f86b957c5b681f7da1d3efe

New Zealand politician ridicules Covid-19 denier

A New Zealand politician ridiculed a man for suggesting that the coronavirus does not exist - comparing it to saying 'the Earth is flat'. Deputy prime minister Winston Peters poured scorn on the audience member at a campaign event ahead of Saturday's general election, joking that he had 'obviously got an education in America' because of his accent. The man, who was holding a sheet of notes, drew sceptical looks from the audience as he asked: 'Where's your evidence that there is a virus that causes the disease?'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8838501/amp/New-Zealand-politician-ridicules-Covid-19-denier.html>

Continued Lockdown

Coronavirus lockdown 2.0 deepens divisions in Israel

Even before the pandemic, Israel had one of the largest income gaps and poverty rates among developed economies, with a few high earners, mostly in the lucrative high-tech sector, while many Israelis barely get by as civil servants, in service industries or as small business owners. Those gaps have widened as the second nationwide lockdown, imposed last month, dealt a new blow to an economy already hit hard by the first round of restrictions. The fallout from the pandemic has also deepened long-simmering divisions among Israeli Jews, pitting a largely secular majority against a powerful ultra-Orthodox minority. Much public anger has turned toward ultra-Orthodox leaders, whose communities have flouted public safety rules, sent coronavirus rates skyrocketing and vociferously resisted calls for targeted lockdowns.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/coronavirus-lockdown-2-0-deepens-divisions-in-israel-1.5144269>

Lack of mental health help: 'I felt nobody cares'

The number of under-18s getting NHS help for mental health issues in England nearly halved in the first two months of lockdown. Young people who weren't able to get support say they felt like they "didn't really matter". The number of people in England referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) dropped 47% in April and May, compared with last year. Charities worry a drop like this could happen again if we see a second spike and further lockdowns around the UK.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-54529217>

COVID-19 lockdown in Israel extended till October 18

The period of the general quarantine to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Israel has been extended until October 18, the prime minister and the health minister said in a joint statement. Earlier, Israel imposed strict norms of nationwide quarantine until the end of the fall holidays - October 11, and then the period was extended until October 14. According to these norms, many workplaces are closed, with the exception of vital and continuous production lines, only grocery stores and pharmacies continue to work.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2020/oct/14/covid-19-lockdown-in-israel-extended-till-october-18-2210192.html>

Melbourne beauty salons devastated, urge easing of lockdown

Melbourne beauty salons have lost 80 to 95 per cent of their income in sweeping devastation to the

sector since the COVID-19 pandemic started, industry experts say. Salon owners are now pleading with the Victorian government to reopen from Sunday, saying changes are needed “for the sake of all of our wellbeing”. “We understood when we were asked to close down on the 25th of March, however to still be closed down is now destroying the lives of over 45,000 team members – it is obliterating our industry,” Australian Hair and Beauty Association board member Sia Psicharis said.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/breaking-news/melbourne-beauty-salons-devastated-urge-easing-of-lockdown/news-story/e53bd2ce8b62f594b5ee3b42d5787be1>

Business owner opens Melbourne clothing store despite risk of \$10,000 fine in Dan Andrews' lockdown

In Melbourne, a small business owner who reopened his clothing store despite the risk of fines in has urged others to do the same after overwhelming support from the community. Harry Hutchinson announced on Monday he was at his wits end and was reopening his store despite the risk of a \$10,000 fine for breaking lockdown rules. The decision has proved to be profitable so far, with Mr Hutchinson telling Daily Mail Australia his stock has been flying off the shelves. Mr Hutchinson said his store reopening had inspired others in Berwick to open their doors and he urged others to follow suit.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8837817/Business-owner-opens-Melbourne-clothing-store-despite-risk-10-000-fine-Dan-Andrews-lockdown.html>

Scientific Viewpoint

Blood test could help predict which Covid-19 patients are at greatest risk of critical illness

A blood test could help to pinpoint which coronavirus patients are most susceptible to falling critically ill, a new study has suggested. Researchers at the University of Southampton found that patients who have high levels of some cytokines, a group of proteins released into the blood in response to an infection, are at an increased risk of serious illness. This is because cytokines can, if they are overproduced, lead to hyper-inflammation, an immune system response that sometimes proves fatal. If scientists conclusively work out which proteins are responsible for hyper-inflammation among coronavirus patients, drugs could be used to block them, according to the study's researchers.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-blood-test-cytokines-hyperinflammation-study-b1039848.html>

Kids may not be recommended for COVID-19 vaccination initially, U.S. CDC says

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that COVID-19 vaccines may not be initially recommended for children, when they become available. Children, who rarely have severe COVID-19 symptoms, have not yet been tested for any experimental coronavirus vaccine. The CDC said so far early clinical trials have only included non-pregnant adults, noting the recommended groups could change in the future as clinical trials expand to recruit more people. Pfizer has said it will enroll children, who are capable of passing on the virus to high-risk groups, as young as 12 in its large, late-stage COVID-19 vaccine trial, while AstraZeneca has said a sub-group of patients in a large trial will test children between five to 12.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-vaccine-children-idUSKBN26Z2IP>

Your Blood Type May Predict Your Risk For Severe COVID-19

There's more evidence that blood type may affect a person's risk for COVID-19 and severe illness from the disease. The findings are reported in a pair of studies published Oct. 14 in the journal Blood Advances. The findings suggest that people with A, B or AB blood may be more likely to be infected with COVID-19 than people with type O blood. Infection rates were similar among people with types A, B and AB blood.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2020-10-14/your-blood-type-may-predict-your-risk-for-severe-covid-19>

Russia approves second COVID-19 vaccine after preliminary trials

Russia has granted regulatory approval to a second COVID-19 vaccine, according to its register of authorised medicines. A delighted President Vladimir Putin announced the news at a government meeting on Wednesday. The jab was developed by the Vector Institute in Siberia and completed early-stage human trials last month. However, results have not been published yet and a large-scale trial, known as Phase III, has not yet begun. "We need to increase production of the first and second vaccine," Putin said in comments broadcast on state TV. "We are continuing to cooperate with our foreign partners and will promote our vaccine abroad." The peptide-based vaccine, named EpiVacCorona, is the second to be licensed for use in Russia. There has been a placebo-controlled trial on 100 volunteers between 18 and 60 in Novosibirsk.

<https://news.yahoo.com/putin-says-russia-approves-second-123532603.html>

Eli Lilly says other COVID-19 antibody drug trials ongoing after study halted for safety concern

Eli Lilly & Co LLY.N on Wednesday said other trials of its experimental coronavirus antibody therapy remain on track after a government-run study testing the treatment in hospitalized COVID-19 patients was paused due to safety concerns. Lilly said on Tuesday that an independent safety monitoring board requested a pause in the trial, called ACTIV-3, due to a potential safety issue. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), which is collaborating with Lilly on the trial, said the advisory board paused the trial after seeing a "difference in clinical status" between patients on Lilly's drug on those who received a placebo, without providing further detail.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eli-lilly-antibody/eli-lilly-says-other-covid-19-antibody-drug-trials-ongoing-after-study-halted-for-safety-concern-idUKKBN26Z210>

Richard Quest: After recovering from Covid-19, I thought I was safe. Now my antibodies are waning

I recovered from Covid-19 back in April. I was fortunate: My symptoms, while nasty, were minor compared to others. I had the hacking dry cough and I was fatigued to the point where I would spend many hours on the sofa. But I never had breathing difficulties, nor required hospital treatment. Whenever the question of catching it again has come up since, I airily and hubristically said, "Oh, I've had it, and have antibodies to prove it." At least I did until Friday, when my third antibody test came back negative. I was in shock. Even though it's not clear antibodies do actually offer immunity, I had treated my previous AB positive tests as a shield I could wave, crying, "Been there. Done that. I'm OK." Rightly or wrongly. Now my precious protection had vanished.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/14/health/quest-covid-recovery-antibodies-intl/index.html>

Coronavirus: YouTube bans misleading Covid-19 vaccine videos

YouTube has pledged to delete misleading claims about coronavirus vaccines as part of a fresh effort to tackle Covid-19 misinformation. It said any videos that contradict expert consensus from local health authorities, such as the NHS or World Health Organization, will be removed. It follows an announcement by Facebook that it would ban ads that discourage people from getting vaccinated. However, that restriction will not apply to unpaid posts or comments. YouTube had already banned "medically unsubstantiated" claims relating to coronavirus on its platform. But it is now explicitly expanding the policy to include content relating to vaccines.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-54541517>

"Herd immunity is another word for mass murder," expert says

William Haseltine, Chair and President of ACCESS Health International, said he is "extremely concerned that the President is being advised by people who speak of herd immunity." Haseltine

went on to say that if the virus is allowed to spread, as the Trump Administration is allegedly advocating, “we are looking at two to six million Americans dead – not just this year but every year.” “This is an unmitigated disaster for our country – to have people at the highest levels of our government countermanding our best public health officials,” Haseltine said. “We know this epidemic can be put under control. Other countries have done it. We are doing the opposite.”

https://www.cnn.com/world/live-news/coronavirus-pandemic-10-14-20-intl/h_571c71aa21a9a2a0d0aadd95af67a022

Italian research shows low transmission of SARS-CoV-2 within schools

A team of scientists from Italy has recently conducted a study to investigate the incidence of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection among students attending Italian schools after reopening after COVID-19 lockdown. The findings reveal that the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is low among younger students. The study is published on the medRxiv* preprint server.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20201012/Italian-research-shows-low-transmission-of-SARS-CoV-2-within-schools.aspx>

WHO Warning About Covid-19 Coronavirus Lockdowns Is Taken Out Of Context

As you can see, Nabarro said, “We in the World Health Organization do not advocate lockdowns as the primary means of control of this virus.” Note the word “primary” here. He did not say, “do not advocate lockdowns as a means of control of this virus.” Nabarro continued by saying, “The only time we believe a lockdown is justified is to buy you time to reorganize, regroup, rebalance your resources, protect your health workers who are exhausted, but by and large, we’d rather not do it.” Note the words “rather not do it” as opposed to “should not do it” or “will not do it.” Nabarro went on to describe how “lockdowns just have one consequence that you must never, ever belittle, and that is making poor people an awful lot poorer.” He added, “Look what’s happened to smallholder farmers all over the world. Look what’s happening to poverty levels. It seems that we may well have a doubling of world poverty by next year. We may well have at least a doubling of child malnutrition.” So basically, Nabarro was pointing out the potentially serious negative consequences of lockdowns. That, of course, makes sense. So, where exactly was the “reversal” of the WHO’s position? Did Nabarro actually “admit” something new? Not really. Again, pay attention to the words “primary” and “rather not do it.” Nabarro really never said that lockdowns should not be used at all and that everything should be opened now and kept open forever.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brucelee/2020/10/13/who-warning-about-covid-19-coronavirus-lockdowns-is-taken-out-of-context/>

A 'circuit breaker' in England will work only if test and trace is urgently reformed

In July, it all looked possible. England’s 12-week lockdown had reduced the number of positive cases. We could have continued to crush the R value, and built the infrastructure capable of snuffing out local outbreaks. But instead the government chose privatised call centres over community contact tracers. Our testing system, divorced from primary care, was too slow to identify cases. Those who did test positive were often uncertain about what should happen next. And in the absence of financial support, many households did not comply with isolation.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/oct/14/circuit-breaker-england-test-and-trace-reform-lockdown-sa>
[ge](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/oct/14/circuit-breaker-england-test-and-trace-reform-lockdown-sa)

Coronavirus 'excess deaths': why England and Wales have been hardest hit in Europe - new study

To get through the COVID-19 pandemic, we need good information. One hugely important statistic is how many people have died from the disease in various countries. But it’s notoriously difficult to compare deaths in this way – each nation reports and counts deaths due to COVID-19 differently. A more promising approach is to measure “excess deaths”. The idea is pretty simple. You estimate how many deaths, from any cause, there would have been if there had been no pandemic. Then you

count how many deaths there actually were. The difference between those numbers is the excess deaths. This is exactly what a major new study, published in Nature Medicine, has done for 21 countries.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/coronavirus-excess-deaths-why-england-092404714.html>

Spain, England and Wales top the list for coronavirus deaths in new study

A new study from Imperial College London looking at both the direct and indirect deaths caused by the pandemic puts England and Wales at the top of the ranks for per capita mortality, along with Spain. The findings, published Wednesday in the journal Nature Medicine, studied the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in 21 industrialized countries, mainly in central and western Europe as well as Australia and New Zealand.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/spain-england-and-wales-top-the-list-for-coronavirus-deaths-in-new-study/amp/>

COVID-19 in New Zealand and the impact of the national response: a descriptive epidemiological study

1503 cases were detected over the study period, including 95 (6.3%) hospital admissions and 22 (1.5%) COVID-19 deaths. The estimated case infection rate per million people per day peaked at 8.5 (95% CI 7.6-9.4) during the 10-day period of rapid response escalation, declining to 3.2 (2.8-3.7) in the start of lockdown and progressively thereafter. 1034 (69%) cases were imported or import related, tending to be younger adults, of European ethnicity, and of higher socioeconomic status. 702 (47%) cases were linked to 34 outbreaks. Severe outcomes were associated with locally acquired infection (crude odds ratio [OR] 2.32 [95% CI 1.40-3.82] compared with imported), older age (adjusted OR ranging from 2.72 [1.40-5.30] for 50-64 year olds to 8.25 [2.59-26.31] for people aged ≥80 years compared with 20-34 year olds), aged residential care residency (adjusted OR 3.86 [1.59-9.35]), and Pacific peoples (adjusted OR 2.76 [1.14-6.68]) and Asian (2.15 [1.10-4.20]) ethnicities relative to European or other. Times from illness onset to notification and isolation progressively decreased and testing increased over the study period, with few disparities and increasing coverage of females, Māori, Pacific peoples, and lower socioeconomic groups.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30225-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30225-5/fulltext)

Countries turn to rapid antigen tests to contain second wave of COVID-19

Countries struggling to contain a second wave of COVID-19 are turning to faster, cheaper, but less accurate tests to avoid delays and shortages that have hampered efforts to quickly diagnose and trace those infected. Germany, where infections jumped by 4,122 on Tuesday to a total of 329,453 cases, has gotten nine million so-called antigen tests a month that can give a result in minutes and cost around \$ 7.75 each. This would, in theory, cover more than 10% of the population. The United States and Canada also buy millions of tests, as does Italy, whose recent tender for five million tests attracted bids from 35 companies. Switzerland, where new cases of COVID-19 are at record levels, is considering adding the tests to its national screening strategy. The German Robert Koch Institute (RKI) now recommends antigen testing to supplement existing molecular polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, which have become the standard for the assessment of active infections, but which have also suffered from shortages because the pandemic has overwhelmed laboratories and exceeded the production capacity of manufacturers.

<https://www.fr24news.com/a/2020/10/countries-turn-to-rapid-antigen-testing-to-contain-second-wave-of-covid-19.html>

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Coronavirus Resurgence

Newly reported coronavirus cases in Germany reach April's level

The number of newly reported coronavirus cases in Germany has passed 5,000 for the first time since mid-April as officials weigh the possible rollout of new measures to contain the pandemic. The country's disease control agency, the Robert Koch Institute, said on Wednesday that a further 5,132

infections and 43 deaths from Covid-19 were recorded over the past day. The development came as German Chancellor Angela Merkel was set to meet with the governors of the country's 16 states to discuss which measures to take in response to the growing case load.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/germany-coronavirus-reported-infections-april-level-a4570601.html>

Germany's economic recovery loses momentum as daily cases spike above 5,000

Germany's growth prospects for 2020 are looking increasingly bleak, with the country's leading economic research institutes downgrading GDP forecasts for 2020 and beyond. Publishing a joint economic forecast Wednesday, Germany's leading economists warned that the coronavirus pandemic is leaving what they called "substantial marks" on the German economy. The impact of the virus "is more persistent than assumed in spring."

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/10/14/germanys-2020-growth-forecasts-are-downgraded.html>

Portugal imposes tougher COVID-19 measures as virus spreads

Tougher measures will be imposed in Portugal from Thursday onwards to contain record levels of coronavirus cases, including stricter limits on gatherings and heavier penalties for rule-breaking establishments. Prime Minister Antonio Costa will also submit a proposal to parliament to make face masks compulsory in crowded outdoor spaces, and use of the government's tracing app compulsory for some workforces. "I know many people are tired of the restrictions," Costa told a news conference on Wednesday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-portugal/portugal-imposes-tougher-covid-19-measures-as-virus-spreads-idUKKBN26Z24L>

Russia, Poland and Iran each hit new coronavirus records

European nations are closing schools, cancelling operations and enlisting legions of student medics as overwhelmed authorities face the nightmare scenario of a COVID-19 resurgence at the onset of winter. With new cases hitting about 100,000 a day, Europe has by a wide margin overtaken the United States, where more than 51,000 COVID-19 infections are reported on average every day. Most European governments eased lockdowns over the summer to start reviving economies already battered by the pandemic's first wave, but the return of normal activity - from packed restaurants to new university terms - has fuelled a sharp spike in cases all over the continent. Bars and pubs were among the first to shut or face earlier closing in the new lockdowns, but now the surging infection rates are also testing governments' resolve to keep schools and non-COVID medical care going.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/russia-poland-and-iran-hit-new-respective-coronavirus-records-20201014-p5657a.html>

Switzerland calls 'crisis summit' in bid to avoid second lockdown

The Swiss government will hold a 'crisis summit' on Thursday to discuss what steps can be taken to avoid a second lockdown. The Swiss government has called a 'crisis meeting' to determine how a second lockdown can be avoided. President Simonetta Sommaruga, Health Minister Alain Berset, Economics Minister Guy Parmelin, President of the Conference of the Cantonal Governments Christian Rathgeb, Lukas Engelberger and Christoph Brutschin, top health and economics directors, will attend the meeting. In calling for the 'crisis summit', Sommaruga is hoping to avoid an economically and socially destructive second lockdown, reports Swiss tabloid Blick.

<https://www.thelocal.ch/20201013/switzerland-calls-crisis-summit-to-avoid-second-lockdown-am>

Covid-19: Health experts suggest Christmas lockdown as Italy reports record rise in new cases

Italy has reported over 7,000 new cases of coronavirus in a day for the first time ever, as scientific experts warned of pressure on hospitals and said a "circuit breaker" lockdown may be necessary by Christmas. Italy's health authorities on Wednesday reported 7,332 new cases within the past 24 hours, a figure that exceeds the record high of 6,557 seen on March 21st.

<https://www.thelocal.it/20201014/covid-19-italy-reports-record-number-of-new-cases-as-health-experts-suggest-christmas-lockdown>

As virus surges anew, Milan hospitals under pressure again

Coronavirus infections are surging again in the region of northern Italy where the pandemic first took hold in Europe, renewing pressure on hospitals and health care workers. At Milan's San Paolo Hospital, a ward dedicated to COVID-19 patients and outfitted with breathing machines reopened over the weekend, a sign that the city and the surrounding Lombardy region is entering another emergency phase of the pandemic. The region was the hardest hit area of Italy in the spring, when Italy spent weeks with the world's highest reported virus-related death toll before being overtaken by the United States. For the medical personnel in Lombardy who fought the virus the first time around, the long-predicted rebound came too soon.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/virus-surges-anew-milan-hospitals-pressure-73608694>

More masks, less play: Europe tightens rules as virus surges

Governments across Europe are ratcheting up restrictions to try to beat back a resurgence of the coronavirus that has sent new confirmed infections on the continent to their highest weekly level since the start of the pandemic. The World Health Organization said Tuesday there were more than 700,000 new COVID-19 cases reported in Europe last week, a jump of 34% from the previous week. Britain, France, Russia and Spain accounted for more than half of the new infections. The increasing caseload is partly the result of more testing, but the U.N. health agency noted that deaths were also up 16% last week from the week before. Doctors are warning that while many of the new cases are in younger people, who tend to have milder symptoms, the virus could again start spreading widely among older people, resulting in more serious illnesses.

<https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-pandemics-geneva-france-europe-40521fb6080e35bc4aae4144bf3652bc>

Why complacency and lifting restrictions could be driving India's high COVID-19 numbers

Megha Mogare, a chauffeur in Mumbai, has been out of work since March, when the Indian government introduced one of the world's strictest lockdowns in reaction to the coronavirus pandemic. Mogare lives in the poor neighbourhood of Dharavi. Often described as one of Asia's largest slums, it is a labyrinth of small, cramped lanes and home to one million residents. Earning just 15,000 rupees (\$268 Cdn) a month before the pandemic struck, it was always a struggle for the 56-year-old to make ends meet, let alone build up enough savings to see him through a crisis. "The situation now is so bad I can't run my own house," he said. "I've had to take out loans."

<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/why-complacency-lifting-restrictions-could-080000751.html>

Malaysian royal palace postpones meetings due to coronavirus curbs

Malaysia's royal palace postponed from Wednesday all meetings for two weeks because of new coronavirus curbs, a palace official said, likely putting off a decision on a bid by opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim to form a new government. Anwar had on Tuesday met King Al-Sultan Abdullah to try to prove he had a "convincing" parliamentary majority to form a government, sparking a fresh bout of political wrangling just months after Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin took office. The king was scheduled to meet leaders of main political parties to verify Anwar's claim but a two-week partial lockdown took effect from Wednesday in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, and neighbouring state of Selangor.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/malaysia-politics/update-1-malaysian-royal-palace-postpones-meetings-due-to-coronavirus-curbs-idUSL4N2H51S3>

Netherlands PM: partial lockdown needed to slow coronavirus spread

The Dutch government announced a new round of measures to slow the spread of coronavirus on Tuesday, including limits on the size of social gatherings and a ban on the sale of alcohol in the evening. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said the measures will go into effect from Wednesday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-netherlands-measur/netherlands-pm-partial-lockdown-needed-to-slow-coronavirus-spread-idUKKBN26Y2NS>

Dutch to impose social restrictions to curb COVID-19 surge

The Netherlands will return to a “partial lockdown” on Wednesday, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said, closing bars and restaurants as it battles to control the coronavirus in one of Europe’s major hotspots. “Today we are announcing new and sturdy measures and in fact we are going to a partial lockdown,” Rutte said in a televised news conference. He said public gatherings of more than four people would be prohibited and alcohol sales in the evening would also be banned. Schools were to remain open and public transport would keep running, in contrast to measures imposed during a partial lockdown earlier this year.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-netherlands/dutch-return-to-partial-lockdown-as-covid-19-cases-soar-idUKKBN26Y115>

New Lockdown

IMF urges governments to maintain Covid-19 support, as restrictions tighten - business live

International Monetary Fund says it’s too early to end government support scheme, as pandemic drives up to 90m people into extreme poverty - Britain’s economy faces a double risk to recovery from a disorderly Brexit as the coronavirus pandemic drags down growth, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has warned. On the eve of a critical EU leaders’ summit in Brussels, the influential Paris-based thinktank said the Covid crisis would further complicate a disorderly Brexit as companies were less prepared for the end of the transition period, having diverted attention away from leaving the EU. It warned that failure to secure a free trade agreement before the UK leaves the Brexit transition period at the end of December would leave the economy 6.5% lower in the next few years than would have been the case if existing arrangements with the EU had been maintained.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/live/2020/oct/14/markets-edgy-covid-19-restrictions-tighten-oil-growth-ftse-imf-business-live?page=with:block-5f86cce08f080db3080ba52a>

Two-week UK circuit-breaker lockdown ‘will be considered’ if strict tier system fails

The prime minister is reportedly considering a short ‘circuit breaker’ lockdown if his three-tier system fails, as pressure mounts on him to take drastic action over the half-term break. Sir Keir Starmer and experts are urging Boris Johnson to go further than his latest measures by introducing a fortnight of nationwide curbs, with scientists estimating the move could save around 7,800 lives by the end of the year. The temporary lockdown would see most businesses, including pubs and restaurants close, if the three-tier restrictions coming into effect today fail to bring down the spiralling infection rate, a Government source told The Telegraph.

https://metro.co.uk/2020/10/14/two-week-uk-circuit-breaker-lockdown-will-be-considered-if-strict-tier-system-fails-13418211/?ico=more_text_links

Liverpool becomes first city to be placed under UK's tightest restrictions

The city of Liverpool in northern England is part of the first area to go under the UK's new strictest set of Covid-19 restrictions. CNN's Salma Abdelaziz reports

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2020/10/14/uk-liverpool-coronavirus-covid-19-tier-3-lockdown-abdelaziz-pkg-intl-hnk-vpx.cnn>

Coronavirus: Northern Ireland to go into four-week partial lockdown

Northern Ireland is to close schools, pubs and restaurants as part of new restrictions to try to contain exploding rates of Covid-19 infection. Arlene Foster, the first minister, announced the partial lockdown on Wednesday at a special sitting of the Stormont assembly in response to what has

become a pandemic hotspot. The new rules take effect from Friday and are to last four weeks with the exception of schools, which will shut for two weeks. The hospitality sector will close apart from deliveries and takeaways. Off-licences and supermarkets cannot sell alcohol after 8pm. There will be no indoor sport or organised contact sport involving mixing of households, other than at elite level.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/oct/14/coronavirus-northern-ireland-to-be-put-under-partial-lockdown>

UK PM Johnson resists national lockdown but rules nothing out

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday resisted a short lockdown for all of England but said he ruled nothing out in the face of calls to shut the country down for two weeks as a "circuit breaker" in order to save lives. With cases rapidly rising, the British government opted this week for a three-tier system of local measures. The Liverpool area in the northwest became the first part of the country in the highest category, requiring bars, gyms and other businesses to shut, perhaps for months. Johnson said he would stick to this localised approach, responding to opposition leader Keir Starmer's demand for a temporary national lockdown. "The whole point is to seize this moment now to avoid the misery of another national lockdown," Johnson told parliament.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain/uk-pm-johnson-resists-national-lockdown-but-rules-nothing-out-idUSKBN26Z0OD>

Spain's Catalonia region orders bars and restaurants to shutdown for 15 days

The Spanish region of Catalonia, which includes the city of Barcelona, ordered bars and restaurants to close for 15 days from Thursday night onwards and limited the numbers of people allowed in shops to try to curb a surge in coronavirus cases. With close to 900,000 registered cases and more than 33,000 deaths, Spain has become the pandemic's hotspot in Western Europe. The capital Madrid and nearby suburbs were put on partial lockdown last week.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-spain/spanish-catalonia-region-orders-bars-restaurants-shutdown-for-15-days-idUSKBN26Z1SG>

Netherlands goes into partial lockdown to contain coronavirus spread

The Netherlands returned to a "partial lockdown" on Wednesday (October 14, 2020) following Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte's announcement on Tuesday evening to close bars and restaurants in order to control the coronavirus in one of Europe's major hotspots. "Today we are announcing new and sturdy measures and in fact we are going to a partial lockdown," Rutte said in a televised news conference. He said public gatherings of more than four people would be prohibited and alcohol sales in the evening would also be banned. Schools were to remain open and public transport would keep running, in contrast to measures imposed during a partial lockdown earlier this year.

<https://zeenews.india.com/world/netherlands-goes-into-partial-lockdown-to-contain-coronavirus-spread-2317348.html>

COVID 2nd wave drives more European countries back into lockdown

More European countries have decided to reimpose nationwide lockdown measures to counter fast-rising coronavirus infection rates. Northern Ireland announced Wednesday that it would become the first among the United Kingdom's four nations to try a so-called circuit breaker lockdown. The tactic will see pubs and restaurants closed for all but takeout service, all schools closed and many other businesses greatly restricted for a short, defined period to try and break the cycle of spiraling infections.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-second-wave-europe-lockdowns/>

Lockdowns from China to Europe as trials stumble

As Europe imposed new restrictions to try to stall a surging second wave of the novel coronavirus, hopes for vaccines to rapidly provide relief suffered a blow Tuesday with the suspension of two clinical trials in the United States. China, meanwhile, rushed to test an entire city of nine million within days after a minor coronavirus outbreak in the sprawling country, and Europe struggled to tackle a new surge of infections. The virus is still spreading rapidly worldwide, with more than one

million deaths and 37 million infections. Many nations that suppressed their first outbreaks now face a second wave.

<https://asiatimes.com/2020/10/lockdowns-from-china-to-europe-as-trials-stumble/>

New lockdowns from China to Europe as coronavirus trials stumble

As Europe imposed new restrictions to try to stall a surging second wave of the novel coronavirus, hopes for vaccines to rapidly provide relief suffered a blow on Tuesday with the suspension of two clinical trials in the United States. China meanwhile rushed to test an entire city of nine million within days after a minor coronavirus outbreak in the sprawling country, a far cry from the struggle in Europe to tackle surging infections with tough new steps including partial lockdowns

<https://www.news24.com/news24/world/news/new-lockdowns-from-china-to-europe-as-coronavirus-trials-stumble-20201014>

Coronavirus: Which countries have tried circuit-breaker lockdowns and have they worked?

Sir Keir Starmer has called for a two- to three-week national lockdown, accusing the prime minister of "no longer following the scientific advice". The Labour leader's intervention came after it emerged Boris Johnson dismissed a recommendation for the measure from government scientists three weeks ago. Here's a look at how other countries have attempted a so-called "circuit-breaker" in their fight against Covid-19.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-circuit-breaker-lockdown-uk-singapore-israel-new-zealand-keir-starmer-b1032283.html>

Here's how circuit breaker lockdowns worked in Israel, New Zealand and Singapore

Just 24 hours after Boris Johnson unveiled his latest plans to curb the spread of coronavirus, the Labour Party has called for 'circuit breaker' lockdown. Sir Keir Starmer called for a two to three-week national lockdown on Tuesday that, accusing the Prime Minister of "no longer following the scientific advice". His comments come after it emerged on Monday evening that scientists advising the government recommended the country be put into a two-week 'circuit break' lockdown three weeks ago. Documents released on Monday night - prior to the PM appearing from Downing Street for his press conference - show that the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) were urging the Prime Minister to go further than the three-tiered system.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/uk-news/heres-how-circuit-breaker-lockdowns-19099854>

Keir Starmer calls for 'circuit breaker' lockdown for England - video

Keir Starmer called for a two-to three-week national 'circuit breaker' lockdown across England to prevent the NHS being overwhelmed, urging Boris Johnson to act in a dramatic escalation of his criticism of the government's approach. Starmer pushed the PM to heed the advice of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) after it was revealed late on Monday that the government's scientific advisers called for a fortnight-long lockdown as long ago as 21 September, warning that a failure to do so risked a 'very large epidemic with catastrophic consequences'

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/video/2020/oct/13/keir-starmer-calls-for-circuit-breaker-lockdown-for-england-video>

Some British gyms defy PM Johnson's COVID-19 lockdown

For one gym owner in the northwest of England, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's latest COVID-19 lockdown is a step too far. To save his business, he is defying the government's command to close, along with dozens of other gyms in the area. Governments across the world have imposed some of the most severe restrictions in peacetime history to tackle the coronavirus, to varying degrees of success. The virus has killed more than a million people and Europe is deep in a second wave. The measures have also pushed many companies, and in some cases whole sectors, out of business. Some feel ignored and are starting to push back against the rules. "We're supposed to be closed but

we are open," Chris Ellerby-Hemmings, 36, owner of EmpoweredFit Gym in Greasby, near Liverpool, told Reuters.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-gym/some-british-gyms-defy-pm-johnsons-covid-19-lockdown-idUKKBN26Z16Q>

UK not heading for a national lockdown yet, minister says

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday resisted a short lockdown for all of England but said he ruled nothing out in the face of calls to shut the country down for two weeks as a "circuit breaker" in order to save lives. With cases rapidly rising, the British government opted this week for a three-tier system of local measures. The Liverpool area in the northwest became the first part of the country in the highest category, requiring bars, gyms and other businesses to shut, perhaps for months. Johnson said he would stick to this localised approach, responding to opposition leader Keir Starmer's demand for a temporary national lockdown.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain/uk-not-heading-for-a-national-lockdown-yet-minister-says-idUKKBN26Z00I?il=0>

Northern Ireland to shut restaurants and suspend school in strictest UK lockdown

Northern Ireland announced the strictest COVID-19 restrictions seen in the United Kingdom since early summer on Wednesday, closing schools for two weeks, restaurants for four weeks and leading Ireland to respond by tightening curbs in bordering counties. The British-ruled region of Northern Ireland has become one of Europe's biggest COVID-19 hotspots in recent weeks. Its health minister described the situation last Friday as becoming graver by the hour.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-nireland-restaurant-idUKKBN26Z1A0>

Coronavirus: France to impose night-time curfew to battle second wave

French President Emmanuel Macron has announced a night-time curfew in Paris and eight other cities to try to curb the rapid spread of coronavirus. The measure - from 21:00 to 06:00 - will come into effect from Saturday and last for at least four weeks, Mr Macron said in a televised interview. A public health emergency has also been declared. Meanwhile Germany announced that bars and restaurants in higher-risk areas must close early. Chancellor Angela Merkel announced tightened restrictions on Wednesday as the country recorded more than 5,000 new infections for the first time since April. In areas where infections exceed 50 per 100,000 inhabitants, bars and restaurants must close their doors by 23:00. Private gatherings will be limited to 10 people from two households.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54535358>