

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

23rd Feb 2021

News Highlights

U.S. crosses 500,000 deaths in a global first

The United States's death toll from COVID-19 has surpassed 500,000 in a global first. [The Milestone was crossed just over a year after its first confirmed fatality due to the pandemic.](#) 'As we acknowledge the scale of this mass death in America, remember each person and the life they lived,' said president Joe Biden. He ordered the American flag to be flown at half-staff on public buildings and grounds until sunset on Friday. Bells rang in the National Cathedral 500 times in tribute.

Argentina hit by vaccines scandal

The Argentine health minister, [Gines Gonzalez Garcia, has resigned following a scandal wherein he is reported to have enabled queue-jumping to get a COVID-19 vaccine.](#) Garcia stepped down on Friday, at the behest of president Alberto Fernandez, who described the former minister's conduct as 'unforgivable.' The public prosecutor's office has reportedly opened an investigation.

Studies suggest promising Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine results

Studies conducted in the UK suggest there are promising results for the Pfizer and BioNTech vaccine. [Public Health England found the vaccine reduced infection by seventy percent after one dose and 85% after two.](#) Research in Scotland led by Edinburgh University found the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine reduced hospitalisation risk by up to 85% four weeks after the first dose. For the AstraZeneca vaccine, the figure was 94%.

Lockdown exit roadmap unveiled in England

[Prime Minister Boris Johnson has unveiled his roadmap for easing England out of lockdown, one he has described as 'cautious but irreversible.'](#) although ministers have said dates set out in the plan could be adjusted if infections rise at any stage. The roadmap prioritises reopening schools and follows with the phased reopening of non-essential businesses and loosening of restrictions on social interaction. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have slightly different roadmaps outlined for exiting lockdown.

Lockdown Exit

Pfizer set to double weekly production of coronavirus vaccine

Pfizer expects to roughly double the number of coronavirus vaccine doses it makes per week for use in the U.S, CEO Albert Bourla said Friday at an event with President Joe Biden held at the company's plant in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The boost in production should take effect in the next "couple weeks," Bourla said, noting the drugmaker currently manufactures about 5 million doses each week. Pfizer has supplied approximately 40 million doses to the U.S. government through February 17, some 29 million of which have been administered since the vaccine's emergency authorization last December. Pfizer's stepped-up manufacturing is a result of improvements the company's made in reducing by half the time it takes to make and do quality checks on each vaccine lot. The pharma is also expanding its production network, tapping a site in Kansas to aid in the fill and finish of vaccine vials.

<https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/pfizer-coronavirus-vaccine-manufacturing-kansas-factory/595407/>

Australia to ramp up COVID-19 vaccination drive as more doses arrive

Australia will ramp up its COVID-19 immunisation drive with more shots to be rolled out from next week, federal Health Minister Greg Hunt said on Tuesday, after a second shipment of the vaccine reached the country overnight. About 166,000 doses of the vaccine developed by Pfizer Inc and Germany's BioNTech arrived late Monday, authorities said, as the country entered the second day of a nationwide inoculation programme. Total weekly doses will be raised to 80,000 next week from 60,000 doses this week, with the number expected to reach 1 million a week by the end of March when CSL Ltd begins to locally produce the AstraZeneca vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/australia-to-ramp-up-covid-19-vaccination-drive-as-more-doses-arrive-idUSKBN2AN02Q>

Coronavirus vaccine rollout begins in Western Australia with two hotel quarantine nurses

Two hotel quarantine nurses have become the first people in Western Australia to be given the COVID-19 vaccine. Four thousand five hundred doses of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine arrived at Perth Airport yesterday and were stored overnight in a Perth Children's Hospital (PCH) pharmacy freezer at minus 80 degrees Celsius. It is the first COVID vaccine approved for use in Australia by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-22/wa-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-begins-with-hotel-quarantine-nurses/13176590>

A year after its 1st COVID-19 cases were discovered, Italy is cautiously bouncing back

Italy discovered its first COVID-19 infections one year ago. The outbreak led to the first nationwide lockdown outside of China, and it has claimed more than 95,000 lives across the country. But as CBS News correspondent Chris Livesay reports, it's a very different story there now. Life has slowly been returning to normal, and Italians packed the streets over the weekend - even in the country's north, which was once the epicenter of its coronavirus epidemic. Old traditions are bouncing back across Italy, but with some differences. A year ago, something as simple as drinking a cappuccino out in the open had become unthinkable. Life is hardly back to normal; the law still requires that you to wear a mask at all times in public, even outside, except when you're eating or drinking.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-19-italy-anniversary-first-cases-cautious-return-normal-waiting-vaccines/>

Air New Zealand to trial digital Covid `vaccination passport`

Air New Zealand will trial a digital travel pass to give airlines and border authorities access to passenger health information, including their Covid-19 vaccination status, the carrier said Monday. The scheme, dubbed a "vaccination passport" by industry observers, is intended to streamline travel once borders reopen by allowing passengers to store their health credentials in one place.

<https://www.wionews.com/world/air-new-zealand-to-trial-digital-covid-vaccination-passport-365394>

Covid 19 coronavirus: Auckland lockdown was 'frustrating' but justified, says expert

Auckland's latest Covid-19 episode will have proven "frustrating" to many - but the snap lockdown was nonetheless ultimately justified, an expert says. Scientists today welcomed Cabinet's call to move Auckland to alert level 1, and to require masks on public transport across the whole country, at all alert levels. Covid-19 modeller Professor Michael Plank said the drop down made sense, with a vast number of negative tests now giving officials "good confidence" there wasn't an undetected community outbreak.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-coronavirus-auckland-lockdown-was-frustrating-but-justified-says-expert/XHZGJNEF4OYZL3XGJIL6CHNIGI/>

WHO calls for other steps to ease COVAX vaccine access

At a press briefing today, the World Health Organization's (WHO) top official said money isn't the only obstacle to getting vaccines to lower income countries through the COVAX program, designed

to offer equitable access to tamp down the COVID-19 activity across the globe. In other developments, the WHO pleaded with Tanzania to report on its COVID-19 situation and describe measures it's taking, as some countries in Europe looked toward easing measures, while a few other nations tracked rising cases.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/02/who-calls-other-steps-ease-covax-vaccine-access>

Pfizer to ship 13 million COVID-19 vaccine doses per week to U.S. by mid-March, says executive

Pfizer Inc expects to deliver more than 13 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine per week to the United States by the middle of March, more than doubling its shipments from early February, a top Pfizer executive said in prepared testimony ahead of a Tuesday congressional hearing. Pfizer has shipped around 40 million doses to locations across the United States so far and is on track to deliver 120 million doses of its two-dose regimen by the end of March, said John Young, Pfizer's chief business officer.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-vaccines/pfizer-to-ship-13-million-covid-vaccine-doses-per-week-to-u-s-by-mid-march-says-executive-idINKBN2AM2LW>

New pledges boost COVAX, but critics say more is needed to ensure global vaccine access

After months of uncertainty and frustration, a World Health Organization program designed to ensure access to Covid-19 vaccines in dozens of low-income countries late last week received a spate of good news. First, Novavax pledged 1.1 billion doses of its shot to the WHO effort, which is known as COVAX. Meanwhile, the U.S. agreed to contribute \$4 billion in aid over the next two years, with Germany adding \$1.2 billion and the European Commission providing \$600 million. Collectively, the G7 countries have now committed a total \$7.5 billion. And the U.K. promised to provide surplus vaccines to low-income countries. The sudden rush of announcements was in stark contrast to increasing concerns that COVAX was faltering. For much of the past year, wealthy nations and drug makers reached deals that critics argued would leave low-income nations with little access to vaccines. As a result, the vast majority of vaccinations have so far occurred in high-income countries.

<https://www.statnews.com/pharmalot/2021/02/22/covid19-coronavirus-vaccine-who-covax-pfizer-jnj-moderna-astrazeneca/>

On the Post-Pandemic Horizon, Could That Be an Economic Boom?

The growing optimism stems from the confluence of several factors. Coronavirus cases are falling in the United States. The vaccine rollout, though slower than hoped, is gaining steam. And largely because of trillions of dollars in federal help, the economy appears to have made it through last year with less structural damage — in the form of business failures, home foreclosures and personal bankruptcies — than many people feared last spring

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/21/business/economy/pandemic-economic-boom.html>

Exit Strategies

Spanish region vaccinates 7,000 adults living with a disability in a week

In Spain, Extremadura last week took on the challenge of vaccinating 7,000 adults with need for daily care who are not in residences, and their professional carers in a week. This group included people who need help to carry out basic tasks, recognized as Grade III dependents under the Law of Dependency, those who have asked to be recognized in this category and those who, without having made any request, are accredited with suffering from a disease which requires them to have significant support measures. Thanks to the support of family and health workers, the vaccination day was "surprisingly easy," said the coordinator of the drive, Paula Salamanca. Red Cross teams, which facilitated up to 300 trips to the center, were also key. Salamanca said that it all comes down

to teamwork: "If one of us fails, we all fail."

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2021-02-22/spanish-region-vaccinates-7000-adults-living-with-a-disability-in-a-week.html>

U.S. administers 64.2 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines - CDC

The United States has administered 64,177,474 doses of COVID-19 vaccines as of Monday morning and delivered 75,205,940 doses, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The tally of vaccine doses are for both Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech, vaccines as of 6:00 a.m. ET on Monday, the agency said. According to the tally posted on Feb. 21, the agency had administered 63,090,634 doses of the vaccines, and distributed 75,204,965 doses.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-cdc/u-s-administers-64-2-million-doses-of-covid-19-vaccine-s-cdc-idUSKBN2AM29A>

More than 100,000 Covid-19 vaccines to be administered this week

In Ireland, more than 100,000 doses of Covid-19 are set to be administered this week, as supplies of the vaccine are to be ramped up over the coming weeks. Health Service Executive (HSE) boss Paul Reid said the light is "beginning to emerge" as the State scales up its vaccine programme. The CEO of the HSE said that it delivered some 40,000 to 45,000 doses every week, but that increased to 80,000 vaccines last week. He said that 13,500 of those vaccines went to people aged over 85, while 25,000 were delivered to healthcare workers and 40,000 to residents and staff in long-term residential facilities.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/more-than-100000-covid-19-vaccines-to-be-administered-this-week-40119551.html>

Superdrug launches £120 COVID-19 PCR saliva testing service

In the UK, Superdrug has become the first high street pharmacy chain to offer a saliva-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for COVID-19, at the price of £120. The saliva-based PCR test is designed to be less intrusive than the standard method of using a swab to retrieve a sample from the back of the patient's nose or throat. It is available in all 200 Superdrug branches across the country and via the multiple's website, it announced last week

<https://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news/superdrug-launches-120-salvia-pcr-test-covid>

Tens of thousands more will die of Covid-19 as lockdown eases, advisers warn

Tens of thousands more people will die of Covid-19 as Britain opens up, government scientific advisers have concluded. Even a gradual easing during the spring is likely to produce a peak on the scale of last month or last April because so many people remain susceptible, according to modelling by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage). Lifting all restrictions from the end of April would lead to a far bigger wave of hospital admissions than last month and some limits on social contact will be needed into the summer, the models suggest. Sage told ministers last week that mask-wearing, avoiding crowds and contact tracing may be needed indefinitely to keep the virus under control.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sage-warns-tens-of-thousands-more-will-die-of-covid-19-as-lockdown-eases-nkxxblktx>

Life may be close to normal by June 21, says PM as he unveils roadmap

Boris Johnson said there is "light ahead" for the UK today after earlier revealing his roadmap to bring England out of lockdown. All pupils in England's schools will return to class from March 8 while people will be able to socialise with one person outside, Mr Johnson confirmed earlier. Mr Johnson, laying his "roadmap" out of lockdown to the House of Commons on Monday afternoon, also revealed from April 12 at the earliest shops, hairdressers, nail salons, libraries, outdoor attractions and outdoor hospitality venues such as beer gardens will be allowed to reopen. From June 21 at the earliest, all remaining restrictions on social contact could be lifted, larger events can go ahead and

nightclubs could finally reopen.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/coronavirus-uk-live-boris-johnson-roadmap-covid-lockdown-announcement-latest-updates-b920680.html>

Germany reopens some schools amid fears pandemic may rebound

Elementary students in more than half of Germany's 16 states returned to school Monday after more than two months at home, the first major relaxation of the country's pandemic measures since before Christmas. Kindergartens also reopened their doors for pre-school children, giving much-anticipated relief to stressed parents trying to juggle working from home and childcare during the lockdown. The move was agreed at a meeting between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and state governors two weeks ago, and stuck to despite signs that the decline in case numbers seen in the country is flattening out again and even rising in some areas.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-reopens-some-schools-amid-fears-pandemic-may-rebound-germany-schools-school-states-country-b1805574.html>

Covid-19: New York City Is Down to 1,000 First Vaccine Doses

Vicious winter weather has snarled vaccine deliveries nationwide. The White House estimated that the weather had created a backlog of six million doses, and pleaded with local officials to extend hours at vaccination sites and schedule additional appointments. The bad weather has slowed two vaccine shipping hubs — a FedEx center in Memphis and a UPS site in Louisville, Ky. And the Federal Emergency Management Agency said this week that more than 2,000 vaccine sites were in areas with power outages.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/02/20/world/covid-19-coronavirus>

COVID-19: Gaza starts inoculation drive amid vaccine shortage

The inoculation campaign against COVID-19 in the besieged Gaza Strip has kicked off after the arrival of vaccines donated by Russia and the United Arab Emirates. On Monday, officials and health workers received the first shots of 22,000 Russian Sputnik V jabs in front of dozens of cameras.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/22/gaza-starts-covid-19-inoculation-drive-amid-vaccine-shortage>

Step by step: how England's Covid lockdown will be lifted

Boris Johnson has announced detailed plans for the unlocking of England amid the coronavirus vaccination programme. Here is the proposed timetable, in four stages, and other initiatives announced by Downing Street. No 10 is stressing that after the first step the subsequent stages of reopening could be subject to delay and that the programme would be guided by "data rather than dates". There is a minimum of five weeks between each stage - four weeks to collect and assess data and then a week for people and businesses to prepare for the next step.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/22/step-by-step-how-england-lockdown-lifted>

Partisan Exits

Israel's coronavirus vaccines wielding political power

Forget about oil and arms. Coronavirus vaccines are emerging as the newest currency of choice in the Middle East. Israel's reopening of its economy, combined with a murky prisoner swap with Syria and the arrival of a batch of vaccines in the Gaza Strip, have all underscored how those with access to the vaccines have political power in the turbulent region. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been at the forefront of this trend, pinning his re-election hopes on the success of his campaign to vaccinate Israel's adult population. At the same time, he has offered rewards to those who vaccinate and punishments to those who do not. Israel has rolled out the world's fastest vaccination campaign, administering at least one dose to more than half its 9.3 million people and the required two doses to about one-third in less than two months.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/22/israel-coronavirus-vaccines-wielding-political-power>

UK PM sets out road map to ease England's COVID lockdown

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has set out a four-step plan to ease coronavirus restrictions in England, expressing a hope that life could get back to normal by the end of June. Johnson outlined a "gradual and cautious" approach to lifting curbs in England, starting with the return of pupils to schools from March 8. Non-essential retail and hairdressers will reopen April 12. So will pubs and restaurants, though only outdoors. Indoor venues such as theatres and cinemas, and indoor seating in bars and restaurants, are scheduled to open May 17, when limited crowds will be able to return to sports stadiums. It is also the earliest date Britons may be allowed foreign holidays. The government is aiming for the lifting of all limits on social contact from June 21. The government says the dates could all be postponed if infections rise.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/22/uk-aims-for-lifting-all-social-restrictions-in-england-by-june-21>

Bells toll for lives lost as U.S. reaches 500,000 COVID deaths

The United States on Monday crossed the staggering milestone of 500,000 COVID-19 deaths just over a year since the coronavirus pandemic claimed its first known victim in Santa Clara County, California. In a proclamation honoring the dead, President Joe Biden ordered the U.S. flag to be flown at half-staff on public buildings and grounds until sunset on Friday. "On this solemn occasion, we reflect on their loss and on their loved ones left behind," Biden said in the proclamation. "We, as a Nation, must remember them so we can begin to heal, to unite, and find purpose as one Nation to defeat this pandemic."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa/a-day-that-will-live-in-infamy-us-nears-500000th-covid-19-death-idUSKBN2AM1Y4>

False claims tying coronavirus vaccines to infertility drive doubts among women of childbearing age

As the rollout of the coronavirus vaccine ramps up across the United States, women of childbearing age have emerged as a surprising roadblock to efforts to halt the pandemic by achieving herd immunity. Officials have encountered hesitancy among other groups, including some Black and Hispanic adults and those who believe the pandemic is a hoax. But the reluctance of women in their 20s and 30s — largely around disinformation spread on Facebook, Twitter and other social media — has been more unexpected. With such women making up a large share of the health-care workforce, vaccine uptake at nursing homes and hospitals has been as low as 20 to 50 percent in some places — a far cry from the 70 to 85 percent population target that health officials say may be needed to stop the virus.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/02/22/women-vaccine-infertility-disinformation/>

COVID-19: Australian Open fans criticised for 'disgusting' booing of vaccine rollout

The behaviour of Australian Open fans who booed the mention of a COVID-19 vaccine rollout after Sunday's men's final has been branded "disgusting". Tennis Australia president Jayne Hrdlicka was loudly heckled when she mentioned vaccines in her presentation speech after Novak Djokovic's victory. Michael McCormack, Australia's deputy prime minister said: "Well, that's un-Australian (the booing incident), I'm sorry that is just un-Australian." "This vaccine is going to get our country back to some sort of pre-COVID normality."

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-australian-open-fans-criticised-for-disgusting-booing-of-vaccine-rollout-12225467>

Australian woman refusing a Covid swab in MIQ had already protested against lockdowns

An Australian woman who is refusing to take a Covid-19 swab says she will finally leave MIQ in Wellington today - after 28 days. Lucinda Baulch flew into New Zealand almost a month ago to drop off children she had been fostering to their new home in Aotearoa. "I put my hand up saying I'll take the children on the plane, I'll stay with them during managed isolation." She claims that while she was in Australia, she was told by officials there she wouldn't need to take a Covid-19 swab because

she flew in from Australia, but once she arrived she was informed that this was not the case. This isn't the first time Baulch has challenged Covid-19 rules, and back in Australia, she participated in an anti-lockdown protest.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/australian-woman-refusing-a-covid-swab-in-miq-had-already-protested-against-lockdowns/TU6SVTXFGD3VBC5GCO27L2GBEM/>

Argentina's president decries 'unforgivable' vaccine scandal

The president of Argentina has decried an "unforgivable" COVID-19 vaccine scandal that prompted the resignation of the country's health minister. Gines Gonzalez Garcia stepped down on Friday after reports surfaced that he had aided people in the South American nation jump the queue to receive COVID-19 vaccines.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/21/argentina-president-decries-unforgivable-vaccine-scandal>

Continued Lockdown

Italy Extends Ban on Movement Between Regions Until Late March

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi has extended a ban on movement between the country's 20 regions for another month -- until late March -- as his new government tries to step up a vaccination campaign to counter the pandemic. A cabinet meeting chaired by Draghi prolonged travel curbs between regions until March 27 and maintained a 10 p.m. curfew, according to a statement. The government also introduced a ban on visits between households in the highest-risk areas.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-22/italy-government-extends-ban-on-movement-between-regions?srnd=politics-vp>

Residents in Chinese city vent frustration after more than 40 days in lockdown

Gaocheng, a district of the Hebei capital Shijiazhuang, went into lockdown in early January after a spike in cases. Many complain that they are still unable to leave their houses despite a fall in cases and an easing of restrictions earlier this month

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3122508/coronavirus-china-city-residents-vent-frustration-after-spending>

UK shopper numbers rise for fifth straight week despite lockdown

The number of people heading out to shops across Britain increased by 6.8% last week versus the previous week, a fifth straight week of uplift despite the national lockdown, market researcher Springboard said on Monday. It said shopper numbers, or footfall, in the week to Feb. 20 was up 10.5% in high streets, 4.5% in shopping centres and 1.2% in retail parks. "You could be fooled into thinking that last week was a normal (school) half term week rather than the eighth week of a national lockdown, as footfall continued to rise for the fifth consecutive week," said Springboard director Diane Wehrle.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/britain-retail-springboard/update-1-uk-shopper-numbers-rise-for-fifth-straight-week-despite-lockdown-idUSL8N2KS3OQ>

Don't ignore 'lockdown fatigue', UK watchdog tells finance bosses

Staff at financial firms in Britain are suffering from "lockdown fatigue" and their bosses are not always making sure all employees can speak up freely about their problems, the Financial Conduct Authority said on Monday. Many staff at financial companies have been working from home since Britain went into its first lockdown in March last year to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. One year on, the challenges have evolved from adapting to working remotely to dealing with mental health issues, said David Blunt, the FCA's head of conduct specialists. "During this third lockdown, there has been a greater impact on mental well-being, with many people struggling with job security, caring responsibilities, home schooling, bereavements and lockdown fatigue."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-finance-regulator/dont-ignore-lockdown-fatigue-uk-watchdog-tells-finance>

Scientific Viewpoint

'Extremely promising': 1st dose of COVID vaccine cuts illness

Data from two separate studies published in the UK, one in England and another in Scotland, have shown vaccines against COVID-19 are effective in cutting disease transmission and hospitalisations starting from the first dose. Analysis from Public Health England (PHE) published on Monday shows that the vaccine manufactured by Pfizer-BioNTech reduces the risk of catching infection by more than 70 percent after the first dose. That risk is reduced by 85 percent after a second dose.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/23/first-covid-vaccine-dose-cuts-transmission-hospitalisation>

Novavax vaccine could be approved by JUNE - bringing another 100 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to the US after drug company announced its final stage clinical trial in

...

Novavax has now enrolled 30,000 people in the US and Mexico to its shot trial. Its CEO told Reuters last month it could deliver doses to the US by June if all goes well in its trials. The vaccine was shown to be 89.3% effective and works nearly as well against the UK variant in tests in Britain. But the shot is about 50% less effective against the South African variant. US has a contract for 100 million doses of Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine. It would likely be the fourth shot authorized in the US, assuming Johnson & Johnson's vaccine gets greenlit by the FDA this week.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9286595/Novavax-completes-enrollment-U-S-trial-COVID-19-vaccine.html>

Covid-19 Pfizer vaccine cuts chance of hospitalisation for elderly by 75% after one jab, research finds

One dose of the Pfizer vaccine slashes the chances of being admitted to hospital with Covid by at least 75 per cent among over-80s, real-world data from Public Health England (PHE) has found. Dr Mary Ramsay, head of immunisation at PHE, said this was at the "lower end of the estimate" and the drop in hospital admissions and deaths was thought to be even more profound. Another study found that the Pfizer/BioNTech jab also offered a high degree of protection for younger age groups.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/health/medical/covid-19-pfizer-vaccine-cuts-chance-of-hospitalisation-for-elderly-by-75-25-after-one-jab-research-finds/ar-BB1dUviA>

COVID-19: Vaccine rollout linked to 85% and 94% drop in coronavirus hospital admissions in Scotland, study shows

The COVID-19 vaccines being used in the UK could reduce a person's risk of being admitted to hospital by as much as 94% four weeks after the first dose, new data suggests. Experts examined coronavirus hospital admissions in Scotland among people who have had their first jab and compared them to those who had not yet received a vaccine.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-vaccine-rollout-linked-to-85-and-94-drop-in-coronavirus-hospital-admissions-in-scotland-study-shows-12225532>

Why this week's FDA meeting on J&J's coronavirus vaccine will be important

This Friday, a group of vaccine and infectious disease experts will assemble virtually to discuss whether the Food and Drug Administration should clear Johnson & Johnson's coronavirus vaccine for emergency use. The meeting, convened by the FDA, is likely one of the last steps in the agency's review of J&J's shot. The regulator held similar meetings to review study results from Pfizer and Moderna and, each time, authorized the companies' vaccines the very next day. The advisers are expected to support emergency use of J&J's vaccine, as they did for Pfizer's and Moderna's. But Friday's meeting will be important viewing nonetheless, as the experts are likely to debate emerging issues like protection against new virus variants. The meeting will be broadcast through an FDA conference system as well as on Youtube. BioPharma Dive will be covering live.

<https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/johnson-johnson-coronavirus-vaccine-fda-advisory-meeting/595366/>

Sanofi and GSK start test of upgraded coronavirus vaccine after first version disappoints

Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline on Monday announced the start of a Phase 2 study testing a new version of the experimental coronavirus vaccine the two partners have been developing. The 720-volunteer mid-stage study begins roughly two months after the partners disclosed weaker than expected results for their first vaccine candidate. Sanofi and GSK are evaluating a "refined antigen formulation" in the new trial, and could start Phase 3 testing in the second quarter if results are positive, they said in a statement. If all goes well, Sanofi and GSK hope to bring a vaccine to market by the fourth quarter of 2021. But that outcome would still represent a six-to-nine month delay from previous estimates, a significant setback for a program that was promised up to \$2.1 billion in funding from the U.S. government. Multiple coronavirus vaccines are already available, and others could arrive later this year.

<https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/sanofi-gsk-upgraded-coronavirus-vaccine-trial/595457/>

U.K. Data Trove Shows Vaccine Program Cuts Covid-19 Hospitalizations, Deaths

A single shot of the vaccine produced by Pfizer led to a 57% reduction in cases of Covid-19 in people of age 80 and over, rising to 88% after a second dose, according to preliminary data from the U.K.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-vaccines-effectiveness-highlighted-by-u-k-data-11614008331>

Clinical trials offer new hope for Covid-19 treatment

Clinical trials are taking place at the Great Western Hospital with the aim of finding more effective ways to treat patients with coronavirus. Operating department practitioner Helen Langton explains how her team approaches patients and families to get their consent.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-wiltshire-56155288>

COVID-19 survivors may only need one vaccine dose, study finds

Researchers looked at blood samples of 10 people previously infected with coronavirus who received one shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. COVID-19 survivors had boosted levels of immune system cells and a 1,000-fold increase in levels of neutralizing antibodies. The levels were enough to neutralize both the original strain of the virus and the South African variant that is more highly contagious. Dr Anthony Fauci said the data is 'impressive' and that - if it holds up - health officials may consider letting survivors get one dose.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9287557/COVID-19-survivors-need-one-vaccine-dose-study-finds.html>

Blood thinners may protect against COVID-19 complications

A new study has found that administering heparin-based blood thinners to patients with COVID-19 in the first 24 hours of hospital admission reduced the risk of death. The researchers observed a 27% reduced risk of 30-day mortality among patients who received blood thinners. Severe bleeding that required a blood transfusion occurred in 4.6% of patients and was not significantly linked with early intervention to prevent coagulation.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/blood-thinners-may-protect-against-covid-19-complications>

This UK lockdown must be the last. Here's how we can achieve that

As the UK has yo-yoed in and out of multiple lockdowns, restrictions have harmed people's livelihoods, businesses, mental and physical health, and their quality of life. In the first and second lockdowns, these restrictions proved insufficient to permanently drive down the prevalence of Covid-19. This time, we have been promised that all adults will have received their first vaccine dose by July - but its level of effectiveness, coupled with the potential emergence of new strains of the virus, means the vaccine rollout will not be a complete solution to the pandemic.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/feb/21/uk-lockdown-health-livelihoods-2021-sage-committee>

Delaying 2nd AstraZeneca COVID shot may boost efficacy

A single dose of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine offered 76% protection against COVID-19 for 3 months, at which time administering the second dose resulted in up to 47% greater protection than giving it at 6 weeks, according to a study published late last week in the Lancet. The pooled post-hoc exploratory analysis of four randomized, controlled trials led by researchers from Oxford University involved 17,178 adults in the United Kingdom, Brazil, and South Africa from Apr 23 to Dec 6, 2020. The study also examined the effect of one versus two doses of the vaccine in reducing community spread of COVID-19 and the protection conferred by a low dose followed by a standard dose versus two standard doses.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/02/delaying-2nd-astrazeneca-covid-shot-may-boost-efficacy>

AstraZeneca's Indian COVID-19 vaccine partner told to prioritize local supplies: CEO

Low- and middle-income countries banking on doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine from Serum Institute of India may have to wait a bit longer, the Indian shot maker's CEO said over the weekend. The same goes for Europe, where officials have reportedly considered importing supplies from the world's largest vaccine maker by doses. Serum Institute has been told to prioritize supplies for India first as the country hustles to vaccinate 300 million people, or a fifth of its population, by August. The move could signal delays for other countries waiting on orders of AstraZeneca's adenovirus shot, which Serum Institute is cranking out on license under the name Covishield.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/manufacturing/astrazeneca-s-indian-covid-19-vaccine-partner-told-to-prioritize-local-supplies-ceo>

After Pfizer deal, Sanofi offers a hand to Johnson & Johnson for COVID-19 vaccine production

Sanofi hasn't abandoned its COVID-19 vaccine hopes despite a setback in the high-stakes race, but as it moves two different shots forward, it's also pitching in to make doses for its usual rivals. The drugmaker on Monday inked a manufacturing tie-up with Johnson & Johnson to help produce that company's vaccine in Europe. The deal follows a separate agreement for Sanofi to turn out 100 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for Europe this year. When J&J's one-dose-and-done vaccine scores an authorization, Sanofi will give the company access to its plant in Marcy l'Etoile, France. Workers there will formulate the J&J vaccine and fill vials, and the site will turn out around 12 million doses per month, Sanofi said. The deal "demonstrates Sanofi's ongoing commitment to the collective effort to ending this crisis as quickly as possible," CEO Paul Hudson said in a statement.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/after-pfizer-deal-sanofi-offers-a-hand-to-johnson-johnson-for-covid-19-vaccine-production>

US: South African COVID strain found in New York state resident

The first case of a fast-spreading coronavirus variant from South Africa has been discovered in a resident of the US state of New York, Governor Andrew Cuomo said. Cuomo said on Sunday the case, a person from Nassau County, was detected at the Opentrons Labworks Inc's Pandemic Response Lab. The mutated strain of the coronavirus, which was first detected in South Africa, was first discovered in the US last month.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/22/south-african-variant-found-in-new-york-state-resident>

Coronavirus Resurgence

UK records 445 new deaths as more than 17 million Brits have received a coronavirus vaccine

More than 17 million people in the UK have now received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, new figures reveal. The UK reported 445 coronavirus-related deaths and 10,406 new infections on Saturday. However, London continues to lag behind other regions bar the South West. The NHS England data shows a total of 1,753,957 jabs were given to people in London between December 8

and February 19, including 1,687,471 first doses and 66,486 second doses.

https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/more-than-17-million-coronavirus-vaccine-uk-445-deaths-covid-b920610.html?itm_source=Internal&itm_channel=homepage_banner&itm_campaign=breaking-news-ticker&itm_content=2

ER doctor documents COVID-19 battle in LA hospital with emotional photographs

Dr Scott Kobner, 29, chief resident at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center's Department of Emergency Medicine, documented his front-line colleagues. The amateur photographer took pictures of doctors and patients at the 600-bed public hospital using Leica M6 and M10 cameras and posted them on Instagram. Dr Kobner had permission from the hospital and patients. Kobner, originally from New York, doesn't photograph people he treats but comes in on his days off instead. He tested positive for the virus in the summer but recovered alone at home. In LA County, more than 19,880 people have died of COVID-19. There is a long history of photographing medical treatment during disasters that gained popularity in the US during the Civil War.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9287451/ER-doctor-documents-COVID-19-battle-LA-hospital-emotional-photographs.html>

Coronavirus: High Covid rates delay France and Germany easing

Stubbornly high infection rates are hampering French efforts to ease coronavirus restrictions, with Nice in the south a particular hotspot. In Germany many schools are reopening on Monday, but officials say infection rates remain worryingly high. France is not under lockdown, but there is a national curfew (18:00-06:00). The area around Nice, which has the highest rate in France, will go into partial lockdown for the next two weekends.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56153570>

South Africa's COVID-19 cases, deaths decline as variant spreads globally

COVID-19 cases have been declining in South Africa despite the nation battling to contain a more contagious variant that has spread globally. Worldwide, the virus has killed 2,477,790 people with 111,953,292 cases in tracking by Worldometers.info. The United States continues to lead both categories, surpassing 28 million infections and fewer than 2,000 deaths from 500,000 fatalities, according to Johns Hopkins tracking, ahead of two other North American nations, Brazil at 246,504 and No. 3 Mexico with 179,797.

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2021/02/21/South-Africas-COVID-19-cases-deaths-decline-as-variant-spreads-globally/5511613916328/

COVID-19: Lockdown if cases keep rising for 8-15 days, says Uddhav Thackeray

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said that in view of the rising COVID-19 cases, religious, social and political gatherings will be prohibited in the state from Monday.

<https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/national/covid-19-lockdown-if-cases-keep-rising-for-8-15-days-says-uddhav-thackeray>

French city of Nice asks tourists to stay away amid COVID surge

The mayor of Nice in southern France called on Sunday for a weekend lockdown in the area to reduce the flow of tourists as it battles a sharp spike in coronavirus infections to triple the national rate. The Nice area has France's highest COVID-19 infection rate, with 740 new cases per week per 100,000 residents, according to Covidtracker.fr. "We need strong measures that go beyond the nationwide 6 p.m. curfew, either tighter curfew, or a partial and time-specific lockdown. A weekend lockdown would make sense," Mayor Christian Estrosi said on franceinfo radio. Health Minister Olivier Veran said on Saturday the government would decide this weekend on tightening virus control measures in the Mediterranean city.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-france/french-city-of-nice-asks-tourists-to-stay-away-amid-covid-surge-idUSKBN2AL061>

US COVID-19 death toll hits 500,000 as hospital cases drop

Today the United States met a grim milestone: In 1 year, more than half a million Americans have died from COVID-19, as at least 28,174,133 million have suffered infections, thousands have lost jobs, and all have had the pandemic touch multiple aspects of everyday life. To mark the passing of 500,000 Americans, President Joe Biden today will hold a moment of silence and candle-lighting ceremony at sundown at the White House. The Washington Post today put the 500,000 death toll in context. The first US death from COVID-19 was reported on Feb 29, 2020. By May 28, 100,000 had died. Deaths remained at a fairly steady clip until a post-holiday surge.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/02/us-covid-19-death-toll-hits-500000-hospital-cases-drop>

New Lockdown

First Test For Italy's New Government: A New Lockdown Ahead?

No movement between regions until March 27th and no visits to family and friends in a red zone: these are the main measures that Italy's new government has introduced to counter the coronavirus crisis, which has started to strike back and threaten the country's restart. It is the first official act that the government has taken since its settlement last week.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/irenedominioni/2021/02/22/first-test-for-italys-new-government-a-new-lockdown-ahead/>

India sees new lockdowns as coronavirus cases rise again

Cases of COVID-19 are increasing in some parts of India after months of a steady nationwide decline prompting authorities to impose lockdowns and other virus restrictions. Infections have been plummeting in India since September, and life has already returned to normal in large parts of the country. In many cities, markets are bustling, roads are crowded and restaurants are nearly full. But experts have been warning that the reasons behind India's success aren't really understood, and that the country of nearly 1.4 billion people can't afford to let its guard down. Public health officials are now investigating potential mutations in the virus that could make it more contagious and render some treatments and vaccines less effective.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/india-sees-new-lockdowns-as-coronavirus-cases-rise-again-cases-parts-decline-india-life-b1805444.html>

Maharashtra reimposes curbs as Covid cases surge

A Covid-19 test positivity rate inching towards 10% in Pune district and a surge in cases in Amravati division made authorities in Maharashtra act swiftly on Sunday to reimpose measures like school and college closure, limitation on movement at night and restrictions on events like weddings for the remainder of the month.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/maharashtra-reimposes-curbs-as-covid-cases-surge/articleshow/81143695.cms>

French Riviera placed under weekend lockdown

The French government has placed the French Riviera in southern France under lockdown on weekends, local authorities announced, amid a rapid surge of coronavirus cases in recent weeks. While France has been reluctant to enforce a third nationwide lockdown, local ones are seen as increasingly likely in areas where the situation has deteriorated, including the Paris region. This measure will be enforced from Friday 6 p.m., until Monday 6 a.m. for the next two weekends, "following the same rules as during October lockdown," state Representative Bernard Gonzalez said.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/france-riviera-weekend-lockdown-coronavirus-infections/>