

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

15th Apr 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

Beware 'last mile, first smile,' syndrome as we near the end of the COVID-19 pandemic

- Fatigue, distracted attention, and the sense a crisis will soon be over contribute to bad judgement, last-minute accidents, and preventable deaths. This 'last mile, first smile' phenomenon happens in the military, in law enforcement, and in the final stages of disasters and crisis situations. It can happen to anyone while driving the last mile home. Medical teams aren't exempt from it. [The end-of-crisis is all but 'class dismissed and back to normal' but things are far more complicated than that.](#)
- Fighting COVID-19 everyday, being exposed to the danger of infection and worrying about bringing the virus home; the psychological trauma and moral injury sustained while treating patients who died alone with healthcare workers playing the role of family members, having to prioritise care while balancing a shortage of medical gear, time, and attention - all of these can induce a heavy toll. **Transitioning medical teams into the post COVID-19 era needs to be planned, supported, and done with the precision of a delicate surgical procedure**

WHO expert warns pandemic 'nowhere near finished' as Covid surges across world

- We are not yet close to a world without COVID-19, World Health Organisation special envoy on COVID-19 David Nabarro has said at a symposium of Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh. [He stressed new variants of concern will be a regular occurrence whilst COVID-19 continues to circulate at the levels it is now.](#)
- 'I have to stress that I am not 100% sure the world is going to find it easy to vaccinate itself out of a pandemic because of the emergence of variants that are capable of escaping the protection of current vaccines.'
- With very large amounts of virus around there will be a regular arrival of new variants that are particularly troublesome. The variant problem is going on and on as long as there is a lot of virus going around. For anyone to say they are safe because they are vaccinated is more hope than probability.
- We should expect more variants to emerge and escape vaccine protection, that is inevitable, and so globally we should anticipate that this pandemic is going to go on roaring in parts of the world where there are large numbers of people still infected.'
- Dr David Nabarro said world leaders need to support other countries through a global COVID-19 programme, adding 'If they don't do so I think the prospect of getting collectively ahead of this pandemic in short order are next to zero and we will go on struggling with uncertainty, not just for the coming year but for a number of years.' Whilst the vaccination programmes are indeed offering some hope, there is no guarantee they will be able to protect us from new strains of COVID-19.

African Union seeks to boost vaccine-making with 5 new centres

- The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), which helps run the global COVAX coronavirus vaccine-sharing programme with the public-private alliance GAVI and the World Health Organization (WHO) have signed a memorandum of understanding to boost African vaccine research and development as well as manufacturing.
- The five centres will be located in the north, south, east, west and centre of Africa over the next 10-15 years, according to John Nkengasong, director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- ['Trusted partnerships will be critical in advancing the vaccine manufacturing agenda on the continent,' he said on Tuesday after a two-day virtual meeting.](#) 'The partnership with CEPI symbolises cooperation and collaboration to help respond to infectious disease threats and ensure Africa's health security.'
- The target is to produce locally within 20 years 60% of all vaccines used on the continent, compared with one percent today. 'We are aware that it is a challenge,' said Nkengasong, but added 'If Africa does not plan to address its vaccine security needs today, then we are absolutely setting ourselves up for failure going forward.'

Europe won't renew AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine contracts new year - report says

- Amid delivery delays and concerns over rare but serious blood clots for the AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 shots, European officials are looking elsewhere for next year's supply.
- The European Commission has opted against renewing its vaccine contracts with AstraZeneca and J&J once they expire at the end of the year, [Italian newspaper La Stampa reported Wednesday, citing an unamed source from the Italian health ministry. Reuters also picked up the story.](#)
- Both shots have come under scrutiny over rare but serious cases of blood clots in people who had received vaccine shots, prompting several countries to pause the use of the AZ shot while the European Medicines Agency completed a follow-up safety review. Meanwhile, AstraZeneca has struggled to meet the delivery targets it originally laid out, while J&J just this week said it would delay its vaccine rollout across the EU over safety concerns.

Deaths outstrip births in ten Brazilian cities as COVID-19 cases surge

- There were more deaths than births in several Brazilian cities in March, amid the country's latest surge in COVID-19 cases. At least ten cities, including Rio de Janeiro, recorded higher death rates than birth rates during the month. [According to the National Civil Register, Rio de Janeiro reported 36,437 deaths in March but only 32,060 births during the same period.](#)
- Brazil is currently the global epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, with daily deaths surpassing 4,000 last week. The outbreak is pushing hospitals to breaking point with many patients dying before an Intensive Care Unit bed becomes available. ICU capacity stands at about, or above, 80% full across all of Brazil's 27 regions.
- Victims are also getting younger with over 50 percent of intensive care beds occupied by patients under 40 years old, according to a study published over the weekend by the Brazilian Association of Intensive Medicine. This new statistic is a jump of 16.5% compared to the ICU bed occupancy rate for that age between December and February.

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As frontline health care workers emerge from the work that has consumed them since March 2020, they will be shading their eyes to accommodate to the optimistic sunlight of a post-Covid world. For many doctors, nurses, and other frontline health care workers, this transition may be challenging in ways that might expose them to profound risk of burnout, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and even suicide. Fighting Covid-19 day in and day out, being exposed to the danger of infection and worrying about bringing the virus home; the psychological trauma and moral injury sustained while treating patients who died alone with health care workers playing the role of family members; having to prioritize care while balancing a shortage of medical gear, time, and attention — all of these can induce a heavy emotional toll. Transitioning medical teams into the post-Covid-19 era needs to be planned, supported, and done with the precision of a delicate surgical procedure

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/04/14/beware-last-mile-first-smile-syndrome-end-covid-19-pandemic/>

WHO expert warns pandemic 'nowhere near finished' as Covid surges across world

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We are not yet close to a world without Covid-19, World Health Organisation (WHO) special envoy on Covid-19 David Nabarro has said. Addressing a Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh symposium, he said that new variants will be a "regular" occurrence whilst Covid-19 continues to circulate. "The pandemic is nowhere near finished," Dr Nabarro said. "Each week we have seen four and a half million cases being reported and know those are an enormous underestimate. "And we are still seeing a really significant number of deaths - nearly three million.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/who-envoy-pandemic-covid-surge-b1831402.html>

African Union seeks to boost vaccine-making with 5 new centres

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The African Union (AU) has announced the launch of a partnership to manufacture vaccines at five research centres to be built on the continent within the next 15 years. The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), which helps run the global COVAX coronavirus vaccine-sharing programme with the public-private alliance Gavi and the World Health Organization (WHO), signed a memorandum of understanding to boost African vaccine research and development as well as manufacturing. The five centres will be located in the north, south, east, west and centre of Africa over the next 10-15 years, according to John Nkengasong, director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an AU agency. "Trusted partnership will be critical in advancing the vaccine manufacturing agenda on the continent," he said on Tuesday after a two-day virtual meeting. "The partnership with CEPI symbolises cooperation and collaboration to help respond to infectious disease threats and ensure Africa's health security."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/14/african-union-wants-five-vaccine-making-centres-on-continent>

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the bloc over safety concerns.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/astrazeneca-j-j-covid-19-vaccine-contracts-won-t-be-renewed-europe-next-year-report>

Deaths outstrip births in ten Brazilian cities as COVID-19 cases surge

Deaths outstrip births in ten Brazilian cities as COVID-19 cases surge and the total body count nears 400,000

Ten cities such as Rio de Janeiro recorded higher death than birth rates in March ICU capacity stands at 80 per cent and most patients are under the age of 40 The jab rollout has been painfully slow with only 6.3 million people vaccinated Brazil is the global epicenter of the pandemic with more than 380,000 deaths

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9469729/Deaths-outstrip-births-ten-Brazilian-cities-COVID-cases-surge-body-count-nears-400-000.html>

Covid-19 vaccines: Denmark becomes first country to stop using Oxford/AstraZeneca jab entirely

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Denmark has become the first country to entirely cease using the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine following its possible link to very rare cases of blood clots. The decision, which removes the jab from Denmark's vaccination scheme, will push back completion of the country's vaccine rollout from July 25 to early August. Results of investigations into the blood clots "showed real and serious side effects," according to Soren Brostrom, head of the Danish Health Authority. "Based on an overall consideration, we have therefore chosen to continue the vaccination programme for all target groups without this vaccine."

<https://inews.co.uk/news/covid-19-vaccines-denmark-stop-using-oxford-astrazeneca-955710>

Europe scrambles as J&J vaccine delay deals another blow

Europe scrambles as J&J vaccine delay deals another blow

European countries diverged Wednesday on whether they would push ahead with giving their residents Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine after reports of very rare blood clots in a handful of recipients in the United States. While some European Union members put the vaccine on hold as recommended by the American company, Poland, France and Hungary said they would go ahead and administer the doses that had arrived as the EU's 27 nations face continuing pressure to speed up their immunization drives. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine, distributed in Europe by its subsidiary Janssen, is a key part of Europe's vaccination campaign, which has been criticized as sluggish. Of the four vaccines currently approved for use in the EU, J&J's is the only one that requires a single dose to be fully effective. That makes it ideal for hard-to-reach, vulnerable groups, such as those who are homeless or migrant workers.

<https://apnews.com/article/europe-immunizations-portugal-poland-migrant-workers-5677f476109b7c279b9c5cb2ef57fc35>

EU throws weight behind Pfizer-BioNTech and new technology

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In a stinging rebuke to pharma giant AstraZeneca Wednesday, the European Union announced plans to negotiate a massive contract extension for Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine insisting the 27-nation bloc had to go with companies that had shown their value in the pandemic. "We need to focus on technologies that have proven their worth," said EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. She also announced that America's Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech would provide the EU with an extra 50 million doses in the 2nd quarter of this year, making up for faltering deliveries of

AstraZeneca.

<https://apnews.com/article/world-news-europe-ursula-von-der-leyen-coronavirus-pandemic-3492fd8262cbc39815168ec26b0d8ff9>

Astrazeneca vaccine risk prompts Australian government to recommend Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for under 50

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The Australian government is recommending that Australians under 50 take the Pfizer Inc. COVID-19 vaccine due to the risk of rare blood clots associated with AstraZeneca plc's COVID-19 vaccine (ChAdOx1-S). The move jeopardizes Australia's vaccine rollout as it had planned for the majority of Australians to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine, which is being locally manufactured by CSL Ltd. During a press conference announcing the local manufacture of the vaccine in March, officials were gloating about what a fabulous job the country had done in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Now it looks as if it is falling behind on vaccinating its citizens, and Prime Minister Scott Morrison said that essentially "all bets are off" on whether Australians will be vaccinated by the end of the year. Previously, he had said that all Australians would be vaccinated by October.

<https://www.bioworld.com/articles/505794-astrazeneca-vaccine-risk-prompts-australian-government-to-recommend-pfizer-covid-19-vaccine-for-under-50>

Sweden pauses plans for J&J COVID-19 vaccinations, awaits review

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Sweden's Health Agency said on Wednesday it would pause plans to start vaccinations using Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine following reports of rare blood clots similar to those reported for the AstraZeneca shot. The Health Agency said in a statement it would not start the vaccinations and await the findings of a review by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). The vaccine has not yet been used in Sweden though a first batch of 31,000 doses has arrived in the country.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/sweden-pauses-j-j-covid-140343814.html>

Romania suspends use of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine pending EU probe

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The first shipment of 60,000 Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine doses arrived in Romania on Wednesday. Pending the conclusion of an investigation by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) for possible blood clot risk, the vaccines will be stored in a warehouse, the National Coordinating Committee for Vaccination Activities against COVID-19 (CNCAV) said. In the U.S., six blood clot cases have been reported among more than seven million people who received the shot. This batch entered Romania via its land border with Hungary one day after the American pharmaceutical company said on Tuesday it had suspended the rollout of its vaccine in the European Union (EU). Under its contract, Johnson & Johnson had committed to delivering 55 million vaccine doses to the EU by the end of June. The first vaccine shipments reached the EU states on Monday, but the U.S. company has since suspended further deliveries. Under the initial contract, Romania is to receive another 100,000 doses this month, 518,400 doses in May and 1.6 million in June.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/europe/2021-04/14/c_139880688.htm

Australia returns to 'war footing' amid COVID-19 vaccine turmoil

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Australia's national cabinet will begin meeting twice a week from Monday, marking a return to a "war footing" in the country's battle against the coronavirus pandemic amid turmoil in its national vaccination programme. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Wednesday the return to more frequent meetings of the group of federal and state government leaders was necessary to address

“serious challenges” caused by patchy international vaccine supplies and changing medical advice. “This is a complex task and there are problems with the programme that we need to solve to ensure more Australians can be vaccinated safely and more quickly,” Morrison said in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-australia/australia-returns-to-war-footing-amid-covid-19-vaccine-turmoil-idUSL1N2M630R>

NHS trust will tell staff Covid jobs are compulsory asking workers turning down vaccines to change their minds

Chelsea and Westminster NHS trust is set to tell staff that Covid jobs are compulsory as it calls on workers who have turned down vaccines to change their minds

Letter will go out to all of the trust's 6,000 staff shortly to inform them of change Pfizer's jab has cut emergency admissions by three quarters in elderly people Ministers are also pushing for jobs to become mandatory for care home staff.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/finance/other/nhs-trust-set-to-tell-staff-that-covid-jobs-are-compulsory/ar-BB1fEF9I>

Lockdown Measures Extended

Dutch PM Rutte extends pandemic lockdown as infections rise

The Dutch government on Tuesday extended most pandemic lockdown restrictions including a nighttime curfew as Prime Minister Mark Rutte cited rising COVID-19 infection rates and hospitals near capacity. “We have to see daily hospitalizations falling, then we’ll be over the peak of the third wave,” Rutte said at a press conference in The Hague. He said hopes that some measures could be eased on April 21 had proved illusory and they must remain in place until April 28 at the earliest. Current measures in the Netherlands, which has seen 1.3 million coronavirus cases and more than 16,700 deaths, include the first nighttime curfew since World War Two and a ban on public gatherings of more than two people.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-netherlands/dutch-face-prospect-of-extended-lockdown-amidst-rising-infections-idUSKBN2C0151>

Ukrainian capital Kyiv extends strict lockdown until April 30 - mayor

The Ukrainian capital Kyiv will stay in strict lockdown until April 30 as the daily number of new coronavirus cases and coronavirus-related deaths continues to climb despite tight restrictions imposed in March, the mayor said on Wednesday. “We have no other choice, otherwise the medical system will not cope with such a number of patients, otherwise there will be even more deaths,” mayor Vitali Klitschko told a televised briefing. Earlier, in order to contain the spread of the coronavirus, Kyiv limited its public transport services, closed schools and kindergartens, theatres and shopping centres, and banned spectators from sporting events. It allowed cafes and restaurants to provide only takeaway food, and recommended that all state employees to work from home. However, Kyiv continues leading other regions with about 1,500 new coronavirus cases and over 40 coronavirus related deaths registered daily.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-ukraine-cases/ukrainian-capital-kyiv-extends-strict-lockdown-until-april-30-mayor-idUSL1N2M70QA>

Mumbai imposes strict virus restrictions as infections surge

The teeming metropolis of Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra, the Indian state worst hit by the pandemic, face stricter restrictions for 15 days starting Wednesday in an effort to stem the surge of coronavirus infections. Top state officials stressed that the closure of most industries, businesses, public places and limits on the movement of people didn’t constitute a lockdown. Last year, a sudden, harsh, nationwide lockdown left millions jobless overnight. Stranded in cities with no income or food, thousands of migrant workers walked on highways to get home. Since then, state leaders have repeatedly stressed that another lockdown wasn’t on the cards.

<https://apnews.com/article/business-mumbai-migrant-workers-india-coronavirus-pandemic-87978912a0810e517217d>

[dff80952f7f](#)

Bangladesh COVID shutdown triggers exodus from capital Dhaka

Tens of thousands of people have scrambled to get the last trains, buses and ferries out of Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka, before a nationwide transport shutdown to halt the spread of coronavirus takes hold. With new cases and deaths hitting record numbers, Bangladesh's government has ordered all offices and shops to close for eight days from 6am (00:00 GMT) on Wednesday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/14/bangladesh-covid-shutdown-triggers-exodus-from-capital-dhaka>

Maharashtra imposes 15-day lockdown to slow COVID-19 spread

India's richest state, Maharashtra, will be under lockdown from Wednesday night for 15 days to slow rising coronavirus infections, its chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said on Tuesday. Maharashtra, home to India's financial capital Mumbai and the country's most industrial state, has been the country's worst hit state, accounting for about a quarter of its 13.5 million cases.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-india-maharashtra/maharashtra-imposes-15-day-lockdown-to-slow-covid-19-spread-idUSKBN2C028K>

Colombian capital to hold another weekend lockdown

Colombia's capital Bogota will repeat a three-day lockdown this weekend in a bid to slow coronavirus infections, Mayor Claudia Lopez said on Tuesday. A similar lockdown last weekend has helped slow the transmission of the disease, Lopez said in a press conference. People should stay home on Friday through Sunday, she added, and limits on when people can shop based on their ID number will continue. Intensive care units in Bogota have an occupancy rate of 76%, less than other cities like Medellin, which has also imposed quarantine measures. Officials will evaluate again next week whether to extend the lockdown measures, Lopez said. Colombia has reported more than 2.5 million coronavirus cases, as well as 66,000 deaths. It has administered more than 3.1 million vaccines doses, including more than 600,000 in Bogota.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/colombian-capital-hold-another-weekend-232521062.html>

What is the real extent of Turkey's COVID-19 crisis?

Medical professionals warn that Turkey's COVID-19 crisis could be even more severe than official statistics suggest, as new restrictions come into effect to tackle record case numbers and Russia bans flights to the country. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced new measures on Tuesday after Turkey recorded 59,187 new cases the day before, among the highest in the world per capita and more than double the daily figure reported two weeks prior.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/14/what-is-the-real-extent-of-turkeys-covid-crisis>

Merkel under fire over German COVID-19 lockdown law

German Chancellor Angela Merkel faced opposition on Wednesday to a plan to seek new powers to force coronavirus lockdowns on areas with high infection rates, with the imposition of curfews drawing particular fire given the country's authoritarian past. As infections rise rapidly and hospital beds fill up, Merkel's government is pushing parliament to change the Infection Protection Act to enable federal authorities to enforce restrictions even if regional leaders resist them. Reiner Haseloff, premier of the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt, said it was more important to motivate people to cooperate in order to get infections under control rather than banning them from leaving home at night. "If no one cooperates anymore, then we have a problem. Then it doesn't matter how many laws we make," Haseloff, a member of Merkel's Christian Democrats, told MDR television

<https://www.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-germany/merkel-under-fire-over-german-covid-19-lockdown-law-idUSL8N2M73WY>

Superspreader Event of Concern

‘Super-spreader’: Over 1,000 COVID positive at India’s Kumbh Mela

More than 1,000 people have tested positive for the coronavirus at the site of a major Hindu festival in India in two days, officials said, as huge crowds of mostly maskless devotees descend on the Ganges River in the northern Uttarakhand state. The virus was detected in the city of Haridwar, which lies along the river where the weeks-long Kumbh Mela, or the pitcher festival, is being observed, officials said. Of some 50,000 samples taken from people in Haridwar, 408 tested positive on Monday and 594 on Tuesday, the Uttarakhand government said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/14/super-spreader-over-1000-covid-positive-at-indias-kumbh-mela>

Xanana Gusmão slaps mourners and sleeps in street outside Timor-Leste hospital in Covid-19 protest

The former prime minister of Timor-Leste Xanana Gusmão has been filmed slapping family members of a man who died in the capital, Dili, in what the government said was the country’s second Covid-related death. Gusmão – the young country’s first president and a national hero – disputes the government’s assertion that Armindo Borges, who died aged 47 on Sunday night, died from Covid-19, with Gusmão claiming he died from a stroke. Borges’s body has been kept in the Covid isolation room at the Vera Cruz health centre. Hundreds of protesters gathered outside the health centre on Monday, including Borges’s son. A video shows Gusmão arriving at the centre and repeatedly slapping the son in the face and also repeatedly and angrily slapping a woman, believed to be Borges’s sister. She is weeping as he hits her.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/14/xanana-gusmao-slaps-mourners-and-sleeps-in-street-outside-timor-leste-hospital-in-covid-19-protest>

London South African Variant Outbreak

More Londoners urged to take a test as Covid South African variant spreads to Barnet

Londoners have been urged to take a test as the South African variant spreads across capital. People living in an area of Barnet have been told a case of the variant of coronavirus was detected in the north London borough. It comes after initial cases were detected in Lambeth, Wandsworth and Southwark in south London. Teams of officials will go door-to-door in areas under the N3 postcode to deliver PCR test kits and a mobile testing unit will be set up in the car park of Finchley Central Station.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/londoners-take-test-covid-south-african-variant-spreads-barnet-b929686.html>

Battle to control South African Covid-19 variant in London

Londoners were today urged to get tested for Covid-19 to protect the city from the South African variant as surge testing was extended to a third borough. Residents in a “targeted area” within SE16 in Southwark are being urged to get a test after a case of the mutation was detected there. Additional testing sites, some of them mobile, are also being rolled out in Wandsworth and Lambeth where dozens of cases of the SA variant virus have been identified. Health chiefs believe the SA mutation may be more resistant to vaccines but the jabs, including the Oxford/AstraZeneca, Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna inoculations which have been approved in the UK, are thought to still offer significant protection against severe disease.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/battle-control-south-african-covid19-variant-matt-hancock-lambeth-b929631.html>

COVID-19: Mix and match vaccine study extended to include Moderna and Novavax jabs

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A study assessing the benefits of mixing and matching coronavirus vaccines has been extended to include the Moderna and Novavax jabs. The Com-Cov study, led by the University of Oxford, has been investigating the immune responses of volunteers given a dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine followed by the Pfizer jab - and vice versa.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-mix-and-match-vaccine-study-extended-to-include-moderna-and-novavax-jabs-12274349>

Covid-19 cases in healthcare staff fell dramatically after vaccines - Government

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The percentage of positive cases of Covid-19 among healthcare workers has fallen dramatically since the State's vaccination programme began, the Government has said. The figure has fallen from 10 per cent of all cases in December, down to just two per cent in the latest 14-day report. A senior official at the Department of an Taoiseach Elizabeth Canavan told a media briefing on Covid-19 at Government Buildings that other metrics also showed a positive downward trend.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/covid-19-cases-in-healthcare-staff-fell-dramatically-after-vaccines-government-1.4537109>