

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

27th Apr 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

Real-world studies find COVID vaccines cut infection, hospitalization

- Three new real-world UK studies highlight the effectiveness of one or two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech or AstraZeneca/Oxford COVID-19 vaccines in preventing both symptomatic and asymptomatic infections and related hospitalizations, with one study showing an effectiveness above 90% for only one dose of the Pfizer vaccine.
- [In the first study, an interim analysis of the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 Immunity and Reinfection Evaluation \(SIREN\) study, was published in The Lancet.](#) Public Health England Colindale researchers in London enrolled 23,234 adult healthcare workers from 104 public hospitals in England starting Dec 7, 2020, the day before the UK vaccine rollout began.

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<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/04/real-world-studies-find-covid-vaccines-cut-infection-hospitalization>

COVID treatment has improved, but many wish for an easy pill

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If Priscila Medina had gotten COVID-19 a year ago, she would have had no treatments proven safe and effective to try. But when the 30-year-old nurse arrived at a Long Island hospital last month, so short of breath she could barely talk, doctors knew just what to do. They quickly arranged for her to get a novel drug that supplies virus-blocking antibodies, and “by the next day I was able to get up and move around,” she said. After two days, “I really started turning the corner. I was showering, eating, playing with my son.” Treatments like these can help newly diagnosed patients avoid hospitalization, but they are grossly underused because they require an IV. Other medicines for sicker patients can speed recovery, but only a few improve survival. While vaccines are helping to curb the pandemic, easier and better treatments are needed, especially as virus variants spread.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-science-coronavirus-80c3e03423c017876edf558c64d08769>

Is a Cheap 'Universal' Coronavirus Vaccine on the Way?

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An experimental COVID-19 vaccine could potentially provide universal protection against future COVID variants as well as other coronaviruses — maybe even the ones responsible for the common cold. And it's dirt cheap — less than \$1 a dose, researchers say. The vaccine targets a part of the

COVID virus' spike protein that appears to be highly resistant to mutation and is common across nearly all coronaviruses, said senior researcher Dr. Steven Zeichner. He is a professor of pediatric infectious disease with the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville. In animal studies, the COVID vaccine protected pigs against two separate diseases caused by two types of coronavirus, COVID-19 and porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV), according to results published online recently in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

<https://consumer.healthday.com/4-23-could-a-cheap-universal-coronavirus-vaccine-be-on-the-way-2652633793.html>

Column: Vaccine the key to getting 135,000 into Indy 500

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It's pretty spacious inside Indianapolis Motor Speedway, a sprawling national landmark of 300 acres that can fit Vatican City, Yankee Stadium, the White House, Liberty Island, the Taj Majal, the Roman Colosseum, Churchill Downs and the Rose Bowl inside. All at the same time. The plan calls to put 135,000 fans in there next month for the Indianapolis 500. During a pandemic. A number that screams too many! Too reckless! But the speedway is not your average place. She's a behemoth along Georgetown Road and 16th Street, the largest sporting venue in the world. On a typical race day, there can be 400,000 people on the grounds for "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing." Roger Penske will have to settle for 135,000 this May 30, the 105th running of the race, and that's still a whole lot better than last year when he held the first ever Indy 500 without any spectators. State and local health officials said 40% attendance and Penske and the folks at IMS smiled and said thank you.

<https://apnews.com/article/indianapolis-health-roger-penske-coronavirus-pandemic-indianapolis-500-69d73b9ef004c342646274b138f69c42>

Here are 9 ways we can make it easier for Australians to get the COVID-19 vaccine

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Between vaccine supply issues, confusion about the role of GPs, and changed advice for AstraZeneca, the Australian COVID-19 vaccine rollout is well behind schedule. How can we make it easier for the majority of Australians who want to be vaccinated? Especially given all Australians over 50 years of age are eligible to be vaccinated from May 3 next week. There are tangible things we can do now to help people understand the benefits and possible risks of COVID-19 vaccination, and get the vaccine quickly as soon as they're eligible.

<https://theconversation.com/here-are-9-ways-we-can-make-it-easier-for-australians-to-get-the-covid-19-vaccine-159219>

Malaysia to roll out AstraZeneca COVID jab for over-60s

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Malaysian health authorities say the vaccine developed by AstraZeneca is safe for use, three days after the Southeast Asian nation received its first batch of shots from the COVAX facility led by the World Health Organization. Health minister Adham Baba confirmed the decision in a televised news conference on Monday, and said the jab would be administered to those over 60. Malaysia, which has a population of more than 30 million people, received its first shipment of nearly 270,000 doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine on Friday. Ministry officials said the vaccine was found to be "suitable for use" for those aged 60 and older, and they were assessing available data before approving it for use for younger people.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/26/malaysia-to-roll-out-astrazeneca-covid-19-jab-for-over-60s>

India COVID Crisis

World reacts to India's catastrophic COVID surge

India has set a new global record for a rise in daily coronavirus cases for a fifth straight day, while

deaths from COVID-19 also jumped by an all-time high over the last 24 hours on Monday. Several nations, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany, have offered support as India's under-funded healthcare system struggles to cope with the increasing demand for medical oxygen and hospital beds.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/26/world-reacts-to-indias-catastrophic-covid-surge>

Two die and more than 100 test positive in coronavirus outbreak among US diplomatic staff in India

There has been a major coronavirus outbreak among US diplomatic staff in India with two locally employed staff dying and more than 100 people testing positive in recent weeks as the country struggles to cope with a dramatic surge of the deadly disease, two sources familiar with the situation told CNN. Reported Covid-19 case rates in India have hit global highs for the past five consecutive days, hospitals have run out of beds, medicine, ventilators and oxygen, and thousands have died amid a devastating second wave, which began last month. The sources did not provide details where in the country the staff died and tested positive but the US operates five consulates in different cities and an embassy in the capital of New Delhi. US personnel, family members and locally employed staff in India only began receiving their Covid vaccines within the past two weeks, one of the sources said. Within the past six weeks -- even as India's case rates were ticking up and staff had not yet been vaccinated -- there were two high-level trips by Biden administration officials to the country.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/26/politics/us-diplomatic-staff-coronavirus-india/index.html>

Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal extends lockdown by a week

Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday the city state would continue to be under a lockdown till May 3, as coronavirus cases rise steeply. India's number of cases surged by 349,691 in the past 24 hours, the fourth straight day of record peaks, and hospitals in Delhi and across the country are turning away patients after running out of medical oxygen and beds

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/delhi-chief-minister-kejriwal-extends-lockdown-by-week-2021-04-25/>

Indian hospitals swamped by coronavirus as countries promise aid

India ordered its armed forces on Monday to help tackle surging new coronavirus infections, as nations including Britain, Germany and the United States pledged urgent medical aid to try to contain an emergency overwhelming the country's hospitals. The situation in the world's second most populous country is "beyond heartbreaking", World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, adding that WHO is sending extra staff and supplies including oxygen concentrator devices.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-reports-record-352991-new-covid-19-cases-2021-04-26/>

Covid-19 in India: Patients struggle at home as hospitals choke

As hospitals in Delhi and many other cities run out of beds, people have been forced to find ways to get treatment for sick patients at home. Many have turned to the black market, where prices of essential medicines, oxygen cylinders and concentrators have skyrocketed and questionable drugs are now proliferating. On Monday, India recorded a new global high for daily coronavirus cases for a fifth straight day at 352, 991. Anshu Priya could not get a hospital bed in Delhi or its suburb of Noida for her father-in-law and as his condition continued to deteriorate. She spent most of Sunday looking for an oxygen cylinder but her search was futile. So she finally turned to the black market. She paid a hefty amount - 50,000 rupees (\$670; £480) - to procure a cylinder that normally costs 6,000 rupees. With her mother-in-law also struggling to breathe, Anshu knew she may not be able to find or afford another cylinder on the black market.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-56882167>

COVID-19: One in five testing positive in Indian state as court says officials should face

'murder charges'

Some Indian states are imposing new restrictions as coronavirus infections spiral out of control and vaccine demand grows.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-one-in-five-testing-positive-in-indian-state-as-court-says-officials-should-face-murder-charges-12287530>

SOS messages, panic as virus breaks India's health system

Dr. Gautam Singh dreads the daily advent of the ventilator beeps, signaling that oxygen levels are critically low, and hearing his desperately ill patients start gasping for air in the New Delhi emergency ward where he works. Like other doctors across India, which on Monday set another record for new coronavirus infections for a fifth day in a row at more than 350,000, the cardiologist has taken to begging and borrowing cylinders of oxygen just to keep patients alive for one more day. On Sunday evening, when the oxygen supplies of other nearby hospitals were also near empty, the desperate 43-year-old took to social media, posting an impassioned video plea on Twitter. "Please send oxygen to us," he said in a choked voice. "My patients are dying." India was initially seen as a success story in weathering the pandemic, but the virus is now racing through its population of nearly 1.4 billion, and systems are beginning to collapse.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-india-coronavirus-1bda2318594d65be400074da41fa13c6>

India's COVID-19 crisis prompts global response

Several countries over the weekend resoundingly answered India's pleas for help with its massive COVID-19 surge—the worst of the pandemic—including the United States, which announced it will supply a raw material India urgently needs to make its Covishield vaccine. In a related development, with India's production of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine for the COVAX program sidelined to allow the country to take care of its own needs, the United States today announced that it will donate 60 million doses to the global vaccination effort. India today reported a world record for daily cases for the fifth day in a row, with 352,991 new illnesses reported, along with 2,812 deaths, according to CNN.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/04/indias-covid-19-crisis-prompts-global-response>

US Covid-19 vaccination efforts may start to slow, official says. Here's why

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Covid-19 vaccination efforts may begin to slow down as more Americans get vaccinated, an official told CNN. More than 42% of the US population has gotten at least one Covid-19 vaccine dose, according to data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Roughly 28.5% of the population is fully vaccinated. "We're going to continue to make progress, it might not be as fast as the first 50% (of the population vaccinated), I think that it's going to be slower. But I think we're going to continue to get there," Andy Slavitt, White House senior adviser for Covid-19 response, said Sunday. Experts say the US is facing some major challenges when it comes to getting more shots into arms, including vaccine hesitancy.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/26/health/us-coronavirus-monday/index.html>

EC launches legal action against AstraZeneca over vaccine contract

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The European Union's executive branch has launched legal action against coronavirus vaccine-maker AstraZeneca for failing to respect the terms of its contract with the 27-nation bloc. The AstraZeneca vaccine has been central to Europe's immunisation campaign, and a key part of the global strategy to get vaccines to poorer countries, but the slow pace of deliveries has frustrated the Europeans and they have held the company responsible for partly delaying their vaccine rollout. European Commission spokesman Stefan De Keersmaecker said Brussels launched the legal action last Friday "on the basis of breaches of the advance purchase agreement".

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/world-news/ec-launches-legal-action-against-astrazeneca-over-vaccine-contract-40356423.html>

Coronavirus: EU sues AstraZeneca over vaccine delivery delays

The European Commission - the EU's executive branch - said it was suing the company for not respecting its vaccine supply contract, and for not having a "reliable" plan to ensure timely deliveries. AstraZeneca said the move was "without merit".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56891326>

EU sues AstraZeneca over alleged failure to supply COVID vaccines

The European Union has launched legal action against AstraZeneca over the pharmaceutical giant's alleged failure to respect its contract for the supply of COVID-19 vaccines to the bloc. The British-Swedish company's vaccine was envisaged as a central part of Europe's mass immunisation campaign, and a linchpin in the global strategy to get coronavirus vaccines to poorer countries because it is cheaper and easier to use than shots produced by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/26/eu-sues-astrazeneca-over-alleged-covid-19-vaccine-supply-failures>

AstraZeneca's next COVID-19 vaccine headache? A lawsuit from the EU over supply shortcomings

When word broke last week that the European Commission was weighing legal action against AstraZeneca over its COVID-19 vaccine delivery delays, it was unclear whether all member nations were on board. Now, the bloc is moving forward with approval from all its members. The commission confirmed Monday that it had launched legal action against AstraZeneca late last week for failing to deliver its promised supply of COVID-19 vaccines and for not having a "reliable" plan to ensure timely deliveries, a spokesperson told Reuters. The EU said the decision was unanimous among the 27-member bloc. AstraZeneca originally committed to sending Europe 90 million doses of its vaccine in the first three months of the year. But after struggling to get its supply chain up to speed, the company knocked that projection down to 30 million.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/eu-moves-forward-legal-action-against-astrazeneca-for-covid-19-vaccine-shortcomings-report>

Canada sending military, Red Cross to help COVID-hit Ontario

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Canada's federal government has said it will send military and Red Cross medical teams to the province of Ontario, which earlier on Monday asked for help to respond to a surge in coronavirus hospitalisations. Canadian Minister of Public Safety Bill Blair said on Twitter that Ottawa had approved Ontario's request and the military would be providing "medical + civilian human health resources within medical care facilities" in the province, as well as logistical and administrative support.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/26/ontario-requests-help-from-canadian-military-amid-covid-crisis>

Brazil once vaccinated 10 million people for polio in a day. What went wrong with COVID-19?

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Praised worldwide for its National Immunisation Program, Brazil was expected to have an edge in protecting its population against the coronavirus. Previous vaccination campaigns in the country—some vaccinating millions in just one day—have gone off without a hitch and serve as prime examples of tight immunisation logistics. But erratic planning, a virus-denying president, and a vocal anti-vaccine movement have set the country up for failure as it faces wave after wave of coronavirus infections. Brazil's death toll is now second only to the United States. According to Our

World in Data, it's ranked first in the Americas, with 1,756 deaths per million. On its worst day since the start of the outbreak, April 6, Brazil registered more than 4,000 deaths. Then it happened again two days later.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/science-and-technology/2021/04/brazil-once-vaccinated-10-million-people-for-polio-in-a-day-what-went-wrong-with-covid-19>

Virus surge in crowded Gaza threatens to overwhelm hospitals

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More than a year into the coronavirus pandemic, some of the worst fears are coming true in the crowded Gaza Strip: A sudden surge in infections and deaths is threatening to overwhelm hospitals weakened by years of conflict and border closures. Gaza's main treatment center for COVID-19 patients warns that oxygen supplies are dwindling fast. In another hospital, coronavirus patients are packed three to a room. For months, Gaza's Hamas rulers seemed to have a handle on containing the pandemic. But their decision to lift most movement restrictions in February — coupled with the spread of a more aggressive virus variant and lack of vaccines — has led to a fierce second surge. At the same time, many of Gaza's more than 2 million people ignore safety precautions, especially during the current fasting month of Ramadan. In the daytime, markets teem with shoppers buying goods for iftar, the meal breaking the fast after sundown. Few wear masks properly, if at all. "Corona is not a game," said Yasmin Ali, 32, whose 64-year-old mother died of the virus last week. "It will take the lives of many people if they don't protect themselves in the first place."

<https://apnews.com/article/health-gaza-strip-pandemics-ramadan-lifestyle-079024b5121bf4f46e64345311ac8895>

Nepal COVID infections surge, fuelled by India's mutant strains

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Authorities in Nepal are grappling to contain the rapid rise of COVID-19 cases with experts fearing that thousands of people in the Himalayan state have caught the more infectious mutant strains emerging out of India. Nepal, which shares a long porous border with India, reported 3,032 new infections on Sunday, the highest daily number recorded this year. It took the total caseload since the pandemic first struck Nepal to 300,119 with 3,164 deaths so far, according to government data. "We have detected the UK variant and the double mutant variant detected in India," Krishna Prasad Paudel, the director of Nepal's Epidemiology and Disease Control Department Paudel told Reuters news agency, adding that experts were checking for other variants too.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/26/nepal-covid-infections-surge-fuelled-by-indias-mutant-strains>

Michigan became hotspot as variants rose and vigilance fell

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Eric Gala passed up an opportunity to get a coronavirus vaccine when shots became available in Michigan, and he admits not taking the virus seriously enough. Then he got sick with what he thought was the flu. He thought he would sweat it out and then feel back to normal. Before long, the 63-year-old Detroit-area retiree was in a hospital hooked up to a machine to help him breathe. He had COVID-19. "I was having more trouble breathing and they turned the oxygen up higher — that's when I got scared and thought I wasn't going to make it," a visibly weary Gala told The Associated Press on Wednesday from his hospital bed at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, north of Detroit. "I had so many people tell me this was a fake disease." Gala's situation illustrates how Michigan has become the current national hotspot for COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations at a time when more than half the U.S. adult population has been vaccinated and other states have seen the virus diminish substantially.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-michigan-coronavirus-a9cdf0590d94786b198c22b7b4e4b9d7>

Italy Cautiously Reopens

Italy opens again amid hopes for real economic relaunch

Lunch-time diners filled tables on Milan's landmark Piazza Duomo even on a cloudy, windswept Monday, proof of the pent-up demand for eating out as Italy begins its second, and many hope last, reopening of the COVID-19 pandemic. After six months of rotating on-again, off-again closures, restaurants, bars, museums and cinemas opened to the public in most of the country under a gradual reopening plan that is seen as too cautious for some, too hasty for others. The nation's weary virologists and health care workers fear that even the tentative reopening laid out by Premier Mario Draghi's government will invite a free-or-all, signs of which were seen over the weekend with parks and squares filling up in cities from Rome to Turin, Milan to Naples. "It is illusory to think that you give a sign of opening, and you don't see people around. Perfection doesn't exist," Milan Mayor Giuseppe Sala said Monday. "You also have to be a little tolerant, and also a little careful."

<https://apnews.com/article/world-news-health-science-italy-lifestyle-ee0b8e67df7a8e84d4bbf570058625c7>

Packed parks, lurking virus? Worries mount as Italy reopens

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<https://apnews.com/article/world-news-health-science-italy-lifestyle-ee0b8e67df7a8e84d4bbf570058625c7>

Lockdown Continues Across the World

Turkey announces full lockdown in bid to halt COVID surge

Turks will be required to stay mostly at home under a nationwide "full lockdown" starting on Thursday and lasting until May 17 to curb a surge in coronavirus infections and deaths, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has announced. Turkey logged 37,312 new COVID-19 infections and 353 deaths in the previous 24 hours on Monday, health ministry data showed, sharply down from mid-April but still the world's fourth highest number of cases.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/26/turkey-announces-full-lockdown-in-bid-to-halt-covid-surge>

Bengaluru, facing India's second-highest COVID-19 surge, to enter lockdown

The city of Bengaluru, home to the technology operations of hundreds of global companies, is to enter a two-week lockdown as India battles a sharp surge in COVID-19 infections, officials said on Monday. Karnataka state, of which Bengaluru is capital, will also lock down from Tuesday evening for 14 days, the state chief minister, B.S. Yediyurappa, told reporters after a cabinet meeting. Groceries and other essential services will operate for four hours in the mornings, he said. The region is the latest to impose restrictions after similar lockdowns or curfews in many parts of India, which is in the middle of a massive second wave of infections that has swamped its health system

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indian-tech-hub-bengaluru-enter-lockdown-infections-surge-2021-04-26/>

Thailand starts stricter COVID-19 shutdown, but experts say not enough

Thailand's government slapped restrictions on travel from India on Monday over concerns of imported coronavirus cases and closed more venues in Bangkok, even as it came under fire for not doing enough to contain a spike in infections. The government has ordered parks, gyms, cinemas and day-care centres in its capital, the epicentre of the latest wave of infections, to shut from April 26 until May 9. It has also introduced a fine of up to 20,000 baht (\$635) for not wearing masks in public, with even the prime minister falling foul of mask-wearing rules

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-suspends-travel-india-it-steps-up-coronavirus-measures-home-20>

[21-04-26/](#)

France Treads Carefully

French restaurants to reopen in staggered manner - Macron

French restaurants will reopen in a staggered fashion and on a regional basis, depending on the extent to which the COVID-19 epidemic is brought under control, President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-restaurants-reopen-staggered-manner-macron-2021-04-26/>

French primary pupils return to school despite high COVID numbers

France sent primary and nursery pupils back to school on Monday, the first phase of reopening after a three-week COVID-19 lockdown, even as daily new infections remained stubbornly high. President Emmanuel Macron said a return to school would help fight social inequality, allowing parents who struggle to pay for childcare to get back to work, but trade unions warned that new infections would lead to a "torrent" of classroom closures.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-primary-pupils-return-school-despite-high-covid-numbers-2021-04-26/>

Sanofi to aid Moderna on final steps in manufacturing coronavirus vaccine

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French drugmaker Sanofi will help Moderna fill and finish vials of its coronavirus vaccine, announcing Monday an agreement with the Massachusetts biotech to manufacture up to 200 million doses of the shot at a plant in New Jersey. Fill and finish describes the final steps of the production process, in which the vaccine product is siphoned into individual vials, capped and labeled for distribution. The deal with Sanofi should help Moderna expand capacity through the later stages of manufacturing, but the larger drugmaker won't help with earlier steps of making raw materials or vaccine product. Moderna has contracted with the U.S. government to supply 300 million doses by the end of July, 117 million of which had been delivered through April 12. The company operates a separate supply chain for manufacturing abroad and expects to make between 700 million and 1 billion doses globally this year.

<https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/sanofi-deal-moderna-manufacture-coronavirus-vaccine/599022/>

Brazil health regulator Anvisa's technical staff recommend against importing Russia's Sputnik vaccine

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The Brazilian health regulator's technical staff on Monday recommended against approving imports of the Russian-made Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine requested by governors battling against a deadly second wave of the virus. The recommendations by Anvisa's technical staff will be taken into account by the regulator's board, which will announce its decision later on Monday. Anvisa had previously said there were "critical issues" surrounding the vaccine's effectiveness and safety that needed clarifying.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-health-regulator-anvisas-technical-staff-recommend-against-importing-2021-04-26/>