

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

12th May 2021

Overnight NewsRoundUp

Seychelles, the world's most vaccinated nation, sees renewed COVID-19 surge

- Seychelles, which has vaccinated a higher proportion of its population against coronavirus than any other country, is struggling to contain a new surge in COVID-19 infections, raising questions about the effectiveness of a Chinese shot the island has administered to the majority of its vaccinated residents.
- [In recent days, a rush of patients seeking treatment has overwhelmed the Seychelles's sole coronavirus treatment centre, as the pristine archipelago of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean battles its worst wave of infections, according to the health ministry.](#) The daily rate of COVID-19 symptomatic infections has jumped to more than 300 cases, bringing the cumulative total to 8,172 and forcing the government to reinstitute lockdown measures.
- Although the number is low, it is an outsize problem for a tiny geographically isolated nation with a population of just 100,000. The daily case rate is a higher number of infections per capita than India's outbreak.
- On Sunday, with hospitals in the capital Victoria overwhelmed with patients, the health ministry issued guidelines on how people who have tested positive for COVID-19 should treat themselves from home while the government scrambles to build more makeshift treatment centres.
- The islands' renewed infection surge comes as a shock after the government vaccinated more than 60% of the population. Some 38,000 of the population was given a shot from Chinese state-owned firm Sinopharm and the remainder received AstraZeneca shots produced at the Serum Institute of India.
- According to the health ministry, more than one third of new cases are people who are fully vaccinated. Authorities in the sychelles haven't said how many of those cases arose among people vaccinated with the Chinese shot. 'The rate of transmission remains high and is of concern,' the health ministry said in a statement.

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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/seychelles-the-worlds-most-vaccinated-nation-sees-renewed-covid-19-surge-116206698>

WHO reviewing Seychelles COVID-19 data after fully vaccinated people test positive

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The World Health Organization said on Tuesday it was reviewing coronavirus data from Seychelles after the health ministry said more than a third of people who tested positive for COVID-19 in the past week had been fully vaccinated. Both the ministry and the WHO stressed that the majority of those who tested positive had not been vaccinated or had only received one dose, that no one who had died had been fully vaccinated and that nearly all of those needing treatment for severe or critical cases were unvaccinated. But the WHO said it was closely following the situation in the Indian Ocean nation, which has a population of less than 100,000 and daily cases numbers in the low hundreds.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/reviewing-seychelles-covid-19-data-134637551.html>

India's COVID spike sees slight fall amid WHO warning on strain

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India's coronavirus crisis has shown scant sign of easing despite a seven-day average of new cases now at a record high and international health authorities warning the variant of the virus first found in India poses a global concern. India's daily coronavirus cases rose by 329,942, while deaths from the disease rose by 3,876, according to the health ministry's data on Tuesday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/11/india-covid-spike-sees-slight-decline-amid-who-warning-on-strain>

India's COVID surge unfolds in more grim chapters

India's tragic COVID surge is showing no let-up, as daily cases stay above the 300,000 mark with more grim examples of people's desperation, including scores of bodies turning up in some of the country's rivers. Increases elsewhere in Asia are also raising concerns, even in Taiwan, which has been widely praised for keeping cases and deaths at extremely low levels.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/05/indias-covid-surge-unfolds-more-grim-chapters>

Vietnam says new COVID outbreak threatens stability

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Vietnam reported 102 new COVID-19 infections on Sunday as the Southeast Asian country battled a fast-spreading outbreak which Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh said threatened political stability if not brought under control. The new cases raised the total to 3,332 since the pandemic began, with 35 deaths, the Ministry of Health said. Vietnam has been praised for its record in containing its outbreaks quickly through targeted mass testing and a strict, centralised quarantine programme.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-says-new-covid-outbreak-threatens-stability-2021-05-09/>

'We are worried about the Indian variant,' says Health Secretary Matt Hancock

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Matt Hancock says he is "worried" about the Indian Covid variant amid reports it is becoming more prominent in Britain and spreads faster than the Kent mutation. Scientists say that in England, in the two weeks to May 1, the proportion of Indian variant cases went from one per cent to 11 per cent of Covid-19 infections, with other variants less than one per cent. "We are worried about the Indian variant," the Health Secretary told Times Radio. "You will have seen the very stringent measures that we have taken at the border.

https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/india-coronavirus-variant-of-global-concern-who-warns-b934363.html?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1620717884

The Covid-19 Variant in India: What Scientists Know About the B.1.617 Strain

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Scientists and public health officials are racing to understand the risk posed by a coronavirus variant

known as B.1.617, which the World Health Organization on Monday designated a global “variant of concern.” The WHO says preliminary studies show the variant may spread more easily than other strains of the new coronavirus. Scientists and public-health experts are trying to better understand the role it is playing in the record-setting surge of Covid-19 cases that has overwhelmed India’s healthcare system in recent days—and what risk it poses to the rest of the world. India reported more than 366,000 new cases of Covid-19 on Monday. Here’s what we know so far about the B.1.617 variant.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/india-covid-19-variant-11620722888>

New Outbreaks Prompt Return to Restrictions in Taiwan, Singapore

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Taiwan announced limits on crowds, following Singapore’s move to restrict foreign workers, in a wave of new restrictions in Asian countries trying to stamp out small outbreaks after months of keeping Covid-19 contained. The new curbs prompted fears that economic growth could stall out, leading to stock sell-offs in both countries this week. Low vaccination rates in both countries are contributing to concerns that their populations could be vulnerable if faster-spreading variants take hold. In Taiwan, indoor gatherings will be limited to fewer than 100 people and outdoor events capped at 500 for the next four weeks, Taiwan’s Centers for Disease Control said in a statement Tuesday. It’s the first time the island has tightened anti-Covid measures since it began easing curbs mid-last year, and comes after the government reported seven new cases in the community and four in travelers from overseas.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-11/fresh-outbreak-threatens-taiwan-s-status-as-coronavirus-basti-on?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_content=business&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business

Ethnic groups step in as Myanmar’s COVID response falls apart

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As Myanmar’s national COVID-19 response collapses following a February 1 military coup, one ethnic armed organisation in the country’s north has quietly vaccinated 20,000 people in areas it governs, with support from across the border in China. The vaccines, produced by the Chinese company Sinovac Biotech, were supplied and administered with assistance from the Red Cross Society of China, a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The KIO is one of approximately 20 ethnic armed organisations operating along Myanmar’s borders with China, Thailand and India. Several of them have run their own COVID-19 responses from early on in the pandemic. Although the turmoil and intensifying civil war since the coup have disrupted their efforts, the KIO and Karen National Union (KNU), two of the country’s most well-established ethnic armed organisations, told Al Jazeera that they were continuing as much as possible

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/10/ethnic-groups-step-in-as-myanmars-covid-response-falls-apart>

Vietnam seeks mRNA tech transfer amid COVID-19 vaccine supply issues

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Vietnam is seeking the transfer of mRNA technology to domestically manufacture COVID-19 vaccines, state media reported on Tuesday, as officials warned of supply issues until the end of the year. "Given the currently limited supply to Vietnam, especially as the COVID-19 situation is showing complicated developments, the health ministry has met with a World Health Organization representative to facilitate the negotiations on transferring of mRNA technology," the Vietnam News Agency reported.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-seeks-mrna-tech-transfer-amid-covid-19-vaccine-supply-issues-2021-05-11/>

Singapore warns on COVID-19 vaccine supplies as it expands programme

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Singapore still expects to complete its COVID-19 inoculation programme by the end of the year, the health minister said on Tuesday, though the city-state is also looking to secure more sources of vaccines as global supplies become more stretched. As of Sunday, 1.8 million people in Singapore had received at least one dose of the vaccine, or nearly a third of the population. About 1.2 million people have completed the full two-dose vaccination regimen, Gan Kim Yong told parliament.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/singapore-warns-covid-19-vaccine-supplies-it-expands-programme-2021-05-11/>

Biden administration is open to sharing coronavirus vaccines with North Korea

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The Biden administration is open to sharing coronavirus vaccines and other humanitarian assistance to help North Korea combat the deadly pandemic, according to two sources familiar with internal discussions. Administration officials believe that the North Koreans won't be ready to engage with the US until the threat from the pandemic has passed, which is one reason why sharing vaccines could grease the wheels for initial diplomatic engagement, current and former officials said. But some experts and other officials are skeptical that any humanitarian outreach would draw North Korea to the table given the country's insistence on sanctions relief.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/11/politics/us-coronavirus-vaccines-north-korea/index.html>

New vaccine shows potential to protect from a variety of coronavirus infections

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A potential new vaccine developed by members of the Duke Human Vaccine Institute has proven effective in protecting monkeys and mice from a variety of coronavirus infections -- including SARS-CoV-2 as well as the original SARS-CoV-1 and related bat coronaviruses that could potentially cause the next pandemic. The new vaccine, called a pan-coronavirus vaccine, triggers neutralizing antibodies via a nanoparticle. The nanoparticle is composed of the coronavirus part that allows it to bind to the body's cell receptors and is formulated with a chemical booster called an adjuvant. Success in primates is highly relevant to humans.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20210510/New-vaccine-shows-potential-to-protect-from-a-variety-of-coronavirus-infections.aspx>

NIH vaccine designer takes coronavirus research to Harvard

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The U.S. government scientist who helped design one of the first COVID-19 vaccines and then tackled skepticism of the shots in communities of color is moving to Harvard in June. Kizzmekia Corbett of the National Institutes of Health will take her research into next-generation vaccines for coronaviruses to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the school was set to announce Tuesday. Corbett told The Associated Press the move also allows her to become even more involved in vaccine outreach and equity.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/nih-vaccine-designer-takes-coronavirus-research-to-harvard-nih-covid-modernizers-kareem-abduljabbar-b1845527.html>

Pfizer COVID-19 shot expanded to US children as young as 12

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U.S. regulators on Monday expanded the use of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine to children as young as 12, offering a way to protect the nation's adolescents before they head back to school in the fall and paving the way for them to return to more normal activities. Shots could begin as soon as Thursday, after a federal vaccine advisory committee issues recommendations for using the two-dose vaccine in 12- to 15-year-olds. An announcement is expected Wednesday. Most COVID-19 vaccines

worldwide have been authorized for adults. Pfizer's vaccine is being used in multiple countries for teens as young as 16, and Canada recently became the first to expand use to 12 and up. Parents, school administrators and public health officials elsewhere have eagerly awaited approval for the shot to be made available to more kids.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-science-coronavirus-vaccine-business-health-05fbffc10fb86734b83be058c7b4da22>

FDA paves way for COVID-19 vaccine in 12- to 15-year-olds

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) late yesterday expanded the emergency authorization of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to include 12- to 15-year-olds, paving the way for vaccinating a proportion of school-age children before the fall. "Today's action allows for a younger population to be protected from COVID-19, bringing us closer to returning to a sense of normalcy and to ending the pandemic. Parents and guardians can rest assured that the agency undertook a rigorous and thorough review of all available data, as we have with all of our COVID-19 vaccine emergency use authorizations," said Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock, MD, in a press release. The Pfizer vaccine had previously been approved for use in people ages 16 and up. The FDA said approximately 1.5 million children ages 11 to 17 have been infected with COVID-19 in the United States from Mar 1, 2020, through Apr 30, 2021, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/05/fda-paves-way-covid-19-vaccine-12-15-year-olds>

Coronavirus: Indian variant could spread 60% faster than Kent strain, scientist claims

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Government experts fear the Indian B.1.617.2 variant may be more transmissible than dominant Kent strain. KU Leuven biologist Professor Tom Wenseleers said it appeared to be 60% more transmissible in early data. SAGE advisers admitted in a meeting last week that 'early indications' are that it spreads faster. Kent variant was devastating when it first emerged because outbreaks exploded before lockdown could hit. But vaccines still appear to work against the virus for most people, researchers say

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9567537/Coronavirus-Indian-variant-spread-60-faster-Kent-strain-scientist-claims.html>

Covid-19 outbreak reported near Laos casino run by alleged crime boss

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Authorities in Laos have reported a significant Covid-19 outbreak near the notorious Kings Romans casino, whose Chinese owner is accused by the United States of trafficking people, wildlife and drugs. Officials said a cluster of cases in Tonpheung district was traced to people who illegally entered the area, ignoring lockdown rules, according to the Vientiane Times, a state-run English-language newspaper. The paper also reported that a district task force accused locals of illegally bringing foreigners into Laos from neighboring Myanmar and Thailand.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/11/asia/golden-triangle-covid-19-outbreak-intl-hnk/index.html>

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Taiwan announced limits on crowds, following Singapore's move to restrict foreign workers, in a wave of new restrictions in Asian countries trying to stamp out small outbreaks after months of keeping Covid-19 contained. The new curbs prompted fears that economic growth could stall out, leading to stock sell-offs in both countries this week. Low vaccination rates in both countries are contributing to concerns that their populations could be vulnerable if faster-spreading variants take hold. In Taiwan, indoor gatherings will be limited to fewer than 100 people and outdoor events

capped at 500 for the next four weeks, Taiwan's Centers for Disease Control said in a statement Tuesday. It's the first time the island has tightened anti-Covid measures since it began easing curbs mid-last year, and comes after the government reported seven new cases in the community and four in travelers from overseas.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-11/fresh-outbreak-threatens-taiwan-s-status-as-coronavirus-basti-on?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_content=business&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business

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Mohd Rezuan Othman would normally travel from Kuala Lumpur to his hometown in southern Malaysia to spend Eid al-Fitr with his family, but the country's latest nationwide COVID-19 lockdown has scuppered his plans for the second year in a row. Under measures announced on Monday, just days before Eid, he and millions of others are being forced to stay apart from loved ones during the annual celebration because of strict restrictions on travel

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/lockdown-returns-malaysians-face-another-bleak-eid-2021-05-10/>

Telangana announces 10-day lockdown due to COVID-19 from May 12

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Telangana will lock itself down for a period of 10 days starting tomorrow. The state government has decided to put curbs in place from May 12 to curtail further spread of the second wave, an official release said. There was also a decision taken to invite global tenders for procuring Covid vaccines.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/covid-19-telangana-announces-10-day-lockdown-from-may-12/articleshow/82546448.cms>

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The European Union has exported about 200 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, European Commission vice president Maros Sefcovic said in a tweet. "While we're open to discussing new solidarity proposals, our priority is to ramp up the EU vaccine production + to see others unblocking exports of vaccines and their components," he added in the tweet. In April, Reuters reported that the European Union has exported about 37 million more doses of COVID-19 vaccines than it has shared out among its own 27 countries, according to two sources that cited figures from the bloc's data.

<https://kfgo.com/2021/05/11/eu-has-exported-about-200-million-doses-of-covid-19-vaccines-sefcovic-says/>

Ethnic groups step in as Myanmar's COVID response falls apart

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<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/10/ethnic-groups-step-in-as-myanmars-covid-response-falls-apart>

Brazilian President Allocates More Than \$1 Billion To Produce COVID-19 Vaccines

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Brazil, one of the worst-hit countries in the world by the pandemic, is directing more than \$1 billion toward the production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, the country's far-right president announced Monday, Reuters reported. President Jair Bolsonaro, who has criticized lockdown measures and has told Brazilians to "stop whining" about the deadly virus, said about \$1.05 billion will be spent on the inoculation effort. The announcement comes amid an investigation into Bolsonaro's role in his government's handling of the coronavirus crisis, which has killed more than 421,000 people to date — the second highest number of fatalities in the world.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/05/11/995722972/brazilian-president-allocates-more-than-1-billion-to-produce-covid-19-vaccines>

Covid-19: Global Justice Now activists protest outside AstraZeneca in Cambridge, calling for 'People's Vaccine'

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Activists have blocked the entrance to an AstraZeneca building in Cambridge where its AGM is taking place and hung a banner demanding that its Covid-19 jab becomes a "People's Vaccine". Police made four arrests at the demonstration in Hills Road, held by Global Justice Now, which is demanding that the Cambridge-headquartered biopharmaceutical company openly licenses its Covid-19 vaccine and commits to sharing the technology and know-how with the World Health Organization (WHO).

<https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/covid-19-global-justice-now-activists-protest-outside-astra-9198836/>

Ministers urged to vaccinate over-16s in 'high-risk' areas as Bolton sees sharp rise in cases of Indian variant

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Greater Manchester is also still trying to persuade government to provide extra money to help people self isolate, as Bolton's rate nearly doubled in a week. There are no signs so far that the lockdown roadmap will be delayed in the town.

https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/ministers-urged-vaccinate-over-16s-20567883.amp?__twitter_impression=true

Clock is ticking for EU vaccine certificates as summer looms

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As strict lockdowns are loosened across Europe and many EU citizens dream about holidays in the sun, the 27-nation bloc has yet to agree on how to quickly implement a virus certificate scheme to boost summer travel and tourism. European affairs ministers gathered Tuesday in Brussels to assess progress in discussions with European lawmakers. A deal between the Parliament and EU countries is required in May to ensure the system will be up and running by the end of June, but several sticking points remain.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/clock-is-ticking-for-eu-vaccine-certificates-as-summer-looms-brussels-eu-commission-parliament-world-health-organization-covid-b1845379.html>

Japanese region says deaths at home surge amid COVID-19 wave

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A growing number of Japanese people are dying of COVID-19 at home as more infectious variants of the coronavirus fuel a fourth wave of infections and hospital resources are stretched to the verge of collapse. Public anger with the government over its handling of the crisis is growing as are doubts about the viability of holding the Olympic Games in just over 10 weeks, as a vaccination campaign struggles to build up steam. "Compared to the number of infections, the number of beds for severe

cases is very limited in Japan," Yasutoshi Kido, a professor at Osaka City University's Graduate School of Medicine, said on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japanese-prefecture-says-deaths-home-surge-amid-4th-covid-19-wave-2021-05-11/>

Covid-19: Don't abandon mask wearing in schools, say health experts

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Covid rules in England requiring secondary school pupils to wear face coverings in classrooms could be dropped from mid-May, despite warnings from health experts and teaching unions. Education secretary Gavin Williamson last week said that the requirement would be relaxed no sooner than 17 May, as part of the third stage of the "roadmap" out of lockdown. This is expected to be confirmed on 10 May by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, alongside easing of other controls. But leading scientists have warned that guidance on masks should remain in place for longer and called for more transparency surrounding infections data. They cited signs of an increase of infections in schools that are forcing some to close and the spread of troubling new virus variants linked to schools. Deepti Gurdasani, a clinical epidemiologist and senior lecturer in machine learning at Queen Mary University of London, said on 7 May, "B.1.617.2 [the variant first identified in India] has been spreading in secondary schools, yet the government has decided to remove masks from secondaries. If the government is following the data they should be happy to make this public."

<https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1186>

Novavax jab is delayed in yet another setback for Australia's coronavirus vaccine rollout

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Australia is facing yet another setback in its coronavirus vaccine rollout . Novavax on Tuesday announced further delays with its vaccine production. Australian government has secured 51 million doses of the Novavax vaccine

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9564843/Novavax-jab-delayed-setback-Australias-coronavirus-vaccine-rollout.html>

Novavax chief 'not able to predict' Australian approval date for vaccine

The chief executive of coronavirus vaccine maker Novavax has admitted the company will have to delay filing for approvals of the product until July and will not put a date on when the vaccine is likely to receive the green light in Australia. The Australian government has ordered 51 million doses of the Novavax vaccine, which had been expected to start being delivered as early as September this year. However, on an earnings call for the company on Tuesday morning, chief executive Stan Erck said while the company hoped to have multiple regulatory approvals in the coming months, he could not predict approvals timelines for countries like Australia, New Zealand and Canada. "As of today, we are not able to predict a date with precision, so we won't," he said.

https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/novavax-chief-not-able-to-predict-australian-approval-date-for-vaccine-20210511-p57qpz.html?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1620702821

Those with mild COVID-19 seek more primary care than uninfected peers

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Although nonhospitalized COVID-19 patients are at low risk for delayed complications, they visit their general practitioner or clinic more often than their uninfected peers in the 6 months after testing positive, finds a population-based study published yesterday in The Lancet Infectious Diseases. The study, led by researchers from the University of Southern Denmark, involved comparing 8,983 living, nonhospitalized COVID-19 patients with 80,894 Danish residents who tested negative for the virus from Feb 27 to May 31, 2020. Both groups were followed for 2 weeks to 6 months after testing.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/05/those-mild-covid-19-seek-more-primary-care-uninfected-peer>

CDC's slow, cautious messaging on Covid-19 seems out of step with the moment, public health experts say

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Nearly a year ago, amid concerns about how to prevent transmission of the virus causing Covid-19, scientists were beginning to conclude that rigorous disinfection of surfaces — say, fogging them or deep-cleaning with bleach — was overkill. Academics were warning that the risk of so-called fomite transmission was wildly overblown. In the fall, research from Israel and Italy found that the virus couldn't even be cultured from surfaces in hospital infectious disease units. By February of this year, the editorial board of Nature was openly urging the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to update its guidelines.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/05/11/cdc-messaging-covid-19-seems-out-of-step-public-health-experts-say/>