

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

14th Jun 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

If vaccine apartheid exists, vaccine billionaires shouldn't

- To understand why billionaires are a sign of moral and economic failure, look no further than the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Drug corporations could earn \$190 billion from COVID-19 vaccine sales this year. Pharmaceutical profits have minted nine new pandemic billionaires, and helped eight existing billionaires enlarge their fortunes. Several of these are founders and private investors in three pharmaceutical corporations - Moderna, BioNTech and CureVac - whose vaccines use mRNA technology that was largely developed from publicly funded research.
- [Their financial bonanza provide a disturbing contrast with vaccine apartheid. By the end of May, only 0.3% of all vaccine doses worldwide had been administered in low-income countries.](#)
- Facing condemnation for hoarding doses, the G-7 countries, which are meeting this weekend in England, are under pressure to launch a new plan to expand COVID-19 immunization globally. One hotly contested issue is whether they will call for mandatory sharing of mRNA vaccine technologies, including a proposed waiver of intellectual property rights for COVID-19 technologies.
- Pandemic billionaires are speaking out against government intervention, warning it would undermine innovation and claiming that their firms can satisfy global demand for COVID-19 vaccines.
- Because the public sector was largely responsible for developing mRNA technology and sharing it with corporations, the pandemic fortunes of these founders and investors stands in stark and repugnant contrast to billions of unvaccinated people.
- Moderna, BioNTech and CureVac are each led by founders or long time executives with a key role in company decision-making: Stephane Bancel is Moderna's CEO, Ozlem Tureci and Ugur Sahin are BioNTech's co-founders, and Franz-Werner Haas is CureVac's CEO. In addition to getting head starts from publicly funded research, these companies also relied on private investment provided through venture capital or family offices (privately held companies that handle investment and wealth management for wealthy families). Venture capital investors include Flagship Pioneering, a Boston-based firm whose founder, Noubert Afeyan, also serves as Moderna's chair, and MIG, a German venture capital firm that made early investments in BioNTech. Other large investors in BioNTech and CureVac were German family offices, including investment by Dietmar Hopp in CureVac and the Struengmann brothers in BioNTech.

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To understand why billionaires are a sign of moral and economic failure, look no further than the Covid-19 pandemic. Drug corporations could earn \$190 billion from Covid-19 vaccine sales this year. Pharmaceutical profits have minted nine new pandemic billionaires, and helped eight existing billionaires enlarge their fortunes. Several of these are founders and private investors in three pharmaceutical corporations — Moderna, BioNTech, and CureVac — whose vaccines use mRNA technology that was largely developed from publicly funded research. Their financial bonanzas provide a disturbing contrast with vaccine apartheid. By the end of May, only 0.3% of all vaccine

doses worldwide had been administered in low-income countries.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/06/12/if-vaccine-apartheid-exists-vaccine-billionaires-shouldnt/>

Coronavirus: Vaccine passports considered for use at big events

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The government is considering whether vaccine passports could be used at big events in future, the BBC understands. A review of the use of the certificates in England is expected to confirm on Monday they will not be compulsory. No formal decision has yet been made but a Whitehall source said they could have a role to play at large events, such as sports matches and concerts. It is thought they could also help to prevent business closures if there was a wave of the pandemic this winter. A committee of MPs has warned ministers against introducing the certificates, saying they would be unjustified and discriminatory.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-57450600>

CDC to hold 'emergency meeting' over 226 cases of heart inflammation following COVID-19 vaccines

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US health officials Thursday announced higher than expected reports of heart inflammation in male teens and young adults after getting their second doses. A total of 226 cases have been reported that may meet the CDC's 'working case definition' of myocarditis and pericarditis following the shots, the agency said. Of these cases, 3 are in ICU, 15 are hospitalized, 41 have ongoing symptoms and 167 have recovered. Myocarditis is inflammation of the heart muscle; pericarditis of the outer lining. It is not clear if they are caused by the shots and the reports are extremely rare. More than 130 million Americans have received second doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, meaning just 0.000173846% report such effects. The CDC continues to urge everyone aged 12 and older to get vaccinated.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9672233/The-Latest-WHO-warns-delta-variant-hold-Europe.html>

UK Covid memorial wall should be made permanent, MPs say

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It started as an almost guerrilla act of memorialisation. In March, grieving relatives began inscribing red hearts beside a Thameside walkway – one for every person in the UK who died from coronavirus. Now stretching 500 metres, the Covid memorial wall should be made a permanent national landmark, say more than 200 MPs, peers and mayors. Boris Johnson is facing calls to “make this wall of hearts a, if not the, permanent memorial to the victims of the pandemic” from a cross-party alliance including the mayors of London and Greater Manchester, Sadiq Khan and Andy Burnham.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/12/uk-covid-memorial-wall-should-be-made-permanent-mps-say>

G7 to donate 1 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses to poorer countries

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G7 leaders are meeting for their first in-person talks in nearly two years, with an expected pledge to donate one billion COVID-19 vaccine doses to the world's poorest countries. The club of leading economies – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States – say a joint approach is the world's best chance for recovering from the global health crisis and tackling climate change.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/11/g7-to-donate-1-billion-covid-19-vaccine-doses-to-poorer-countries>

Virtually all hospitalized Covid patients have one thing in common: They're unvaccinated

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There are only three Covid-19 patients at Sandra Atlas Bass Heart Hospital at North Shore University

Hospital, on Long Island, New York — a far cry from when the hospital, which is part of Northwell Health, had as many as 600 patients during the peak of the pandemic. All three patients, who are in the intensive care unit, have one thing in common, said Dr. Hugh Cassiere, director of the hospital's critical care services: They're unvaccinated.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/virtually-all-hospitalized-covid-patients-have-one-thing-common-they-n-1270482>

UK's Johnson set to announce delay to end of COVID restrictions

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British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to announce on Monday that the end of COVID-19 restrictions will be delayed following concern about the rapid rise of infections of the Delta variant of the coronavirus. Under a roadmap outlined by Johnson back in February, the government signalled all social restrictions imposed to control the spread of the disease would be lifted "no earlier" than June 21, when pubs, clubs and other hospitality venues could fully reopen. But, in recent weeks there has been a fast growth again in the number of new cases caused by the Delta variant, first discovered in India, which health officials believe to be 60% more transmissible than the previous dominant strain and scientists warn could trigger a third wave of infections.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uks-johnson-set-announce-delay-end-covid-restrictions-2021-06-13/>

Scientists in Yorkshire say mask wearing could be here to stay long past coronavirus pandemic

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Scientists at Yorkshire universities have told The Yorkshire Post that the act of wearing a face covering in busy public places may even be something the public adopts as a new way of life looking past the pandemic, likening it to a protective measure similar to wearing a car seat belt. Dr Stephen Griffin, an associate professor of virology at the University of Leeds, also said better ventilation of public indoor spaces was a measure that public health authorities should look to adopt long term.

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/health/coronavirus/scientists-in-yorkshire-say-mask-wearing-could-be-here-to-stay-long-past-coronavirus-pandemic-3270335>

Black and Latino communities are left behind in Covid-19 vaccination efforts

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When vaccines became increasingly available throughout America, US health officials moved quickly to try to convince large numbers of Americans to get vaccinated. But amid the mass vaccination rollout, Black and Latino communities, who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic, have been left behind in vaccination efforts, creating racial disparities about who was more likely to get a Covid-19 shot. Amid federal and local efforts to address vaccine disparity, vaccination rates for Black Americans and Latinos lag behind the general population, leaving many communities of color still unprotected against the Covid-19 pandemic. Among the 57% of Americans for which ethnicity data was available who have had at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, the majority are white while only about 15% are Hispanic and 9% are Black: both lower rates than their proportion of the US population. Fewer than half of US states have vaccinated more than a third of their Black populations, according to data provided by Bloomberg, while more than 40 states have done at least as well with white and Asian people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/12/black-latino-left-behind-covid-19-vaccines>

India cuts taxes on medicines and equipment to treat COVID-19

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India on Saturday cut taxes on medical equipment such as oxygen concentrators and drugs used to

treat COVID-19 infections, after widespread criticism over healthcare costs during a devastating second wave of the virus in April and May. The government cut taxes on medical grade oxygen, ventilators, the remdesivir antiviral drug, diagnostic kits, pulse oximeters and hand sanitizers to 5% from 12-18% with immediate effect. The new levies will be in place until the end of September, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, adding it would include taxes on electric furnaces in crematoriums and ambulances.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-daily-covid-19-infections-more-than-two-month-low-2021-06-12/>

UK PM Johnson plans to delay lockdown lifting until July 19 - The Sun

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British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to delay lockdown lifting to July 19 after cases of the Delta variant, first identified in India, rose in the country, The Sun reported on Friday. Under plans that will be announced on Monday, a two week review will be included meaning COVID-19 restrictions could be dropped on July 5 if hospitalizations are low, the newspaper reported. Total British cases of the Delta variant have jumped by 29,892 to 42,323, Public Health England said on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-pm-johnson-plans-delay-lockdown-lifting-until-july-19-sun-2021-06-11/>

The next generation Covid-19 vaccines seeking a slice of the market

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A new group of vaccine makers is hoping to challenge the Covid-19 shots that are already household names, sharpening competition in what is set to be the first ever jab market to encompass the entire global population. BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna, the pandemic's mRNA-based vaccine frontrunners, have already booked billions of dollars in revenue, which they are using to boost production, sign new contracts and entrench their positions. Likewise, Oxford/AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson have been rolling out their cheaper and easier to transport shots for months, while Chinese and Russian-made vaccines dominate in several markets. Yet the global need for coronavirus vaccines is so great that the pandemic's next phase provides a chance for other players to break in. Large pharma companies like Sanofi and GSK are hoping to shake off their image as laggards, while start-ups such as Novavax, CureVac and Valneva see opportunities to satisfy unmet needs.

<https://www.ft.com/content/846c00e4-06ba-417d-978c-98caef7f605a>

Goldman Sachs staff in US must disclose Covid vaccination status

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Goldman Sachs has told its staff in the US that they must disclose their Covid-19 vaccination status before a planned return to office working next week. The investment bank, whose 6,000 UK workers have separately been told they have the option of filling out their status anonymously to give the business an idea of vaccination levels, had previously told US staff that disclosing their inoculation status would be optional. "Registering your vaccination status allows us to plan for a safer return to the office for all of our people as we continue to abide by local public health measures," states the internal staff memo. "As a result, it is mandatory that you submit your vaccination status. While we strongly encourage you to receive a Covid-19 vaccine, we understand that the choice to get vaccinated is a personal one."

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jun/11/goldman-sachs-staff-in-us-must-disclose-covid-vaccination-status>

EMA Approves New Manufacturing Site for Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) announced on June 11, 2021 that its committee for human medicines (CHMP) has approved Recipharm's Monts, France facility for the production of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine finished product. Several other sites were given a positive opinion by CHMP for batch control/testing. The new site follows two other sites approved by CHMP in June for the manufacture of API and finished product intermediates in the United States. "Together, these

changes are expected to allow the production of an additional one to two million vials of ready-to-use vaccine for the European Union market every month. This will increase the supply of the vaccine in the European Union," the agency stated in a press release.

<https://www.biopharminternational.com/view/ema-approves-new-manufacturing-site-for-moderna-covid-19-vaccine>

Selena Gomez calls out Boris Johnson over coronavirus vaccine donation: 'Too little too late'

Selena Gomez calls out Boris Johnson over coronavirus vaccine donation: 'Too little too late'

Selena Gomez has called Boris Johnson out on Twitter over his promise to donate the UK's surplus of coronavirus vaccines to other countries. The singer called on her followers to urge the Prime Minister to donate more vaccines to poorer countries sooner than he plans, labelling the current amount promised as 'too little too late'. She tweeted: '@BorisJohnson, 5million doses by September is too little too late. You promised Britain would donate ALL its surplus vaccines. 'Ahead of the #G7 Summit in Cornwall, call on the PM to help meet 1B doses.'

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/06/11/selena-gomez-calls-out-boris-johnson-over-coronavirus-vaccine-donation-14757683/>

The FDA is forcing Johnson & Johnson to throw out millions of doses of its single-shot COVID-19 vaccine produced at a troubled plant in Baltimore

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The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is forcing Johnson & Johnson to throw out millions of doses of its single-shot COVID-19 vaccine produced at a troubled plant in Baltimore due to contamination concerns. According to The New York Times, 60 million doses were unusable. Another 10 million doses from the plant will be allowed to be distributed but with a warning that the FDA cannot guarantee they were produced using good manufacturing practices, according to the Times. In a statement, the FDA confirmed that it has now authorized two batches of the vaccine. Federal officials "determined several other batches are not suitable for use, but additional batches are still under review and the agency will keep the public informed as those reviews are completed," the agency said.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/557984-fda-says-60-million-jj-vaccine-doses-from-troubled-plant-must-be-thrown-out>

Malaysia extends COVID-19 lockdown for 2 more weeks

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Malaysia on Friday extended a national lockdown imposed to curb a surge in coronavirus infections for two more weeks, with the latest restrictions to end on June 28, security minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said. The lockdown, originally set to end on June 14, was announced as the Southeast Asian nation began reporting record levels of COVID-19 infections and deaths last month.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-malaysia/malaysia-extends-covid-19-lockdown-for-2-more-weeks-idU5L3N2NT2P5>

China reports 35 new coronavirus cases on June 11, Foshan airport cancels flights

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China reported 35 new coronavirus cases in the mainland for June 11, up from 22 a day earlier, the country's health authority said on Saturday. Of the new cases, eight were local transmissions, compared with nine the previous day, the National Health Commission said. All of the local cases were in southern Guangdong province.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-reports-35-new-coronavirus-cases-june-11-vs-22-day-earlier-2021-06-12/>

Moscow residents to have paid leave to curb COVID-19 surge

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Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin announced on Saturday that workers in the Russian capital will have paid leave next week in a bid to contain the rapid spread of COVID-19. Sobyenin said in his blog that he has signed a decree designating June 15-19 as non-working days with salaries staying intact, after the city saw a sharp increase in new COVID-19 infections. The mayor said the paid leave applies to enterprises and organizations of all forms of ownership, except for critically important industries. As Saturday to Monday are Russia Day holidays, the "long weekend" in Moscow will last a total of nine days from June 12 to 20, during which catering and entertainment facilities are ordered to be closed from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-06/12/c_1310004851.htm

Saudi Arabia bars foreign travellers from Haj over COVID-19

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Saudi Arabia has restricted the annual Haj pilgrimage to its own citizens and residents for the second year running in response to the coronavirus pandemic, the state Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported on Saturday. Only people aged between 18 and 65 who have been vaccinated or immunised against the virus, and are free of chronic diseases, will be able to take part, the ministry that manages the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca said in a statement carried by SPA.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-bars-foreign-travellers-haj-over-covid-19-spa-2021-06-12/>

England's COVID re-opening in doubt as Delta variant spreads

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British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's hopes of ending England's coronavirus lockdown on June 21 hung in the balance on Friday as data showed a further rise in cases of the rapidly spreading Delta variant. Johnson is due to announce on Monday whether the planned lifting of restrictions, which would see an end to limits on social contact, can go ahead on time. But the rapid spread of the Delta variant, officially a "variant of concern", has thrown those plans into jeopardy, prompting speculation that the June 21 date will be pushed back, or that some restrictions will remain.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-track-offer-over-50s-second-vaccine-dose-by-june-21-minister-2021-06-11/>

Southern states have a 'real vulnerability' to Delta Covid variant this summer, warns Dr. Peter Hotez

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Dr. Peter Hotez warned that Southern U.S. states could feel the impact of the highly transmissible Delta Covid variant as early as this summer, due in part to low vaccination rates. "Here in the South, particularly in Louisiana, Mississippi, we're seeing really low vaccination rates. And less than 10% of adolescents are vaccinated in many of these southern states, so we have a real vulnerability here," Hotez said. Just around 30% of the population in many Southeastern states is fully vaccinated, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/11/covid-doctor-warns-southern-states-vulnerable-to-delta-variant-this-summer.html?__source=sharebar|twitter&par=sharebar

Chile shuts capital Santiago once more as vaccines fail to quell rampant cases

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Chilean health authorities announced a blanket lockdown across the capital Santiago on Thursday following some of the worst COVID-19 case numbers since the pandemic began, despite having fully vaccinated more than half its population. The development, which will alarm authorities elsewhere who are debating how fast to reopen as vaccination campaigns gather steam, comes as Chile's confirmed daily caseload surged 17% in the past two weeks nationwide and 25% in the Metropolitan

region that includes Santiago and is home to half the country's population.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/chile-shuts-capital-santiago-once-more-vaccines-fail-quell-rampant-cases-2021-06-10/>

Covid jabs can be tweaked within weeks to combat future variants thanks to UK 'vaccine library'

Covid jabs can be tweaked within weeks to combat future variants thanks to UK 'vaccine library'

The UK will be able to tweak current Covid jabs within weeks to combat any further highly transmissible variants and prevent further lockdowns, according to scientists at the country's new "vaccine library". Dr Lucy Foley, director of biologics and Covid response at the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI) in Darlington, told her team have been working closely with the Vaccines Taskforce on developing mRNA vaccines – the same technology used by Pfizer and Moderna in their Covid vaccines – to be ideally placed to combat any future threats. She said: "We're working with the Government now to bank a library of different DNA and RNA clinical vaccines, which means if we do see something like the Delta variant, which becomes a variant of concern (VOC), the UK has the stock in the fridge if you like to go straight to a clinical trial to enable us to reduce the 300 days it took us to create a successful coronavirus vaccine to a much faster time."

<https://inews.co.uk/news/health/covid-jabs-tweaked-within-weeks-combat-future-variants-uk-vaccine-library-1049370>

Vietnam approves Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use

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Vietnam has approved the COVID-19 vaccine jointly made by Pfizer and BioNTech for domestic emergency use, the government said on Saturday. It is the fourth vaccine to be endorsed in the Southeast Asian country that is tackling a new outbreak. Vietnam, which has previously approved the AstraZeneca vaccine, Russia's Sputnik V and China's Sinopharm vaccine, said it is seeking to procure 31 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech version for delivery in the next quarter.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-approves-pfizerbiontech-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-use-2021-06-12/>

Strong immune response protects young children from Covid-19, suggests study

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Young children have relative protection from coronavirus because their bodies produce a strong immune response to it, according to a new study. The University of Bristol and Bristol Royal Hospital for Children conducted research which found that infants produce relatively high levels of antibodies and immune cells which protect against the virus, compared to adults. Researchers say the findings could help explain why younger children appear to be protected from the severe effects of Covid-19 at a time of their development when they could be more vulnerable. The study was led by academics and paediatricians from the university and hospital and is published in Cell Reports Medicine.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/university-of-bristol-b940174.html>

Russia tests COVID-19 vaccine as nasal spray for children - agencies

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Russia has tested a nasal spray form of its COVID-19 vaccine that is suitable for children aged 8-12, and plans to launch the new product in September, the scientist who led the development of the Sputnik V vaccine said on Saturday. Alexander Gintsburg, who heads the Gamaleya Institute that developed Sputnik V, said the spray for children used the same vaccine "only instead of a needle, a nozzle is put on", the TASS news agency reported. The children's shot is expected to be ready for distribution by Sept. 15, Gintsburg was quoted as saying during a meeting with President Vladimir

Putin.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-tests-covid-19-vaccine-nasal-spray-children-agencies-2021-06-12/>

Brazil looks at extending expiry date of J&J COVID vaccines

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Brazil's health regulator Anvisa met with representatives of Johnson & Johnson subsidiary Janssen on Friday to discuss extending the expiry date of a batch of 3 million doses of its COVID vaccine bought by the South American nation.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/brazil-looks-at-extending-expiry-date-of-j-26j-covid-vaccines/ar-AAKXrbb>

COVID-19 vaccine efficacy data: solid enough to delay second dose?

COVID-19 vaccine efficacy data: solid enough to delay second dose? - Authors' reply

In Israel, individuals previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 were ineligible for vaccination at the time of our evaluation. Indeed, 538 (6%) of 9647 HCWs at the Sheba Medical Center were infected before vaccine roll-out and excluded from the analysis. Moreover, serology screening before receiving the first dose was offered to HCWs in our hospital. Overall, 5835 HCWs, none of whom were known to have been infected previously, were tested. 59 (1%) tested positive for antibody and consequently did not receive the vaccine. Therefore, we considered the HCW cohort included in this analysis mostly antibody-negative. Theoretically, a small proportion of HCWs could have been antibody-positive due to unrecognised past infection and were not tested before receiving the first dose; however, extrapolating from the large proportion of tested HCWs, these numbers should be negligible. Moreover, a proportion of antibody-positive people will be included in most vaccine efficacy evaluations and therefore reflect real-life settings

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)01059-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)01059-X/fulltext)

Children SHOULD be vaccinated against Covid says Professor Peter Openshaw

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Professor Peter Openshaw said 'on balance' he supports vaccinating children. Experts are still divided on whether Britain should jab children this summer. Critics say supplies should be used to squash the pandemic abroad first. Professor Openshaw said there was a 'very strong argument' in favour

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9679121/Children-vaccinated-against-Covid-says-Professor-Peter-Openshaw.html>

Delta variant causes more than 90% of new Covid cases in UK

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More than 90% of Covid cases in the UK are now down to the coronavirus Delta variant first discovered in India, data has revealed, as the total number of confirmed cases passed 42,000. Also known as B.1.617.2, the Delta variant has been linked to a rise in Covid cases in the UK in the past weeks. It is believed to spread more easily than the Alpha variant, B.1.1.7, that was first detected in Kent, and is somewhat more resistant to Covid vaccines, particularly after just one dose. It may be also associated with a greater risk of hospitalisation. Now, Public Health England (PHE) has said that more than 90% of new Covid cases in the UK involve the Delta variant. Indeed the most recent data suggests the figure could be as high as 96% of new cases in England.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/11/delta-variant-is-linked-to-90-of-covid-cases-in-uk?utm_term=Autofeed&CMP=twt_b-gdnnews&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1623407541

US FDA Denies Emergency Use Approval to Bharat Biotech's Covaxin

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A vaccine that has been administered in India to the tune of 29 million doses has been denied

emergency-use approval in the US. Covaxin is the name of a whole-virus inactivated vaccine manufactured by Bharat Biotech, Hyderabad. It received accelerated approval in India on January 3, 2021, after which it became one of the two major vaccines in India's COVID-19 inoculation drive. However, because India's drug regulator okayed Covaxin without any data from its phase 3 clinical trial, it was met with considerably vaccine hesitancy that the government itself was forced to acknowledge. Virologist and former INSACOG executive committee chief Shahid Jameel had told The Wire Science in January 3 that Covaxin is in all likelihood safe and meaningfully efficacious, but that the opacity surrounding its approval in India would undermine public confidence. Bharat Biotech had also applied for approvals with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the WHO.

<https://thewire.in/health/us-fda-denies-emergency-use-approval-to-bharat-biotech-covaxin>

COVID-19: Delta variant about 60% more transmissible than Alpha and more resistant to vaccines, PHE reports

COVID-19: Delta variant about 60% more transmissible than Alpha and more resistant to vaccines, PHE reports

The Delta (Indian) variant is 64% more transmissible than the Alpha (Kent) variant indoors and vaccines are less effective against it, Public Health England has said. More than 90% of new COVID-19 cases in the UK are now the Delta variant. The variant, first identified in India, has taken over from the Alpha variant as the most dominant in the UK.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-delta-variant-60-more-transmissible-than-alpha-and-more-resistant-to-vaccines-phe-reports-12330068>

Social distancing rules could be needed 'forever' to stop Covid, says SAGE scientist

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Social distancing and other Covid measures should stay "forever", according to a SAGE scientist. Professor Susan Michie, of University College London, said she thinks some restrictions could be needed over the long-term. And when pushed by her Channel 5 interviewer on how long that might be, she warned: "I think forever, to some extent." Her comments come as Brits wait for Boris Johnson to reveal if so-called Freedom Day can go ahead on June 21. The Prime Minister previously said he hoped to end all Covid restrictions by that date.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/social-distancing-rules-could-needed-24295947>

Trouble for some US COVID-19 vaccines

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The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today said 60 million doses of the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine cannot be used because of possible contamination, according to the New York Times. The vaccines are part of the 170 million vaccines produced at the troubled Emergent BioSolutions plant in Baltimore. Ten million Johnson & Johnson vaccines from the plant will still be useable, the FDA said. While losing 60 million doses does not impact America's vaccination campaign, the decision could have global repercussions as the Biden administration looks to share more doses of COVID-19 vaccines to countries currently in need of supply.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/06/trouble-some-us-covid-19-vaccines>

Suicide Attempts Among Teen Girls Spiked During the Pandemic, CDC Finds

Suicide Attempts Among Teen Girls Spiked During the Pandemic, CDC Finds

Suicide attempts among adolescent girls spiked as the coronavirus pandemic raged, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found in a study released Friday. May 2020 marked the beginning of a rise in emergency room visits for suspected suicide attempts in teenagers ages 12-17 generally, but especially among girls. From Feb. 21 to March 20 2021, suicide attempts were up 50 percent from the same period in 2019 among girls 12 to 17 and 3.7 percent among boys of the same age.

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/suicide-attempts-among-teen-girls-spiked-during-the-pandemic-cdc-finds>

Novavax Vaccine Effective Against COVID-19 Variants Found In UK & South Africa: Study

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As newer COVID-19 variants emerge across the world, US vaccine manufacturer Novavax on Friday, stated that its vaccine was effective against both the Alpha (B.1.1.7) and Beta (B.1.351) variant strains found originally in UK and South Africa. Issuing a press release, Novavax stated that preclinical and clinical data from its tests demonstrated strong immunogenicity and protection against both variants. The company has submitted a paper titled 'Immunogenicity and In vivo protection of a variant nanoparticle vaccine that confers broad protection against emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants' for peer review.

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/us-news/novavax-vaccine-effective-against-covid-19-variants-found-in-uk-and-south-africa-study.html>

The COVID-19 virus can cause diabetes, new studies find

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There is troubling news for those infected with the COVID-19 virus. New studies have found that the virus may cause diabetes in addition to pneumonia and other health problems. Most people will recover from COVID without longer-term problems, but doctors have noticed that some patients go on to develop diabetes. Now, new research is finding that the virus may infect and destroy certain cells that are crucial for keeping diabetes at bay. Armed with this new knowledge, scientists are now racing to understand how to best prevent this from happening in patients with COVID-19.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/covid-19-virus-diabetes-studies-find/story?id=78168634>

Chinese researchers say new batch of coronaviruses found in bats

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Researchers in China say they have uncovered a new batch of coronaviruses in bats that resembles the COVID-19 virus that has swept the globe. The researchers said they collected samples from small bats that lived in forests in the Yunnan province between May 2019 and November 2020. The samples consisted of urine, feces and mouth swabs. "In total, we assembled 24 novel coronavirus genomes from different bat species, including four SARS-CoV-2 like coronaviruses," the researchers wrote in the journal Cell.

<https://thehill.com/policy/international/557998-chinese-researchers-say-new-batch-of-coronaviruses-found-in-bats>

Pulse oximeters, used to fight COVID-19, may be inaccurate on people of color: FDA

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Pulse oximeters, medical devices used in battling COVID-19, may not work effectively on people of color, according to health officials. The small devices clamp onto a patient's finger and measure oxygen levels in blood. During the pandemic, they've been used by people at home and in hospitals to monitor COVID-19 patients as the virus attacks the lungs, often leading to a drop in oxygen levels. "The devices may be less accurate in people with dark skin pigmentation," The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said in a statement on Friday.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/pulse-oximeters-fight-covid-19-inaccurate-people-color/story?id=76062678>