

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

11th Aug 2021

Overnight NewsRoundUp

If we're not careful, booster vaccines could end up giving the coronavirus a boost

- The sooner we start using booster jabs, the more likely it is that we will need them.
- [In the eight months since Covid-19 vaccines first became available, nearly four billion doses have been administered, and yet the number of cases and deaths continues to rise.](#)
- Why? For the simple reason that we are not making the most efficient global use of the doses available. Now, as evidence is emerging about the potential benefits of booster shots in the face of the continued spread of the Delta variant, offering fully vaccinated people a third dose before it is absolutely necessary is in danger of becoming the latest example of this.
- Research into boosters remains an essential part of the pandemic response because if protection from existing Covid-19 vaccines does eventually start to wane or new variants emerge that are more resistant to vaccines, then boosters could potentially offer enhanced protection.
- But both of these scenarios will become self-fulfilling prophecies if countries with high Covid vaccine coverage start making boosters available now, and to all citizens, because it will delay efforts to protect more people. The sooner we start using boosters, the more likely we'll need them.
- By far the best way to avoid both these scenarios is to focus efforts and resources on stopping the spread of the virus now. That means making more efficient use of the vaccines we have by protecting people most at risk in all corners of the world, which will help to avoid the emergence of new variants.
- We are currently far from that goal. Some wealthy countries have vaccinated about two-thirds of their population against the coronavirus, while just 1.1% of people in low-income countries have receive their first jab.
- That is not even enough to cover healthcare workers on the frontlines of this fight, let along other highly vulnerable populations in lower-income countries.
- The COVAX facility, whose aim is to ensure equitable access to Covid vaccines everywhere, is working hard to address this terrible disparity in global vaccine distribution. COVAX is on track to deliver around two billion doses to lower-income countries by February 2022, which should be enough to protect at least 30% of their populations.
- However, if some high-income countries now start offering boosters, others will inevitably follow, and the effect on the global supply will be nothing short of disastrous.
- Whether existing vaccines are used as a third shot, or new versions are developed that target specific variants, the result will be the same; it will mean there are fewer doses for the rest of the world. It will either divert doses directly or indirectly - by consuming manufacturing capacity and the raw materials needed to make vaccines - away from where they are needed the most.
- Not only would this once again collectively set everyone back and delay the global effort to stop the virus from spreading, it may not have any real impact. As things stand, the scientific case for boosters is far from clear.
- New evidence suggests that antibody levels against Covid-19 may decline over time and that

a third dose could help boost them. However, declining antibodies does not necessarily mean reduced protection, since other factors, such as T cells play an important role here too.

- Moreover, there is also evidence that the protection some Covid-19 vaccines offer may even mature over time, that the immune response to these vaccines becomes broader, offering wider protection. Some immunologists believe that if this proves to be the case, boosters may not be necessary at all during this pandemic.
- The point here is that it's too early to tell. What we do know is that the vaccines currently in use are highly effective against all variants, including the Delta variant, providing a high level of protection against severe disease and death.
- With time, that situation may change if new variants emerge and if the protection existing vaccines provide does eventually start to decline. But until that happens it makes no sense to offer third doses until high-risk people in all corners of the world are fully vaccinated.
- Moreover, until we start to get firm evidence of the effectiveness of vaccines declining, it is difficult to see what could possibly be gained with boosters now. Virtually all Covid-19 hospitalisations are of people who have not been vaccinated.
- So, giving third shots to people who are already fully protected will do nothing to reduce these hospitalizations and deaths. Where we'll really see a difference, and where we really need to focus all efforts and precious doses, is getting first and second doses out. Boosters will only delay this and increase the risk that more unvaccinated people become infected, which will prolong this global health crisis.
- Ultimately, it's important for governments to do what they think is necessary to protect their citizens. But at this stage in the pandemic the key question is: will boosters be more effective at protecting people than helping stop the virus from circulating globally.
- That is not to say that boosters won't become necessary and that countries shouldn't prepare for their eventuality, and indeed there may be a case to start offering boosters to extremely vulnerable groups, such as people with compromised immune systems or some older people.
- But the bottom line is that if we use them too soon, then we increase the chances that they will become a necessity. The longer the virus is in circulation, the greater the chance that a new and potentially more dangerous variant will emerge. If we let that happen, then the goal of ending this pandemic will be even further from our grasp.

(Seth Berkley CEO GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance)

The article was originally published by The Telegraph on 5 August, 2021

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The sooner we start using booster jabs, the more likely it is that we will need them. In the eight months since Covid-19 vaccines first became available, nearly four billion doses have been administered, and yet the number of cases and deaths continues to rise. Why? For the simple reason that we are not making the most efficient global use of the doses available. Now, as evidence is emerging about the potential benefits of booster shots in the face of the continued spread of Delta variant, offering fully vaccinated people a third dose before it is absolutely necessary is in danger of becoming the latest example of this.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/were-careful-booster-vaccines-could-end-up-giving-boost-seth-berkley/?trackingId=A4WdBxfwYNL6qZNtKQDbHg%3D%3D>

Schools start again in-person despite growing concern about variants

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The big fear lingering: a repeat of last year, when many students were forced to learn from home all

or part of the time and students were regularly shuttled into quarantine after exposures to the virus. The current surge, driven by the delta variant, has elevated case counts and hospitalizations across the country. There are about twice as many cases today as there were when schools began a year ago, when the country was coming off a case surge.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/schools-start-in-person-pandemic-masks/2021/08/09/29e7fb6c-f8b4-11eb-9c0e-97e29906a970_story.html

Elimination possible after borders open, Govt told

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An expert panel says elimination is still the best approach even after the borders open – in a trio of reports that contain few other details. New Zealanders eager to know when and how the country will at last reopen to the rest of the world are bound to be disappointed with the sparse advice issued by an expert panel tasked with answering exactly those questions. The first three reports from the Strategic Covid-19 Public Health Advisory Group, chaired by epidemiologist Sir David Skegg, were released by the Government on Wednesday morning. They deal with the possibility of a phased reopening of the borders to vaccinated travellers, what proportion of the population might need to be vaccinated to reach herd immunity and whether the elimination strategy will continue to be a viable approach in the next stage of the pandemic.

<https://www.newsroom.co.nz/elimination-possible-after-borders-open-govt-told>

Merkel prods Germans to get COVID-19 vaccine as 4th wave worries mount

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Germany's coronavirus vaccination drive has slowed and those people who have not taken up the opportunity to have shots will have to take COVID-19 tests to take a full part in public life, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Tuesday. To nudge more people to get vaccinated amid concerns about a rise in new cases, Merkel said the government will stop offering free tests from Oct. 11, except for those for whom vaccination is not recommended, such as children and pregnant women.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/unvaccinated-germans-face-more-covid-tests-avoid-restrictions-2021-08-10/>

Biden urges Americans in hurricane-prone states to get COVID-19 shots

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President Joe Biden on Tuesday urged Americans in hurricane-prone states to get vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves in case they have to evacuate from their homes, warning that serious hurricanes could strike this month. The spread of the coronavirus has been particularly severe in Florida and other parts of the Southeastern United States, which is bracing for major storms as the country heads into the height of the Atlantic hurricane season.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-urge-americans-hurricane-prone-states-get-covid-19-shots-2021-08-10/>

High trust in doctors, nurses in US, AP-NORC poll finds

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Most Americans have high trust in doctors, nurses and pharmacists, a new poll finds. Researchers say that trust could become important in the push to increase COVID-19 vaccinations, as long as unvaccinated people have care providers they know and are open to hearing new information about the vaccines. At least 7 in 10 Americans trust doctors, nurses and pharmacists to do what's right for them and their families either most or all of the time, according to the poll from the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-business-health-coronavirus-pandemic-509835fc9b663bffc83f52d248e9ef4a>

Herd immunity 'not a possibility' with Delta variant

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The director of the Oxford Vaccine Group has said that herd immunity is “not a possibility” with the current Delta variant. Professor Sir Andrew Pollard referred to the idea as “mythical” and warned that a vaccine programme should not be built around the idea of achieving it. Speaking to the All-Party Group on Coronavirus, he said that it was clear the Delta variant will still infect people who have been vaccinated. He explained that this meant “anyone who’s still unvaccinated, at some point, will meet the virus.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/covid-coronavirus-latest-updates-travel-list-doctor-vaccine-news-b949921.html>

The Covid vaccines mean we can start living again - in Britain, at least

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We have all made sacrifices over the past 18 months. People have stayed home to protect others. Businesses have shuttered and many people have lost their incomes and jobs. Trips to see family members overseas have been cancelled; weddings have been postponed. As an initial strategy, these pandemic rules made sense. Our collective sacrifices saved lives and bought scientists time to deliver solutions. In the race to produce a vaccine, time was the currency that counted most.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/aug/10/covid-vaccines-britain-scientific-solution-jabs>

Hospitals run low on nurses as they get swamped with COVID

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The rapidly escalating surge in COVID-19 infections across the U.S. has caused a shortage of nurses and other front-line staff in virus hot spots that can no longer keep up with the flood of unvaccinated patients and are losing workers to burnout and lucrative out-of-state temporary gigs. Florida, Arkansas and Louisiana all have more people hospitalized with COVID-19 than at any other point in the pandemic, and nursing staffs are badly strained. In Florida, virus cases have filled so many hospital beds that ambulance services and fire departments are straining to respond to emergencies. Some patients wait inside ambulances for up to an hour before hospitals in St. Petersburg, Florida, can admit them — a process that usually takes about 15 minutes, Pinellas County Administrator Barry Burton said.

<https://apnews.com/article/business-health-coronavirus-pandemic-0f32d1233c090f7d73350d474693354b>

Oxford researcher urges Britain to donate vaccines rather than give boosters

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Booster shots for COVID-19 vaccines are not currently needed and the doses should be given to other countries, Oxford vaccine chief Andrew Pollard said on Tuesday in contrast to the position taken by Britain's health minister.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/oxford-researcher-urges-britain-donate-vaccines-rather-than-give-boosters-2021-08-10/>

Three quarters of UK adults have had both doses of Covid-19 vaccine as decline in daily cases flattens out

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Three quarters of all adults in the UK have now been double vaccinated against Covid-19, according to official statistics. The milestone was passed on Tuesday when it was announced that a total of 39,688,566 people have received both recommended doses of the jab. Another 7,403,323 Britons have had their first dose of the vaccine and are due to receive a second with in the next two or three months. Because most children are not eligible to be vaccinated and the rollout of jabs to those aged 16 and 17 has not yet begun, the proportion of the UK’s total population to have been double vaccinated stands at just under 60 per cent.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/three-quarters-of-uk-adults-have-had-both-doses-of-covid-19-vaccine-as-decline-in-daily-cases-flattens-out/ar-AAN9AZz>

US turns to social media influencers to boost vaccine rates

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As a police sergeant in a rural town, Carlos Cornejo isn't the prototypical social media influencer. But his Spanish-language Facebook page with 650,000 followers was exactly what Colorado leaders were looking for as they recruited residents to try to persuade the most vaccine-hesitant. Cornejo, 32, is one of dozens of influencers, ranging from busy moms and fashion bloggers to African refugee advocates and religious leaders, getting paid by the state to post vaccine information on a local level in hopes of stunting a troubling summer surge of COVID-19. Colorado's #PowertheComeback target audience is especially tailored to Latino, Black, Native American, Asian and other communities of color that historically have been underserved when it comes to health care and are the focus of agencies trying to raise vaccination rates.

<https://apnews.com/article/lifestyle-technology-joe-biden-social-media-business-a2992b2881fcef68e1144efa7b869844>

Bangladesh vaccinating Rohingya refugees amid virus surge

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Bangladesh's government and aid agencies started vaccinating Rohingya refugees Tuesday as a virus surge raises health risks in the sprawling, cramped camps where more than 1 million people who fled Myanmar are sheltering. The highly transmissible delta variant is driving an infection surge across Bangladesh, with around 20,000 infections and 200 deaths recorded so far in Cox's Bazar district, the southern region bordering Myanmar where the refugee camps are located. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said a national positivity rate of around 30% indicates the spread of COVID-19 is much higher, especially with cramped conditions and the risks faced by many people living in the refugee camps.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-bangladesh-coronavirus-pandemic-united-nations-2fc02f9b29fb6544e4a115d70f5fdab8>

US to send more COVID-19 vaccines to Mexico amid Delta surge

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The United States will send up to an additional 8.5 million coronavirus vaccine doses to Mexico, as both countries continue to grapple with a spike in infections fuelled by the highly contagious Delta variant. Speaking on Tuesday, a day after holding a phone call with US Vice President Kamala Harris, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he expected most adults living along the border with the US will have received their second dose of the vaccine within a month.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/10/us-to-send-more-covid-19-vaccines-to-mexico-amid-delta-surge>

Pandemic prompts changes in how future teachers are trained

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Before last year, a one-credit technology course for students pursuing master's degrees in education at the University of Washington wasn't seen as the program's most relevant. Then COVID-19 hit, schools plunged into remote learning, and suddenly material from that course was being infused into others. "It's become so relevant, and it's staying that way," said Anne Beitlers, who directs Washington's master's program for secondary education. "And nobody's going to question that now." Changes to standards and curricula happen slowly, but the pandemic is already leaving its fingerprints on the education of future teachers. Many U.S. educator preparation programs are incorporating more about digital tools, online instruction and mental and emotional wellness in their courses to reflect takeaways from the pandemic.

<https://apnews.com/article/technology-health-education-pandemics-coronavirus-pandemic-f2dabfbf25ac4a074360ec80671971f56>

Pentagon plans to make Covid-19 vaccines mandatory for US troops

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The Pentagon plans to make Covid-19 vaccines mandatory for US troops by mid-September, as the country grapples with a rise in cases caused by the spread of the contagious Delta variant. "To defend this nation, we need a healthy and ready force," wrote Lloyd Austin, defence secretary, in a memo to US forces released on Monday. Some vaccines against other diseases are already mandatory.

<https://www.ft.com/content/ca45b7a6-c472-4583-8b34-f5247f800016>

Austria plans to start COVID-19 booster shots in October

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Austria plans to start COVID-19 vaccine booster shots on Oct. 17, nine months after the first group of people to get the jabs received their second dose, the country's health minister said on Tuesday. The first wave included vulnerable people in nursing homes and medical personnel, Minister Wolfgang Mueckstein told broadcaster ORF in an interview. "There are certain groups, for example immunosuppressed people, where it may be possible to vaccinate even earlier after consultation with the doctor," Mueckstein said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-austria/austria-plans-to-start-covid-19-booster-shots-in-october-idUSL8N2PH1YE>

Tunisia's COVID-19 crisis is not of its own making

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Not only the incompetence of local authorities but also the West's moral failures (lack of vaccines) left Tunisia unable to stem the spread of the virus.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/8/10/tunisia-covid-19-crisis>

Myanmar army attacks medics, hampering COVID response, rights groups say

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Myanmar's army carried out at least 252 attacks and threats against health workers since a Feb. 1 coup, killing at least 25 medics and hampering the response to a resurgent outbreak of COVID-19, a report by rights groups said on Tuesday. More than 190 health workers have been arrested and 86 raids on hospitals carried out since the coup, said the report by Insecurity Insight, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), and Johns Hopkins University Center for Public Health and Human Rights (CPHHR).

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-army-attacks-medics-hampering-covid-response-rights-groups-say-2021-08-10/>

Queen's Brian May Zings Eric Clapton Over Covid-19 Vaccine Stance

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Brian May has long admired Eric Clapton's talents as a musician, but he draws the line when it comes to the Tears in Heaven singer's views on COVID-19 vaccines. In an interview with The Independent, the Queen guitarist criticised Clapton, who in July vowed not to perform where proof of vaccinations are required. "I love Eric Clapton, he's my hero, but he has very different views from me in many ways," May said. "He's a person who thinks it's OK to shoot animals for fun, so we have our disagreements, but I would never stop respecting the man."

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/brian-may-eric-clapton-vaccines-covid-19_uk_61123736e4b034426d4efd6e

Australia expands Covid-19 lockdown as Sydney records its highest daily case count

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Australia's most populous state has expanded its Covid-19 lockdown to include a rural town and the coastal region of Byron Bay, as the city of Sydney recorded its highest daily case count since the beginning of the pandemic. There were four deaths and 356 locally transmitted Covid-19 infections confirmed in New South Wales on Monday, almost all of which were in Sydney, state premier Gladys Berejiklian said during a press conference on Tuesday morning.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/10/australia/australia-covid-lockdown-sydney-intl-hnk/index.html>

Oxford-jab chief criticises UK's Covid booster plan

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Prof Pollard, who led the team that created the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, said decisions on whether to give boosters "should be scientifically driven". "The time we would need to boost is if we see evidence that there was an increase in hospitalisation - or the next stage after that, which would be people dying - amongst those who are vaccinated," he said. "And that is not something we are seeing at the moment."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-58159573>

Novartis, Pfizer and Gilead roll out COVID-19 vaccination rules as Delta makes case for mandates

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Right as several countries seemed to be getting a handle on the COVID-19 pandemic, the Delta variant crashed onto the scene, sending case counts soaring again and throwing re-opening plans into limbo. With cases expected to continue ticking up before Labor Day, the argument for vaccine mandates is growing. For many drugmakers, several of whom led the charge on the therapeutics and vaccines taking aim at the pandemic, vaccination requirements are becoming the norm. Meanwhile, a number of biotechs have been able to forego mandates altogether because their smaller size means their workforces are already fully vaccinated. Over the past few days, Fierce Pharma asked a range of biopharmas big and small about their evolving vaccination policies. While some companies have already gone public with their plans, others are deliberating how to approach the issue.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/novartis-pfizer-and-gilead-roll-out-covid-19-vaccination-rules-as-delta-makes-case-for>

Don't let children under 12 slip through the cracks in the fight against Covid

Don't let children under 12 slip through the cracks in the fight against Covid

In the latest evolution, new guidance from the CDC recommends that all children attending K-12 schools wear masks — even those who are vaccinated. This shift was aimed at protecting children under 12, who cannot yet be vaccinated. As public health professionals and parents of children under 12 ourselves, we welcome this change, which recognizes that guidelines need to take into account the situation of people who are not protected by vaccination. Policies must continue to ensure the safety of vulnerable people in our communities. It is not just a moral imperative: If we fail to protect all individuals in our communities, efforts to control the pandemic will always fall short.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/08/10/dont-let-children-under-12-slip-through-the-cracks-in-the-fight-against-covid/>

A snort or a jab? Scientists debate potential benefits of intranasal Covid-19 vaccines

A snort or a jab? Scientists debate potential benefits of intranasal Covid-19 vaccines

As the world amasses experience with Covid-19 vaccines, something we should have known from the start is coming into sharp focus. Vaccines that are injected into arm muscles aren't likely to be able to protect our nasal passages from marauding SARS-CoV-2 viruses for very long, even if they

are doing a terrific job protecting lungs from the virus. If we want vaccines that protect our upper respiratory tracts, we may need products that are administered in the nose — intranasal vaccines. Can they be made? Probably. Will they do what we want them to do, if they are made? Possibly. Is there still room for this type of next-generation product, given the record number of Covid vaccines that have already been put into use? Potentially. Will it be difficult to get them through development? Likely.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/08/10/covid-intranasal-vaccines/>

Portugal recommends COVID vaccinations for 12 to 15-year-olds

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Portugal on Tuesday recommended that 12 to 15-years-old kids be vaccinated against COVID-19, ideally before the start of the academic year, as the Delta variant has led to a surge of cases in the country.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/portugal-recommends-covid-vaccinations-12-15-year-olds-2021-08-10/>

Inovio focused on launching global COVID-19 vaccine trial next month - CEO

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Inovio Pharmaceuticals Inc is focused on launching the global late-stage trial of its COVID-19 vaccine candidate next month, chief executive Joseph Kim said in a call, with the drug developer expecting trial data in the first half of next year. In May, Inovio said it would begin the study of INO-4800 in summer this year, after the vaccine candidate was found to be safe as well as well-tolerated and produced an immune response against the new coronavirus in a mid-stage clinical trial.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/inovio-focused-launching-global-covid-19-vaccine-trial-next-month-ceo-2021-08-09/>

S. Korea approves Phase III trial of SK Bioscience's COVID-19 vaccine

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South Korea gave vaccine developer SK Bioscience the green light on Tuesday for a Phase III study of its COVID-19 vaccine candidate at a time of vaccine shortages, when a spurt in infections is fuelling demand. The clinical trial of GBP510, the candidate for the first domestic vaccine, will weigh its immunogenicity and safety against AstraZeneca Plc's vaccine, drug safety minister Kim Gang-lip told a news conference.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/s-korea-approves-phase-iii-trial-sk-biosciences-covid-19-vaccine-2021-08-10/>

TWO-THIRDS of moderately ill coronavirus patients suffer from 'long Covid,' study suggests

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A new study looked at 303 COVID-19 patients with mild or moderate symptoms who did not end up hospitalized. In total, 208 participants, or 68.7%, reported experiencing at least one symptom after 30 days, known as 'long Covid.' The most common symptoms were fatigue, shortness of breath, confusion/brain fog and stress/anxiety. Researchers say the findings provide more evidence that long Covid does not just affect those who fall seriously ill with the virus

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9877315/TWO-THIRDS-moderately-ill-coronavirus-patients-suffer-long-Covid-study-suggests.html>

More than 75% of UK adults now double-jabbed

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More than 75% of UK adults have now received two Covid jabs, the government has said. A total of 39,688,566 people have now received both doses, while more than 47 million people have received

a first dose, according to the latest figures.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-58162318>

Did the Tokyo Olympics drive Japan's COVID-19 surge?

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Now with the Olympic flame doused, the cameras turned off and the last remaining athletes headed home, it is the Japanese public that is left weighing the costs and the benefits of the IOC's decision to push ahead with the Summer Games during the pandemic. Analysts say there is little reason to celebrate. They say the Olympics has only worsened Japan's COVID-19 outbreak and left its taxpayers saddled with a \$15bn bill, even as the IOC raked in billions from broadcasting rights.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/10/did-the-tokyo-olympics-fuel-japans-covid-19-surge>

S.Korea reports more than 2000 new COVID-19 cases, highest daily tally yet - Yonhap

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South Korea recorded more than 2,000 new coronavirus infections in the last 21 hours, Yonhap News Agency reported on Tuesday, an almost 50 percent increase from the previous day and a new record high. By 9 p.m. (1200 GMT) on Tuesday, South Korea had logged 2,021 new coronavirus cases for the day so far, Yonhap reported, citing health authorities and local governments. This compares to 1,384 new cases registered by 9 p.m. on the previous day.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-reports-more-than-2000-new-covid-19-cases-highest-daily-tally-yet-yonhap-2021-08-10/>

Florida, Texas schools defy governors' bans on mask mandates as COVID cases soar

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School districts in Florida and Texas are bucking their Republican governors' bans on requiring masks for children and teachers as coronavirus cases soar in conservative areas with low vaccination rates. The Broward County school board in Florida on Tuesday became the latest major district to flout an order by Republican Governor Rick DeSantis outlawing mask requirements in that state, prompting the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden, a Democrat, to say it was considering supporting the school districts financially if DeSantis retaliates against them by withholding funds from officials' salaries.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/florida-texas-schools-defy-governors-bans-mask-mandates-covid-cases-soar-2021-08-10/>

Parts of Southeast Asia still in the heat of Delta battles

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Parts of Southeast Asia are still grappling with high COVID-19 activity, with Thailand today reporting a record daily high for deaths and Vietnam still reporting high daily totals. In other developments, initial findings on booster doses from Israel suggest side effects are similar to what people experience after the second dose.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/08/parts-southeast-asia-still-heat-delta-battles>

Sri Lanka rejects lockdown to beat Covid 'bomb'

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Sri Lanka's government rejected on Tuesday mounting calls for an immediate lockdown to contain a surge in Covid-19 cases and deaths that is severely stretching hospitals and crematoriums. Government spokesman and Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella said the country had not reached a critical stage even as the island nation suffers more than 100 deaths per day on average. "Curfews or a lockdown is the last resort, but we are not there yet," Rambukwella told reporters. "Our target is to get everyone over the age of 18 vaccinated by September and thereafter it is in the hands of the

gods." His comments came despite the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) issuing what it called a "final warning" to the government to restrict the movement of people immediately or risk a bigger catastrophe

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/world/sri-lanka-rejects-lockdown-to-beat-covid-bomb/ar-AAN9Hku>

Covid-19 weekly deaths in England and Wales at highest level since March

Covid-19 weekly deaths in England and Wales at highest level since March

The number of deaths involving coronavirus registered each week in England and Wales has climbed to its highest level since the end of March, new figures show. A total of 404 deaths registered in the week ending July 30 mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate, according to data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This is up 24% on the previous week and is the highest number since 719 deaths were registered in the week to March 26.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/office-for-national-statistics-england-wales-b949958.html>

The Delta Variant And Arkansas' Low Vaccination Rate Fuel COVID-19 Cases

The Delta Variant And Arkansas' Low Vaccination Rate Fuel COVID-19 Cases

NPR's Debbie Elliott speak with Dr. Cam Patterson, chancellor of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, about overwhelmed hospitals amid the surge of COVID-19 patients.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/08/10/1026322986/the-delta-variant-and-arkansas-low-vaccination-rate-fuel-covid-19-cases>

East Timor detects first domestic transmission of COVID-19 Delta variant

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East Timor has recorded its first case of community transmission of the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus, raising concerns by its health ministry about a possible spike.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/east-timor-detects-first-domestic-transmission-covid-19-delta-variant-2021-08-10/>

China issues warnings to officials as COVID-19 cases rise to seven-month high

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Health authorities reported the highest number of cases in China since January. Several officials have been issued warnings for mishandling testing and allowing the outbreak to spread, authorities said. An infectious diseases specialist says the current outbreak is being brought under control.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-11/china-covid-19-nanjing-outbreak-cases-surge/100366712>

Covid-19: 80% of patients not vaccinated, says chief scientist

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An unvaccinated father-of-three who spent four days on a ventilator fighting Covid-19 has said he has "no doubt" a vaccine would have helped him. Gerald Prentice, 40, was discharged from Antrim Area Hospital last week. He said he is not an "anti-vaxxer" but had wanted to obtain more information. Northern Ireland's chief scientific adviser has said about 80% of Covid-19 patients aged under 60 in hospitals have not been vaccinated. Prof Ian Young is encouraging the public to get a jab for Covid-19 as soon as possible.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-58157207>

France's Martinique island imposes tougher COVID-19 lockdown

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France's overseas territory of Martinique will enter a tougher lockdown for three weeks from Tuesday to tackle a COVID-19 outbreak on the West Indian island, a local government official said on Twitter. Authorities in Martinique also advised tourists to leave the island. Martinique had already

imposed an evening curfew but the tougher lockdown, set to start from 7 p.m., will shutter shops selling items that are not essential, close beaches and clamp down on people's movements.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-france-martinique-idUSL1N2PH0EV>

Parts of Southeast Asia still in the heat of Delta battles

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Parts of Southeast Asia are still grappling with high COVID-19 activity, with Thailand today reporting a record daily high for deaths and Vietnam still reporting high daily totals. In other developments, initial findings on booster doses from Israel suggest side effects are similar to what people experience after the second dose.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/08/parts-southeast-asia-still-heat-delta-battles>