

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

10th Jan 2022

What we want to achieve

- We've found stories that come from only reliable sources. We're trying to create a disinformation bulwark, a wall built from accurate stories where journalists can see what is being said about Covid-19 around the world each day.
- We're trying to create trust. Hand-picking reliable sources means the reporting is varied enough to be useful in research terms, but not dictating what journalists should think in any fashion.
- This tool scoops up news via APIs, expert analysts read the text and editors point to the best stories for that day.
- We're maintaining independence, integrity and accuracy - in the hope of encouraging you to write the best stories possible
- If you want to get behind this newsletter in some fashion please get in touch at admin@nfind.uk

Lockdown Exit

COVID: Record number of children admitted to hospital in a single day

A record number of children in England were admitted to hospital with COVID on 3 January, according to government data. Some 157 children were admitted on the Bank Holiday Monday, 110 of whom were aged 5 or younger. The figure surpasses the previous record on 145 admissions on 28 December. In the last seven days, a total of 567 children have been admitted to hospital with COVID.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/covid-record-number-of-children-admitted-to-hospital-in-a-single-day-174113687.html>

Covid: Thousands protest in France against proposed new vaccine pass

French authorities say more than 105,000 people have taken part in protests across the country against the introduction of a new coronavirus pass. A new draft law would in effect ban unvaccinated people from public life. Demonstrators in the capital, Paris, held placards emblazoned with phrases like "no to vaccine passes". Interior Ministry officials said 34 people were arrested and some 10 police officers were injured after the protests turned violent in some places. The bill, which passed its first reading in the lower house of France's parliament on Thursday, would remove the option of showing a negative Covid-19 test to gain access to a host of public venues.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-59925408>

Chile to become first country in Latin America to offer fourth COVID shot

Chile will begin offering a fourth shot of the coronavirus vaccine next week to immunocompromised citizens, the government said on Thursday, the first country in Latin America and one of the first in the world to offer the extra dose. "Starting next Monday, January 10, we are going to start a new mass vaccination process with a fourth dose or a second booster dose," said Pinera in a press conference. Chile has one of the world's highest vaccination rates and has been hailed as a model for its response to the pandemic, having administered two doses to over 85% of the population. About 57% have received a third booster shot, according to Our World in Data.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/chile-become-first-country-latin-america-offer-fourth-covid-shot-2022-01-06/>

Omicron pushes U.S. COVID hospitalizations toward record high

COVID-19 hospitalizations in the United States are poised to hit a new high as early as Friday, according to a Reuters tally, surpassing the record set in January of last year as the highly contagious Omicron variant fuels a surge in the number of cases. Hospitalizations have increased steadily since late December as Omicron quickly overtook Delta as the dominant strain of the coronavirus in the United States, although experts say Omicron will likely prove less deadly than prior variants.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/cdc-chief-says-us-covid-cases-likely-have-not-yet-peaked-2022-01-07/>

Government 'failing' on classroom ventilation as thousands will not get air purifiers

The government's plan to provide 7,000 air purifiers to schools falls thousands short of what is needed to ensure adequate ventilation in every classroom, according to a survey of teachers. The Department for Education said ventilation in classrooms was key to reducing the spread of Covid-19 among schoolchildren but many teachers report that they have been left unable to even monitor the quality of their air. Labour said the government was providing "just a fraction" of the ventilation support that schools need. A survey of nearly 2,000 teachers by Nasuwt, the teachers' union, found that more than half (56 per cent) did not have access to a CO2 monitor despite a commitment by ministers to provide all schools and colleges with them at the start of the school year.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/covid-school-rules-classroom-purifiers-b1988369.html>

Biden, in Shift, Prepares Americans to See Covid-19 as Part of Life

As Covid-19 cases climb across the U.S., President Biden and his administration are preparing Americans to accept the virus as a part of daily life, in a break from a year ago when he took office with a pledge to rein in the pandemic and months later said the nation was "closer than ever to declaring our independence from a deadly virus." The recalibration of Mr. Biden's message comes as the country braces for another round of disruptions wrought by the pandemic. A growing number of schools temporarily have returned to virtual instruction and many businesses are strained by staffing shortages, in both cases due to infections triggered by the highly transmissible Omicron variant. Thursday marked the 12th straight day of more than 1,000 flight cancellations, and many states warned that ongoing testing shortages will make it harder to return people to work and school.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-in-shift-prepares-americans-to-see-covid-19-as-part-of-life-11641465004>

Work-From-Home Access Is Skewed Across U.S. Race, Education Gap

Remote work is here to stay and newly released U.S. government data show how much it could exacerbate inequalities. The ability to telework differed sharply by race and by level of education in a Bureau of Labor Statistics survey of workers in their late 30s and early 40s. Almost half of White respondents worked from home at least part-time during the February 2021 through May 2021 survey period, compared with 38% of Black workers.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-06/work-from-home-access-is-skewed-across-u-s-race-education-gap>

Record numbers of NHS staff quit as frontline medics battle Covid pandemic trauma

More than 27,000 people voluntarily resigned from the NHS from July to September last year, the highest number on record. NHS medics have been quitting in record numbers as staff warned of burnout among an overwhelmed workforce. One worker revealed he battled PTSD and had to quit as an intensive care nurse last year after the trauma of working on Covid wards, with others left in tears due to the strains of the job. Meanwhile, NHS Million, a campaigning website that supports NHS staff said it is receiving a "constant flood" of "disturbing" messages from workers who have spent almost two years working during the pandemic.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/health/nhs-staff-quit-record-numbers-ptsd-covid-pandemic-trauma-1387115>

Canada warns provinces they need to do more to fight Omicron variant

Canadian Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos on Friday warned some of the country's 10 provinces that they needed to do more to fight the Omicron coronavirus variant and prevent healthcare systems from being swamped. New daily cases of COVID-19 soared by 65% in the last week across Canada, and hospitals say it is becoming increasingly hard to maintain staffing levels. Duclos said provinces should pay attention to Ontario and Quebec, which together account for around 61% of Canada's population of 38.4 million. Both have reimposed severe restrictions on businesses and gatherings.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/canada-warns-provinces-they-need-do-more-fight-omicron-variant-2022-01-07/>

Omicron Study in South Africa Points to End of Acute Pandemic Phase

A South African study from the epicenter of the world's omicron surge offers a tantalizing hint that the acute phase of the Covid-19 pandemic may be ending. The infection wave moved with "unprecedented speed" and caused much milder illness than earlier strains, a study of patients infected with Covid-19 at a large hospital in the South African city where the first outbreak of the omicron variant was recorded showed. "If this pattern continues and is repeated globally, we are likely to see a complete decoupling of case and death rates," the researchers said. That suggests "omicron may be a harbinger of the end of the epidemic phase of the Covid pandemic, ushering in its endemic phase." The study at the Steve Biko Academic Hospital Complex analyzed records of 466 patients from the current wave and 3,976 from previous bouts of infection. Researchers that worked on it included Fareed Abdullah, a director at the council and an infectious disease doctor at the hospital.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-07/omicron-may-mark-end-of-pandemic-south-african-researchers-say?srnd=premium-europe>

Hong Kong Faces Worst of Both Worlds as Omicron Ruins Covid Zero

Hong Kong is at a Covid-19 tipping point. The once-vibrant gateway to China sacrificed its status as an international hub to "Covid Zero," its strategy for eliminating the virus by isolating itself from a world awash in the pathogen. It worked for nearly a year, keeping residents safe and largely unfettered while raising the tantalizing possibility of reopening the border with China, the city's economic lifeblood. Now it's living with the worst of both worlds, after a couple of imported infections caused by the highly transmissible omicron variant started spreading in the under-vaccinated city, triggering renewed curbs. Residents can no longer go to the gym or the cinema, and the once-ubiquitous banquets where people gathered to celebrate the Chinese New Year were cancelled for another year.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-07/hong-kong-faces-worst-of-both-worlds-as-omicron-ruins-covid-zero>

U.S. Investors Will Return to the Office, but Probably in London

Even as the Omicron strain forces London's white-collar workers to do their job from home, U.S. investors are eyeing the U.K. capital's offices. Returns are better than other European hubs, but maybe not for long. North Americans were the biggest purchasers of London offices in the fourth quarter of 2021, accounting for 39% of deals by value overall and 56% within the City of London district, based on data from real-estate firm Knight Frank. Typically, they make around one in five purchases. The numbers may be skewed by the fact that Asian buyers, who usually dominate London deals, face travel restrictions. But higher returns on the city's offices are also becoming a draw. Average rent yields on the best properties are around 4%, while in Paris and Berlin they are below 3%.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-investors-will-return-to-the-office-but-probably-in-london-11641475158>

Exit Strategies

Spain's 14-day COVID-19 rate rises to 2722 per 100000

Spain's 14-day COVID-19 infection rate rose by 148 points to 2,722.72 cases per 100,000 people, the health ministry said on Friday, compared to 2,574.46 on Wednesday when the last figures were released before a public holiday on Thursday. The number of cases of coronavirus rose by 242,440 on Friday compared with Wednesday. The percentage of hospital beds occupied by patients with coronavirus was 11.79% on Friday, compared to an earlier wave of the pandemic last year when 24% of hospital beds were occupied by people with COVID-19 on Jan.28.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spains-14-day-covid-19-rate-rises-2722-per-100000-2022-01-07/>

Austrian Chancellor Nehammer Tests Positive for Covid

Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer tested positive for Covid-19 on Friday and is in quarantine, the latest victim of a new wave of infections brought about by the omikron variant. The chancellor announced via Twitter that a member of his security team was responsible for the transmission. He'll continue carrying out government duties remotely via through video links, he said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-07/austrian-chancellor-nehammer-tests-positive-for-covid>

U.S. health agency may be unprepared to take over COVID vaccine program

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) appears unprepared to assume full responsibility for the nation's COVID-19 vaccine program, including activities currently managed by the Pentagon, according to a draft government watchdog report reviewed by Reuters. The report cites a failure to ensure HHS has enough staff or a clear timeline for taking over those additional responsibilities. The COVID-19 vaccine program, dubbed "Operation Warp Speed," by the Trump administration in May 2020, involved hundreds of officials from multiple agencies.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/exclusive-congressional-watchdog-warns-us-health-agency-unprepared-take-over-2022-01-07/>

CDC doesn't yet see signal Omicron variant more severe in young kids

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has not yet seen a signal that the Omicron variant of COVID-19 is more severe in young children despite an increase of the hospitalizations, the agency's director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said at a press conference on Friday. "We have not yet seen a signal that there is any increased severity" in kids under 5, who are not yet eligible for vaccination, Walensky said. She said that an increase in cases in general could be one explanation for the surge in hospitalizations.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/cdc-doesnt-yet-see-signal-omicron-variant-more-severe-young-kids-2022-01-07/>

Germany tightens dining rules due to Omicron, loosens quarantine

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and regional leaders tightened the rules for restaurant and bar visits but shortened COVID-19 quarantine periods on Friday in response to the Omicron variant. Scholz added that all 16 state leaders supported the implementation of a general vaccination mandate and that the Bundestag lower house of parliament would discuss drafts of it soon. Under new measures decided on Friday, people in Germany who have received a booster shot will not have to isolate after being in contact with someone who was infected with the coronavirus.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-leaders-agree-new-restrictions-stem-omicron-variant-2022-01-07/>

'Crisis actor' conspiracy theory: How anti-vax activists targeted a Covid patient

A man was targeted with hundreds of abusive messages after being featured in a year-end BBC News report. The source? Anti-vaccine activists who falsely believed he was a so-called "crisis actor" pretending to be sick with Covid-19.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-59896688>

Covid absences put pressure on England's hospitals

Covid-related staff absences at hospitals in England have risen sharply since Omicron took hold last

month, latest figures show. The number of workers off sick for Covid reasons trebled from the beginning of December. The Royal College of Nursing said growing absences meant the situation was "simply not safe." NHS national medical director Professor Stephen Powis said staff were under pressure but were "stepping up". Downing Street said Boris Johnson saw no need for further restrictions despite the staff absences, as England's current measures were "balanced and proportionate". Earlier this week, the prime minister said he hoped England could "ride out" the Omicron wave without more restrictions.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-59910495>

Some Families Shell Out for Covid-19 Tests as Officials Race to Offer More

Some families say they are spending hundreds of dollars on Covid-19 testing during the surge in cases across the country, as efforts by the Biden administration and local officials to distribute free tests lag behind the Omicron variant's rapid spread. Facing hourslong lines at free testing sites, some people have turned to companies that sell more-convenient laboratory testing options, in some cases at prices of more than \$200. And until the Biden administration begins making free Covid-19 testing more widely available, some people say they will continue to pay \$20 or more for over-the-counter, at-home tests. The tab for using over-the-counter rapid tests effectively, with tests over many days, can stretch past \$100, creating a disincentive for people to test, public-health and policy experts say.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/some-families-shell-out-for-covid-19-tests-as-officials-race-to-offer-more-11641499169>

Hong Kong Suspends Officials, Isolates Some 170 Party Guests

Hong Kong authorities on Friday suspended several government officials from duty and will order about 170 people to be quarantined at a government facility after they attended a birthday party where two guests later tested positive for the coronavirus. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said in a statement late Friday that the officials who were at the party and who are subject to quarantine would be suspended from their duties and must use their vacation days while they are isolated for 21 days. Fears of a new virus cluster were sparked when a second guest at the Jan. 3 party preliminarily tested positive. On Friday, health authorities said all party guests would be classified as close contacts and be sent to mandatory quarantine if the second guest was confirmed as a positive case.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-07/hong-kong-orders-about-170-party-goers-to-quarantine>

French schools "overwhelmed" by COVID-19 and contact tracing

Less than a week has gone by since French schools reopened after Christmas, but at the Jean Renoir high school in Boulogne-Billancourt, just outside of Paris, one in four teachers and nearly 50 pupils are already sick with COVID-19. With new testing and contact tracing rules introduced at the start of this term, the headteacher, Aristide Adeikalam, now faces a huge challenge. "It's very, very, very complicated," Adeikalam said, his glasses fogging up because of his facemask.

[reuters.com/world/french-schools-overwhelmed-by-covid-19-contact-tracing-2022-01-07/](https://www.reuters.com/world/french-schools-overwhelmed-by-covid-19-contact-tracing-2022-01-07/)

Partisan Exits

Australia treasurer tests positive for COVID-19 as cases hit a record

Australian Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said he tested positive to COVID-19, joining other top government officials in contracting the disease as the daily infection rate surpassed 100,000 for the first time amid an outbreak of the Omicron variant. "Like thousands of Australians, I tested positive today to COVID-19," Frydenberg wrote in a short message which he posted to Twitter and Facebook late on Friday. "I have the common symptoms and am isolating with my family," he added without elaborating or disclosing which variant he had

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-treasurer-tests-positive-covid-19-cases-hit-record-2022-01-07/>

No need for a fourth Covid jab yet, say UK advisers

A fourth Covid jab is not yet needed, say UK experts, because booster doses continue to provide high protection against severe disease from the Omicron variant among older adults. UK Health Security Agency data shows three months after boosting, protection against hospitalisation remains at about 90% for people aged 65 and over. Protection against mild symptomatic infection is more short-lived. That drops to about 30% by about three months. Figures also show why it is important to get a booster dose if you have only had two doses so far.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-59915560>

COVID-19: Sajid Javid directly challenged on mandatory coronavirus jabs by unvaccinated NHS doctor

Health Secretary Sajid Javid has been directly challenged by an unvaccinated hospital consultant over the government's policy of compulsory COVID jabs for NHS staff. During a visit to King's College Hospital in south London, Mr Javid asked staff members on the intensive care unit about their thoughts on new rules requiring vaccination for NHS workers. And Steve James, a consultant anaesthetist who has been treating coronavirus patients since the start of the pandemic, told the health secretary about his displeasure. "I'm not happy about that," he said. "I had COVID at some point, I've got antibodies, and I've been working on COVID ICU since the beginning.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-sajid-javid-directly-challenged-on-mandatory-coronavirus-jabs-by-unvaccinated-nhs-doctor-12511224?s=09>

Supreme Court Justices Cast Doubt on Biden Workplace Vaccine Rule

The U.S. Supreme Court cast doubt on the linchpin of President Joe Biden's push to get more people vaccinated amid a Covid-19 surge, questioning whether the Occupational Safety and Health Administration had authority to require that 80 million workers get shots or regular tests. In a special argument session Friday, the court's conservative justices voiced skepticism about the rule, which business groups and Republican-led states say exceeds the workplace-safety agency's authority. The pandemic "sounds like the sort of thing that states will be responding to or should be, and that Congress should be responding to or should be, rather than agency by agency the federal government and the executive branch acting alone," Chief Justice John Roberts said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-07/high-court-justices-cast-doubt-on-biden-workplace-vaccine-rule>

Biden Says Covid Won't Be 'New Normal' But Virus Here to Stay

President Joe Biden said surging Covid-19 cases won't be the "new normal," though the virus is likely to endure and can be managed with newly developed tools. "Covid -- as we're dealing with it now -- is not here to stay," Biden said to reporters at the White House on Friday. "Having Covid in the environment here and in the world is probably here to stay." The president's remarks came after six of his former health advisers published articles saying the U.S. strategy to fight the pandemic needs to be overhauled and adjusted to the idea that living with the virus would become the "new normal."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-07/biden-says-covid-won-t-be-new-normal-but-virus-here-to-stay>

Macron Doubles Down on Plan to 'Piss Off' the Unvaccinated

President Emmanuel Macron on Friday stood by the uncompromising stance and combative language he directed earlier this week at France's unvaccinated citizens amid record numbers of new Covid-19 cases. Macron in a Tuesday interview with Le Parisien used salty language -- saying he wants to "p--- off" people refusing inoculation -- to express zero-tolerance for failing to get fully vaccinated. The government, he said, will keep up the pressure on the holdouts as a way to contain skyrocketing case counts. "You can get upset about ways of talking which may sound colloquial, for which I take full responsibility. But what upsets me is the situation in which we are in," Macron said

at a Friday news conference in Paris. "It was my responsibility to ring the alarm. That's what I did this week so that things will move faster."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-07/macron-sticks-to-his-p-off-attack-against-the-unvaccinated>

Brazil's Bolsonaro knocks vaccines for kids, criticizes health regulator

Article reports that President Jair Bolsonaro criticized Brazil's health regulator Anvisa on Thursday for authorizing the vaccination of children aged 5 to 11 years against COVID-19, one day after his health minister unveiled plans to inoculate that age group. Bolsonaro, who has bragged about not being vaccinated himself and has consistently cast doubt on the efficacy and safety of coronavirus vaccines, said in a radio interview that he had not heard of children dying of COVID-19 and repeated that his daughter Laura, 11, would not be vaccinated.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazils-bolsonaro-knocks-vaccinating-children-criticizes-health-regulator-2022-01-06/>

Smash and shout: Dutch find new ways to vent COVID-19 frustrations

One swinging a sledgehammer and the other a crowbar, twin brothers Steven and Brian Krijger grin as they take turns pulverising a Peugeot 106 spray-painted with the words "F*** COVID". They are participants in "CarSmash", a Dutch project aimed at providing locked-down locals with ways of releasing anger and frustration built up during a pandemic now entering its third year. Dutch bars, restaurants and most stores have been closed since mid-December, when curbs took effect that the government - battling to contain record numbers of coronavirus cases - is not due to review until Jan. 14.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/smash-shout-dutch-find-new-ways-vent-covid-19-frustrations-2022-01-06/>

Citigroup to enforce 'no-job, no-job' policy starting Jan. 14 - source

Citigroup Inc staff in the United States who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19 by Jan. 14 will be placed on unpaid leave and fired at the end of the month unless they are granted an exemption, according to a company memo seen by Reuters on Friday. The U.S. bank announced its plan to impose new vaccination rules in October and now becomes the first major Wall Street institution to follow through with a strict vaccine mandate.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/citi-terminate-employees-unvaccinated-jan-14-source-2022-01-07/>

The American Chess Star Caught in a Polish Covid Nightmare

U.S. grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura went to Warsaw hoping to capture a world championship. He caught Covid instead—and hasn't been able to figure out when he's allowed home.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/hikaru-nakamura-covid-blitz-chess-championship-twitch-11641301101>

Boris Johnson Calls Out U.K. Anti-Vaxxers 'Spouting Nonsense' Online

Boris Johnson slammed anti-vaxxers spreading "nonsense" about Covid-19 on the internet, a change in tone he said was driven by the "tragedy" that so many people admitted to U.K. hospitals are not vaccinated. "I want to say to the anti-vax campaigners, who are putting this mumbo jumbo on social media, they are completely wrong," Johnson told reporters at a vaccination center in the East Midlands on Thursday. "And you haven't heard me say that before, because I want a voluntary approach." While the U.K. has one of the highest levels of vaccinations in Europe -- 60% have had a third booster dose -- a small and vocal minority has consistently campaigned against vaccination. Johnson said 30-40% of patients coming into hospital with Covid-19 haven't had any vaccine doses.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-06/johnson-calls-out-u-k-anti-vaxxers-spouting-nonsense-online>

Scientific Viewpoint

COVID-19 infections in children may increase their risk of diabetes: CDC

Children who have had COVID-19 seem to be at increased risk of developing Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released Friday.

Past studies show increased risk in developing diabetes as an adult after recovering from COVID-19. Research in Europe also found a higher rate of diabetes diagnoses among children since the beginning of the pandemic. The study examined two large insurance claim databases across the United States to document the number of diabetes diagnoses among children under 18 who had previously been diagnosed with COVID-19. These children were compared with those who had never been diagnosed with COVID-19.

<https://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news-other-healthcare/588857-covid-19-infections-in-children-may-increase>

Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine protects children against rare COVID-19 complication - CDC

Two doses of the Pfizer Inc and BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine are highly protective against a rare but often serious condition in children that causes organ inflammation weeks after COVID-19 infections, a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report said on Friday. The vaccine was estimated to be 91% effective in preventing Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) in 12- to 18-year-olds, the study said. MIS-C causes inflammation in children in organs including the heart, lungs, kidneys and brain two to six weeks after a mild or asymptomatic infection. The estimate is based on the assessment of 283 hospitalized patients aged 12-18 years at 24 children's hospitals in 20 states between July and early December, when the prevalence of the Delta coronavirus variant was high.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/pfizerbiontech-vaccine-protects-children-against-rare-covid-19-complication-cdc/ar-AASy3Zf>

CDC reports record number of child COVID-19 hospitalizations

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Walensky reported Friday that there have been a record number of pediatric hospitalizations due to COVID-19 and announced new isolation guidelines for students, staff and teachers to preserve in-person learning in schools. During a media briefing, Walensky cautioned that pediatric hospitalizations are at the highest point they have ever been during the pandemic, even though they are much lower when compared to adults. She said it's still not clear if the increase is due to a greater burden of disease in children's communities or their lower rates of vaccination. The increase was seen most in children younger than 4, who are ineligible for vaccination, and the data include those admitted to hospitals for reasons other than COVID-19 who then tested positive.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/588768-cdc-director-updates-isolation-guidance-in-effort-to-keep-schools-open>

Study: COVID-19 vaccination may cause temporary, slight change to menstrual cycle

COVID-19 vaccination may cause a temporary change to a person's menstrual cycle, but it appears to be a "small change," according to a study published on Thursday. The study, published in the *Obstetrics and Gynecology* journal, examined close to 4,000 people — vaccinated and unvaccinated — and examined menstruation data that individuals entered through an app called Natural Cycles. Researchers then examined the difference between menstruation data before and after individuals received their vaccine doses. For individuals who did not receive the vaccine, researchers looked at six consecutive menstruation cycles. The researchers found that in vaccinated individuals, bleeding was prolonged by a time that amounted to less than one day. However, they concluded that this slight change, while statistically significant, was not clinically significant.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/588858-study-covid-19-vaccination-may-cause-temporary-change-to-menstrual-cycle>

Omicron Study in South Africa Points to End of Acute Pandemic Phase

A South African study from the epicenter of the world's omicron surge offers a tantalizing hint that the acute phase of the Covid-19 pandemic may be ending. The infection wave moved with "unprecedented speed" and caused much milder illness than earlier strains, a study of patients

infected with Covid-19 at a large hospital in the South African city where the first outbreak of the omicron variant was recorded showed. "If this pattern continues and is repeated globally, we are likely to see a complete decoupling of case and death rates," the researchers said. That suggests "omicron may be a harbinger of the end of the epidemic phase of the Covid pandemic, ushering in its endemic phase."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-07/omicron-may-mark-end-of-pandemic-south-african-researchers-say>

Moderna CEO expects a second COVID booster will be needed later this year

Moderna Inc.'s CEO expects fully vaccinated people to need an additional COVID-19 booster shot later this year, as the efficacy of the first booster wanes over time. Speaking Thursday at a virtual conference of health-care CEOs held by Goldman Sachs Group Inc., Moderna MRNA, Chief Executive Stephane Bancel said the current booster should be enough to protect people through the winter omicron surge. However, "I will be surprised when we get that data in the coming weeks that it's holding nicely over time — I would expect that it's not gonna hold great," Bancel said in reference to the booster's strength. "I still believe we're going to need boosters in the fall of '22 and forward." "We have been saying that we believe first this virus is not going away," Bancel said. "We're going to have to live with it." Bancel said the United Kingdom and South Korea have already submitted orders for a second round of boosters.

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/moderna-ceo-expects-a-second-covid-booster-will-be-needed-later-this-year-11641516954>

Moderna CEO warns Americans they may need ANOTHER COVID booster in the fall because the shot's effectiveness won't 'hold great' after a few months

Stephane Bancel, the CEO of Moderna, spoke on Thursday at a Goldman Sachs conference of healthcare professionals. Bancel said he expects a second booster shot will be necessary in the fall, as the data from the first boosters is not expected to be strong. Only around a third of Americans have had their booster shot and convincing a COVID-weary population to get a fourth jab is likely to be a struggle Britain and South Korea have already placed orders for a fourth jab, Bancel said His comments echo those of Pfizer's CEO, who said he too expects a fourth jab to be necessary

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10377093/Moderna-CEO-Bancel-says-people-need-booster-fall-2022.html?ito=social-twitter_mailonline

Rapid nose swab tests for COVID may not detect Omicron quickly enough -expert says

Swabbing the nose with a rapid antigen test will not reliably detect the Omicron variant in the first few days of an infection, so manufacturers should seek U.S. approval to allow users to safely collect samples from the throat as well, according to an infectious diseases expert. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has expressed concerns over the safety of self throat swabbing. People can already transmit Omicron to others when it has infected their throat and saliva but before the virus reaches their nose, so swabbing the nostrils too early in the course of infection will not pick it up, Dr. Michael Mina, formerly of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and now chief science officer at eMed, said during a news conference on Thursday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/rapid-nose-swab-tests-covid-may-not-detect-omicron-quickly-enough-expert-says-2022-01-07/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

HUNDREDS of cars wait for up to three hours for covid tests in Arizona

Arizona citizens are waiting in three or more hour lines for COVID-19 testing. Nearly three in 10 tests are coming back positive statewide this wide, a pandemic high. Before, it has never reached over 20 per cent . Lines are so long that some citizens cannot access their neighborhoods and are being told to find other testing sites

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10380775/HUNDREDS-cars-wait-three-hours-covid-tests-Arizona.html>

Mexico nears 300,000 deaths from COVID-19 as cases surge after holidays

Mexico is likely to surpass 300,000 deaths from COVID-19 this week - the fifth highest death toll worldwide - as infections rise after the holiday season, fueled by the Omicron coronavirus variant and largely unrestricted tourism.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/mexico-nears-300000-deaths-covid-19-cases-surge-after-holidays-2022-01-06/>

India's COVID-19 cases set for new highs as Omicron spreads

India's daily COVID-19 cases jumped to 117,100 on Friday, a five-fold increase in a week and on course to overtake its previous infection peak as the fast-spreading Omicron variant replaces Delta in cities. Government officials have privately said they are working under the assumption that daily infections will surpass the record of more than 414,000 set in May, given what has happened in countries, such as the United States where daily cases have risen past 1 million.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-new-covid-19-cases-hit-seven-month-high-117100-2022-01-07/>

Italy reports 223 COVID-19 deaths, cases halve due to fewer tests

Italy reported 108,304 COVID-19 related cases on Friday, less than half from a day earlier, the health ministry said, reflecting fewer tests being carried out on a national holiday. The number of deaths rose to 223 from 198. On Thursday, Italy's coronavirus cases had reached a new daily record of 219,441. Italy has registered 138,697 deaths linked to COVID-19 since its outbreak emerged in February 2020, the second highest toll in Europe after Britain and the ninth highest in the world. The country has reported 7.08 million cases to date.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/italy-reports-223-covid-19-deaths-cases-halve-due-fewer-tests-2022-01-07/>

Sweden COVID cases hit new record, pile pressure on healthcare

Sweden set a new daily record for COVID-19 cases for the third time this week, registering 23,877 cases on Jan. 5, health agency data showed on Friday, as a fourth wave swept the country and piled pressure on its healthcare system. The mounting wave of COVID-19 cases is increasingly driven by the more contagious Omicron variant and has seen hospitalisations rise rapidly in many parts of the country, although deaths have remained relatively stable so far.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/sweden-sets-daily-covid-case-record-third-time-this-week-2022-01-07/>

Argentina Reports Record Covid Cases for Third Straight Day

Argentina posted a record number of Covid-19 cases for a third consecutive day as the Omicron variant surges across Latin America. Argentina's health ministry reported 109,608 cases on Thursday, more than double the number of infections seen on Dec. 31. Yet the death toll as well as hospital occupancy remained relatively low: 40 people died of the virus and only 38% of intensive-care units were taken -- about half the peak level seen last year for ICUs.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-06/argentina-reports-record-covid-cases-for-third-straight-day>

COVID-19: Military medics drafted into London hospitals as NHS grapples with staff shortages

The Royal College of Nursing says the deployment means the government can no longer deny there is a "staffing crisis" within the NHS. Two major incidents have been declared in England because of pressures caused by the spread of COVID-19 - after the Ministry of Defence said Armed Forces personnel would be deployed in London to help in hospitals. Some 200 Armed Forces personnel are being sent to support the NHS in London as hospitals grapple with staff shortages. Military medics will assist NHS doctors and nurses with patient care, while general duty personnel will help fill gaps caused by other absences. And now two major incidents have been declared in England with emergency services saying there is a civil emergency in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-military-medics-drafted-into-london-hospitals-as-nhs-grapples-with-staff-shortages-12510601>

Omicron surge pushes U.S. COVID hospitalizations toward record high

COVID-19 hospitalizations in the United States are poised to hit a new high as early as Friday, according to a Reuters tally, surpassing the record set in January of last year as the highly contagious Omicron variant fuels a surge in infections.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/omicron-pushes-us-covid-hospitalizations-toward-record-high-2022-01-07/>

Brazil reports rise in new COVID-19 infections as Omicron variant spreads

Brazil has had 63,292 new cases of the coronavirus reported in the past 24 hours, and 181 deaths from COVID-19, the health ministry said on Friday. That is the highest number of daily infections since July last year. Health experts say the Omicron variant is spreading in the South American country. Brazil has now registered 22,450,222 cases since the pandemic began, while the official death toll has risen to 619,822, according to ministry data. Brazil's COVID-19 death toll trails only the United States and Russia, according to Reuters calculations.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-reports-rise-new-covid-19-infections-omicron-variant-spreads-2022-01-07/>