

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

25th Feb 2022

Lockdown Exit

Analysis: China steps in to steer Hong Kong's COVID crisis as risks loom

As COVID-19 rages across Hong Kong at the start of a sensitive political year for China and President Xi Jinping, Beijing is determined not to be embarrassed and undermined as it was by the often-violent protests that rocked the city in 2019. In the past week, since Xi told the city its "overriding mission" was to control the worsening crisis, Hong Kong has stepped up anti-COVID measures, including plans for mass testing buttressed by equipment, testing vehicles and personnel from the mainland. Foremost for Beijing, some advisers to China's government say, is a fear that, unless Hong Kong contains the virus and prevents a lot of people from suffering, the city could see a return to the instability of 2019 when anti-government protests posed a major crisis for Xi..

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-steps-steer-hong-kongs-covid-crisis-risks-loom-2022-02-24/>

EMA backs Pfizer COVID booster for teens, Moderna shot for ages 6-11

The European Union's health regulator on Thursday backed giving a booster shot of Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine to adolescents aged 12 and over, as well as the expanded use of Moderna's shot in children ages six to 11. The recommendations by the European Medicine Agency's (EMA) Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use will be followed by final decisions by the European Commission. The moves come after several EU countries already started to offer booster doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine to teens.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/ema-recommends-approval-pfizers-covid-vaccine-12-over-2022-02-24/>

Serco prepares for life after Covid-19 as NHS Test and Trace winds down

Serco is preparing to live with Covid-19. CEO Rupert Soames said today that around £60 million of profit linked to Covid-19 contracts is likely to disappear this year as governments around the world roll back controls. The UK government this week announced an end to free testing and contact tracing. Outsourcer Serco has been a major beneficiary of the billions spent on NHS Test and Trace, a programme dubbed "muddled, overstated, [and] eye-wateringly expensive" by MPs last year.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/business/serco-covid19-nhs-test-and-trace-rupert-soames-b984390.html>

COVID-19: All remaining coronavirus restrictions lifted in England

People in England who test positive for COVID are no longer legally required to self-isolate. From today, all remaining restrictions have been replaced by the government's "living with COVID plan". This comes just days after guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice weekly asymptomatic testing was scrapped.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-all-remaining-coronavirus-restrictions-lifted-in-england-12549571>

Colombia will not require face masks outdoors in areas with 70% COVID vaccination

Colombia's government will no longer require the use of face masks outdoors in areas where more than 70% of the population has been vaccinated against COVID-19, President Ivan Duque said. The move is a further softening of measures adopted by the country to curb the spread of the coronavirus, as well as an incentive for people to get vaccinated. Colombia is aiming to vaccinate at least 80% of its 50 million inhabitants

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/colombia-will-not-require-face-masks-outdoors-areas-with-70-covid-vaccinated-2022-02-23/>

Japan to accept J&J COVID vaccine for border entry next month

Japan said on Thursday international travellers showing proof of a COVID-19 vaccination with the Johnson & Johnson shot would be allowed in and be eligible for a shorter time in quarantine when border controls are eased next month. The J&J shot, which has not been approved in Japan, will join a list of three other shots that have been approved by regulators as sufficient for non-residents to enter, after a nearly two-year ban on such travellers.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-accept-jj-covid-vaccine-border-entry-next-month-2022-02-24/>

Exit Strategies

Swiss to donate up to 15 million COVID-19 vaccine doses

Switzerland will donate up to 15 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to other countries by the middle of this year, having secured more than enough to cover its own population of around 8.7 million, the government said on Wednesday. Around 34 million doses of vaccine will be available to Switzerland in 2022 - 20 million in the first half of the year and 14 million in the second, the cabinet said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/swiss-donate-up-15-million-covid-19-vaccine-doses-2022-02-23/>

Google drops coronavirus vaccine requirement for US office workers

In a major update to Covid-19 protocols, Google will no longer mandate vaccines as a condition of employment for US workers. "Based on current conditions in the Bay Area, we're pleased that our employees who choose to come in now have the ability to access more onsite spaces and services to work and connect with colleagues," a Google spokesperson said in a statement to CNET. "We are giving employees who welcome the chance to come into the office the option to do that wherever we safely can, while allowing those who aren't ready to keep working from home."

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/google-drops-coronavirus-vaccine-requirement-for-us-office-workers-122022400485_1.html

Japan to accept J&J COVID vaccine for border entry next month

Japan said on Thursday international travellers showing proof of a COVID-19 vaccination with the Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N) shot would be allowed in and be eligible for a shorter time in quarantine when border controls are eased next month. The J&J shot, which has not been approved in Japan, will join a list of three other shots that have been approved by regulators as sufficient for non-residents to enter, after a nearly two-year ban on such travellers.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-accept-jj-covid-vaccine-border-entry-next-month-2022-02-24/>

Italy will exit COVID state of emergency on March 31, Draghi says

The Italian government will end the COVID-19 state of emergency on March 31, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi said on Wednesday, promising a gradual return to normal after more than two years of the health crisis. Coronavirus cases and deaths have receded in recent weeks and the government has come under pressure from businesses and some political parties to roll back the restrictions that have been progressively introduced since early 2020.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/italy-will-exit-covid-state-emergency-end-march-draghi-says-2022-02-23/>

Singapore Halts Easing of Virus Restrictions as Covid Cases Surge

Singapore will push back plans to ease limits on home gatherings and other pandemic curbs as a resurgent Covid-19 outbreak tests the country's pivot to living with the virus. The plans to ease and simplify some virus rules in phases, originally due to happen on Feb. 25 and March 4, will be delayed, according to a statement from the Ministry of Health on Thursday. This is because of the

current surge in daily cases and the extensive work needed to go through detailed rules that have accumulated across different settings over the past two years, it said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-24/singapore-says-planned-easing-of-some-virus-curbs-to-be-delayed>

Africa CDC Urges Vaccine Donors to Stagger Deliveries of Shots

The African Union's public health agency urged Covid-19 vaccine donors to help ensure that the distribution of shots is aligned with take-up so that all of them are used. "We have not asked them to pause the donations, but to coordinate with us so that the new donations arrive in a way so that countries can use them," John Nkengasong, director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, said in a webinar Thursday. "This is very different from saying don't donate at all."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-24/africa-cdc-urges-vaccine-donors-to-stagger-deliveries-of-shots>

Moderna Beats Profit Estimates, Fueled by Covid-19 Vaccine Sales

Moderna Inc. posted better-than-expected profits for the last three months of 2021 as the company's Covid-19 vaccine continued to power its year-over-year growth, while executives mulled plans to roll out an additional booster shot. In the latest quarter, Moderna's revenue reached \$7.21 billion, with nearly all of that coming from vaccine sales. The Cambridge, Mass., company said it distributed a total of 807 million doses of the vaccine, Spikevax, last year. For all of 2021, Moderna posted revenue of \$18.5 billion, nearly all of it from Covid-19 vaccine sales. That figure could rise this year: The company said it has signed advanced purchase agreements from national governments to supply \$19 billion worth of vaccines for full-year 2022, with options for more.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/moderna-beats-profit-estimates-fueled-by-vaccine-sales-11645707646>

US vaccination drive is bottoming out as omicron subsides

The vaccination drive in the U.S. is grinding to a halt, and demand has all but collapsed in places like this deeply conservative manufacturing town where many weren't interested in the shots to begin with. The average number of Americans getting their first shot is down to about 90,000 a day, the lowest point since the first few days of the U.S. vaccination campaign, in December 2020. And hopes of any substantial improvement in the immediate future have largely evaporated. About 76% of the U.S. population has received at least one shot. Less than 65% of all Americans are fully vaccinated.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-us-news-alabama-4c0026679a346ea83a6a04f475a518ef>

Partisan Exits

Most women still shunning Covid-19 vaccines in pregnancy, research shows

Most women are still shunning Covid-19 vaccines in pregnancy despite an increased chance of stillbirth, premature birth and risks to their own health, analysis shows. Data from the Nuffield Department of Population Health at the University of Oxford shows 73% of Asian women, 86% of black women and 65% of white women were unvaccinated at the time of giving birth in October 2021. The charity Wellbeing of Women, which funded the study with the National Institute for Health Research, called for "urgent action" to address "stark racial and social inequalities" among pregnant women. The study found that severe Covid-19 infection in pregnant women, particularly in the third trimester, significantly increased the risk of giving birth early, having an induction or a Caesarean, having a stillborn baby or a baby that needed intensive care.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/most-women-still-shunning-covid-19-vaccines-in-pregnancy-research-shows-41379048.html>

Anti-Covid vaccine mandate protesters chase New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern outside school

A group of shouting protesters have chased the New Zealand prime minister's van down a driveway as she visited a Christchurch primary school, amid tensions over increasingly volatile anti-vaccine

mandate protests. Jacinda Ardern, who was visiting a primary school in Christchurch, was met by a crowd of people shouting “shame on you” and “traitor”. Some held signs saying that the prime minister would be “put on trial” and “held responsible”, and one man brandished a fabricated arrest warrant – references to conspiracy theories that a cohort of world leaders and powerful people are secretly using vaccines to commit a genocide, and would soon be put on trial and hanged for treason. Police officers formed a barrier to allow the prime minister to pass through.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/24/anti-covid-vaccine-mandate-protesters-chase-new-zealands-jacinda-ardern-outside-school>

COVID surges in New Zealand, protesters against mandates chase away Ardern

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was rushed out of a school event in Christchurch on Thursday after protesters opposed to COVID restrictive measures thronged the venue and chased her car, while daily infection numbers hit record levels. New Zealand reported over 6,000 new cases of COVID-19, with 250 hospitalisations, and the government expects the outbreak to peak in mid-March. Having been lauded earlier for her success in keeping the country COVID-free, Ardern has been fiercely criticised recently for the slow unlocking of restrictive measures.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/covid-surges-new-zealand-protesters-against-mandates-chase-away-ardern-2022-02-24/>

US truckers planning pandemic protest to begin heading to DC

Modelled after recent trucker protests in Canada, truck drivers in the United States are planning on setting off on a massive cross-country drive towards Washington, DC to protest against coronavirus restrictions. Organisers of the “People’s Convoy” say they want to “jumpstart the economy” and reopen the country. Their 11-day trek that is estimated to be 4,000km (2,500 miles) long will approach the Beltway – which encircles the US capital – on March 5 “but will not be going into DC proper”, according to a statement. Separate truck convoys have been planned through online forums with names like the People’s Convoy and the American Truckers Freedom Fund – all with different starting points, departure dates and routes. Some are scheduled to arrive in time for President Joe Biden’s State of the Union address on March 1, though others may arrive afterwards.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/23/us-anti-covid-truckers-peoples-convoy-to-begin-heading-to-dc>

Continued Lockdown

Hong Kong domestic workers left homeless after being fired for contracting Covid-19

Live-in domestic workers in Hong Kong have been left homeless after they were diagnosed with Covid-19 and their employers fired them or refused their return to the residence, support groups have said. Many of the workers, who are mostly women from Indonesia and the Philippines, were also left without insurance to cover their medical bills. Hong Kong is in the midst of its worst ever outbreak with the Omicron variant infecting thousands of people a day, overwhelming hospitals and government isolation facilities.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/24/hong-kong-domestic-workers-left-homeless-after-being-fired-for-contracting-covid-19>

Analysis: China steps in to steer Hong Kong's COVID crisis as risks loom

As COVID-19 rages across Hong Kong at the start of a sensitive political year for China and President Xi Jinping, Beijing is determined not to be embarrassed and undermined as it was by the often-violent protests that rocked the city in 2019. In the past week, since Xi told the city its “overriding mission” was to control the worsening crisis, Hong Kong has stepped up anti-COVID measures, including plans for mass testing buttressed by equipment, testing vehicles and personnel from the mainland.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-steps-steer-hong-kongs-covid-crisis-risks-loom-2022-02-24/>

Hong Kong rolls out vaccine passport and tighter COVID measures

Hong Kong rolls out a vaccine passport on Thursday that requires people aged 12 and above to have at least one COVID-19 vaccination and also tightened restrictions in a city that already has some of the most stringent rules in the world. Residents will have to show their vaccine record to access venues including supermarkets, malls and restaurants. They will also have to wear masks for all outdoor exercise and will not be allowed to remove masks to eat or drink on public transport

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-rolls-out-vaccine-passport-tighter-covid-measures-2022-02-24/>

Hong Kong turns to emergency powers for China help in COVID surge

Hong Kong has invoked emergency powers so that doctors and nurses from mainland China can join its efforts to fight what it said was a “dire epidemic situation” as the Omicron variant of the coronavirus sweeps across the densely-populated territory. Authorities on Thursday morning reported 8,674 new cases, nearly all of them locally acquired. “Hong Kong is now facing a very dire epidemic situation, which continues to deteriorate rapidly,” the government said in explaining its need for the emergency powers. The outbreak is expected to “continue to escalate exponentially and go beyond the epidemic control capacity” of the territory’s administration, meaning “Hong Kong’s healthcare system, manpower, anti-epidemic facilities and resources, etc will soon be insufficient to handle the huge number of newly confirmed cases detected every day”. The Chinese territory is one of the world’s most densely-populated places with many families living in tiny high-rise apartments that make it impossible for people to isolate themselves. It has been hit hard by the Omicron wave, which slipped through the defences of its stringent quarantines and contact tracing that had kept the virus at bay since the pandemic began two years ago.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/24/hong-kong-china-help-covid-surge>

Scientific Viewpoint

ConserV Bioscience pan-coronavirus project has been awarded UK Aid funding by the UK Vaccine Network, delivered by Innovate UK

ConserV Bioscience Limited (“ConserV”), a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on developing vaccines that protect against endemic and emergent infectious diseases, has been awarded UK Aid funding to advance development of its pan-coronavirus vaccine candidate, UNICOR-v. The project was selected by the UK Vaccine Network (UKVN) for the award under the competition “Vaccines for epidemic diseases: Readiness for clinical development and regulatory submission.” This is one of twenty-two projects funded by the Department of Health and Social Care as part of the UKVN, a UK Aid programme to develop vaccines for diseases with epidemic potential in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). ConserV specialises in identifying broadly protective antigens for highly mutable viruses. The grant will fund preclinical development of an intra-dermal formulation of UNICOR-v, which consists of twelve antigens from conserved regions of internal viral proteins that include clusters of reactive T-cell epitopes for multiple human leukocyte antigens (HLAs)

[2-02-24/conserv-bioscience-pan-coronavirus-project-has-been-awarded-uk-aid-funding-by-the-uk-vaccine-network-delivered-by-innovate-uk](https://www.innovateuk.com/news/2022-02-24/conserv-bioscience-pan-coronavirus-project-has-been-awarded-uk-aid-funding-by-the-uk-vaccine-network-delivered-by-innovate-uk)

Time between Pfizer and Moderna Covid-19 vaccines can be up to 8 weeks for some people, updated CDC guidance says

The interval between first and second doses of the Pfizer and Moderna Covid-19 vaccines may be as long as eight weeks for certain people, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in vaccine guidance updated Tuesday.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/02/23/health/covid-vaccine-interval-cdc-guidance/index.html>

How Often Will We Need to Update COVID Vaccines?

Last June, as the Delta variant sat poised to take the globe by storm, Pfizer’s CEO, Albert Bourla, promised the world speed. Should an ultra-mutated version of SARS-CoV-2 sprout, he said, his

company could have a variant-specific shot ready for rollout in about 100 days—a pledge he echoed in November when Omicron reared its head. Now, with the 100-day finish line fast approaching and no clinical-trial data in sight, the company seems unlikely to meet its mark. (I asked Pfizer about this super-speedster timeline; “when we have the data analyzed, we will share an update,” the company responded.) Moderna, which started brewing up an Omicron vaccine around the same time, is eyeing late summer for its own debut. Not that an Omicron vaccine would necessarily make a huge difference, even if Pfizer had made good. In many parts of the world, the variant’s record-breaking wave is receding. Having a bespoke vaccine in 100 days would have been an unprecedented accomplishment, but Omicron was simply “too fast” for a cooked-to-order shot to beat it, says Soumya Swaminathan, the chief scientist at the World Health Organization.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2022/02/covid-vaccine-new-variants/622903/>

Fourth Sinopharm shot won’t boost protection against Omicron, study finds

Immunity wanes six months after three doses of the Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine are given, but a fourth shot will not provide more protection against the Omicron strain, a study has found. Researchers from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou said their study suggested that “urgent use” of inactivated vaccines – like the Sinopharm one – as a fourth booster shot against variants of concern such as Omicron was “feasible but not ideal”. Recombinant spike protein or mRNA vaccines based on the variants of concern would be good alternatives for a fourth booster, they said. The study suggested that immune response could not be endlessly boosted and there would be a “turning point” after repeated vaccination.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3168133/coronavirus-fourth-shot-sinopharm-vaccine-wont-boost-protection>

Covid-19: what’s the evidence for vaccinating kids?

When the announcement came last week that all children aged five to 11 in England will be offered a Covid vaccine, emphasis was placed on parental decision-making. But with factors to consider including disease severity, transmission, long Covid and vaccine side-effects, for many parents and guardians this may not be an easy choice. Ian Sample speaks to Prof Adam Finn about how the evidence stacks up, and what parents should be thinking about when deciding whether to vaccinate their five- to 11-year-olds against Covid-19

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2022/feb/24/covid-19-whats-the-evidence-for-vaccinating-kids>

Covid-19: Severe infection in pregnancy significantly increases risks, study shows

Severe covid-19 infection in pregnant women significantly increases the risk of harmful outcomes for mothers and babies, a study has found. The study, led by researchers at Oxford Population Health, examined data from the UK Obstetric Surveillance System,² which holds records for the 1.1 million women who gave birth in UK hospitals between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. Results, published in *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, show that in this period, 4436 pregnant women were admitted to hospital with confirmed covid-19 infection. Some 14% (616) had severe infection, 21% (917) had moderate infection, and 65% (2903) had mild infection. Marian Knight, Wellbeing of Women researcher and professor of maternal and child population health at the University of Oxford’s National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit and lead author, said, “Most women give birth safely and have healthy babies, but we know that pregnant women are at greater risk of developing severe covid-19 infection, particularly in the third trimester. This can lead to tragic outcomes, including premature birth and stillbirth.”

<https://www.bmj.com/content/376/bmj.o480>

Explainer: How the World Health Organization might face future pandemics

Negotiations on new rules for dealing with pandemics will begin at the World Health Organization on Thursday, with a target date of May 2024 for a treaty to be adopted by the U.N. health agency's 194

member countries. A new pact is among more than 200 recommendations for shoring up the world's defences against new pathogens made by various reviewers following the COVID-19 pandemic that has killed more than 6.2 million people in two years. The WHO itself is facing calls for reform after an independent panel described it as "underpowered" when COVID-19 struck, with limited powers to investigate outbreaks and coordinate containment measures

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/how-world-health-organization-might-face-future-pandemics-2022-02-24/>

Omicron BA.2 sub-variant more infectious but no more severe - Africa CDC

The Omicron BA.2 sub-variant of COVID-19 appears to be more infectious than the original BA.1 sub-variant, but does not cause more severe disease, the head of Africa's top public health body said on Thursday citing data from South Africa. "South Africa is reporting that it is more transmissible than the BA.1 variant, but interestingly and very encouragingly the severity seems to be the same," said Dr John Nkengasong, head of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. South Africa was one of the first countries to detect the Omicron variant of COVID-19, which has since swept around the globe and become dominant in most places.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/omicron-ba2-sub-variant-more-infectious-no-more-severe-africa-cdc-2022-02-24/>

AstraZeneca signs deal with Canada for 100000 doses of COVID drug

AstraZeneca plc signed an agreement with Canada for 100,000 doses of its antibody therapy for prevention of COVID-19 in some high-risk patients, the country's government said on Wednesday. AstraZeneca's Evusheld is under review by Health Canada for use as a preventive treatment against the disease in those who are immunocompromised. "While vaccines provide excellent protection, people who are immunocompromised may need additional protection against COVID-19," said Canadian health minister Jean-Yves Duclos.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/astrazeneca-signs-deal-with-canada-100000-doses-covid-drug-2022-02-23/>

Novavax starts shipping COVID vaccine to EU states

Novavax Inc said on Wednesday it had started shipping doses of its COVID-19 vaccine to European Union member states, with France, Austria and Germany expected to be the first to receive the shots in the coming days. Shipments of Nuvaxovid to additional EU member states from the company's Netherlands distribution center are expected to quickly follow, adding to the stockpile of the region as it struggles with a surge in infections due to the Omicron variant.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-starts-shipping-covid-vaccine-eu-states-2022-02-23/>

Moderna predicts boost to sales from COVID-19 turning endemic

Moderna Inc (MRNA.O) executives said on Thursday they believe a fourth COVID-19 vaccine shot will be needed late this year due to waning protection from earlier doses, which could push up sales in the second half of 2022. Chief Executive Stephane Bancel stressed that the company's current sales projections for its Spikevax COVID-19 shot - \$19 billion in 2022, up from its prior estimate of \$18.5 billion - does not include any additional sales to the United States this year. "What is not clear today is what will the U.S. government decide to do for 2022. Will it be a private market, or a mix of private and free vaccines," Bancel said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-raises-2022-covid-vaccine-sales-forecast-19-billion-2022-02-24/>

CDC changes guidance and advises longer interval between vaccine doses

Some people getting Pfizer or Moderna Covid vaccines should consider waiting up to eight weeks between the first and second doses, instead of the three or four weeks previously recommended, US

health officials said. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday quietly changed its advice on spacing the shots. CDC officials said they were reacting to research showing that the longer interval can provide more enduring protection against the coronavirus. Research suggests that 12- to 64-year-olds – especially males ages 12 to 39 – can benefit from the longer spacing, the CDC said. They also say the longer wait may help diminish an already rare vaccination side effect: a form of heart inflammation seen in some young men.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/23/cdc-advises-longer-wait-between-first-and-second-vaccine-doses>

MIS-C rare in COVID-vaccinated teens, study finds

Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) is rare among 12- to 20-year-olds who have received COVID-19 vaccination, a study yesterday in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* suggests. The study was based on 9 months of follow-up data on US children and young adults ages 12 to 20 who had received at least one dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID vaccine from Dec 14, 2020, to Aug 31, 2021. Only 21 cases out of more than 21 million vaccinated adolescents developed the rare disorder, which mimics Kawasaki's, during the follow-up period. Fifteen of the 21 were diagnosed as having COVID-19 despite vaccination, while 6 developed MIS-C for unknown reasons. "Our results suggest that MIS-C cases following COVID-19 vaccination are rare and that the likelihood of developing MIS-C is much greater in children who are unvaccinated and get COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for everyone aged 5 years and older in the United States for the prevention of COVID-19," said Anna R. Yousef, MD, the lead author and a researcher at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in a *Lancet* press release.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/02/mis-c-rare-covid-vaccinated-teens-study-finds>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid-19 is killing more people now than during most of the pandemic. Here's who's still at risk

Plummeting Covid-19 case counts across the United States are leading to lifted mask mandates and more conversations about steps toward normalcy -- but more people are dying of the coronavirus now than during most points of the pandemic. More than 2,000 Covid-19 deaths have been reported in the United States each day for the past month. Average daily deaths are falling, but from a very high point. They dipped just below that mark in recent days, to about 1,900 on Monday; the federal holiday may have delayed reporting. Before Omicron became the dominant coronavirus strain in the US, there were only about 100 other days when there were more than 2,000 Covid-19 deaths, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. The only other time that deaths have been this high for this long was during the first winter surge, before vaccines were available. The Omicron wave has also been deadlier for longer than the Delta surge: In September, when Delta was dominant, average daily deaths topped 2,000 for half as long.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/24/health/covid-deaths-now-younger-unvaccinated/index.html>

Thailand reports record 23557 new coronavirus cases

Thailand reported on Thursday a record daily increase of 23,557 new coronavirus infections, as the country deals with an outbreak driven by the Omicron variant. The Southeast Asian country also reported 38 new deaths, according to the country's COVID-19 centre. The daily death toll from the virus, however, was well below the 184 fatalities reported on Aug 13 last year, when Thailand recorded its previous daily record of 23,418 infections.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-reports-record-23557-new-coronavirus-cases-2022-02-24/>

Caribbean falling behind in COVID fight, PAHO warns

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) warned on Wednesday that the Caribbean was falling behind in its effort to fight COVID-19 as only 63% of its eligible population was vaccinated and large regional discrepancies persist. Out of 13 countries and territories in the Americas that have not yet

reached the World Health Organization's (WHO) goal of 40% coverage, 10 are in the Caribbean, PAHO Director Carissa Etienne said. The region registered 2.2 million new COVID cases last week, down 28% compared with the previous week.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/caribbean-falling-behind-covid-fight-paho-warns-2022-02-23/>

England's COVID-19 prevalence falls - ONS

England's COVID-19 prevalence fell to 1 in 25 in the week ending Feb. 19, Britain's Office for National Statistics (ONS) said on Wednesday, down from 1 in 20 recorded the previous week.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/englands-covid-19-prevalence-falls-ons-2022-02-23/>