

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

16th Aug 2022

Lockdown Exit

UK Says People Must Take Any Covid Shot Available This Fall

British health authorities said people should take whatever Covid-19 booster shot is offered to them this fall, even as the country became the first in the world to approve a new two-strain vaccine. The UK will start providing another round of Covid booster shots to about 26 million patients -- aged 50 or above or those with weak immunity -- from September in a bid to bolster defenses against further waves of Covid infections this winter. Patients could receive a vaccine from Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE, or Moderna Inc.'s original or bivalent shot, which specifically targets the omicron variant and was only approved by the UK drugs regulator today.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-15/uk-says-people-must-take-any-covid-shot-available-this-fall>

'Living with Covid' should be countered by containing the virus once and for all

Last week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new guidelines for the Covid pandemic, heralding "a new strategy [that] pivots from wide approach to a focus on the most vulnerable". Coincident with the opening of schools across the country, relaxation of some restrictions, such as quarantining and physical distancing, will help keep children in school, a cardinal objective. Sadly, the CDC missed an opportunity to help protect seniors and highly vulnerable Americans.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/aug/15/cdc-living-with-covid-should-be-counteracted-by-containing-virus>

Students throughout Southland return to school without strict COVID-19 protocols in place

Article reports that LAUSD has faced a noted decrease in enrollment this year versus those in the past. Experts say this is because of the cost of living in L.A., prompting families to move elsewhere, as well as opting to make different schooling choices for a variety of reasons both related to and unrelated to coronavirus. In an effort to bring numbers back up, Carvalho and other district employees set out to door knock throughout Los Angeles County to find children who needed to return to education. "We have progressively identified the 'Lost Children of Los Angeles. That's my name for them.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/students-throughout-southland-return-to-school-without-strict-covid-19-protocols-in-place/>

Student exchange programs resume with caution after COVID-19 disruption, but some delays persist

Exchange programs were thrown into turmoil due to COVID-19 and related travel bans. Some programs have recently resumed but hold-ups persist in some regions such as WA. Students in the first cohort of post-COVID exchanges were relieved they did not miss out

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-15/student-exchange-programs-resume-australia-covid-19-travel-bans/101328738>

GDP falls 0.1% as Covid-19 vaccination programmes wind up

The UK's economy shrank over the last three months as spending on test and trace and the Covid-19 vaccine programme subsided, figures show. Gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 0.1% between April and June, the Office for National Statistics said. It is a big step down from the first

quarter of the year, when GDP rose 0.8%. The data may not be the start of a recession – which is defined as two quarters of GDP decline – but experts are predicting the UK will slip into a recession later this year.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/business/gdp-falls-0-1-as-covid19-vaccination-programmes-wind-up-b2143649.html>

Pandemic pushed millions more into poverty in the Philippines, government says

About 2.3 million people in the Philippines were pushed into poverty between 2018 and 2021, largely due to the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, the statistics agency said on Monday. The number of people living in poverty in 2021 rose to a total of almost 20 million or 18.1% of the population from 16.7% in 2018, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said, overshooting the government's target of 15.5%-17.5%. Recently inaugurated President Ferdinand Marcos Jr aims to slash the poverty rate to 9% by the end of his single six-year term in 2028 - a target that remains achievable despite soaring inflation, according to Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pandemic-pushed-millions-more-into-poverty-philippines-govt-2022-08-15/>

Pfizer CEO Bourla shows mild symptoms after testing positive for COVID

Pfizer Inc (PFE.N) Chief Executive Officer Albert Bourla said on Monday he had tested positive for COVID-19 and was experiencing very mild symptoms. Bourla, 60, said he had started a course of the company's oral COVID-19 antiviral treatment, Paxlovid, and was isolating and following all public health precautions. "I am confident that I will have a speedy recovery," Bourla said in a statement. Several public figures have tested positive for the infectious disease in the past few months including U.S. President Joe Biden and his chief medical adviser, Dr Anthony Fauci.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-ceo-tests-positive-covid-2022-08-15/>

Shanghai to reopen all schools Sept. 1 as lockdown fears persist

China's financial hub Shanghai said on Sunday it would reopen all schools including kindergartens, primary and middle schools on Sept. 1 after months of COVID-19 closures. The city will require all teachers and students to take nucleic acid tests for the coronavirus every day before leaving campus, the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission said. It also called for teachers and students to carry out a 14-day "self health management" within the city ahead of the school reopening, the commission said in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-reopen-all-schools-sept-1-with-daily-covid-testing-2022-08-14/>

Japan's economy stages modest bounce from COVID jolt, global outlook darkens

Japan's economy rebounded at a slower-than-expected pace in the second quarter from a COVID-induced slump, data showed on Monday, highlighting uncertainty on whether consumption will grow enough to bolster a much-delayed, fragile recovery. A revival in Japan, like many other economies, has been hobbled by the Ukraine war and surging prices of commodities even as rising consumption propped up growth in April-June.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/japans-economy-rebounds-covid-jolt-global-slowdown-clouds-outlook-2022-08-15/>

Pandemic-Era Free School Meals Expire, Leaving Some Districts Seeking Solutions

Millions of school children are heading back to class this month without free breakfast or lunch for the first time in two years, to the disappointment of many parents and school administrators who are facing rising costs of food and supplies due to inflation. Some federal pandemic-era provisions that allowed schools to serve universal free meals will expire when districts start school for the fall, leaving many districts unprepared to make up the difference and urging parents to apply for a free or reduced-price lunch. While the provisions were always meant to be temporary, the expiration comes as supply-chain disruptions and rising food prices are pushing school-meal prices higher.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/pandemic-era-free-school-meals-expire-leaving-some-districts-seeking-solutions-116604>

Exit Strategies

China Surveillance in Xinjiang, Tibet Used to Prevent Shanghai-Like Covid Unrest

To combat fresh outbreaks of Covid-19 in outlying areas like Xinjiang and Tibet, Chinese authorities are drawing on a security apparatus previously used to quell dissent against authorities in Beijing. Broad surveillance measures used over the years against Tibetan Buddhists and mainly Muslim Uyghurs, both minority groups in China, are helping enforce lockdown rules among people long at risk of arbitrary detention. That has helped ensure there's no public displays of anger like those seen earlier this year during the monthslong lockdown in the financial hub of Shanghai. "It's ironic but very convenient for the CCP that it first constructed Uyghur ethno-national identity as a religious extremist 'thought virus,' took draconian steps to eradicate it, and then a real virus came along for which similar techniques were useful," said James Millward, professor of history at Georgetown University, referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-15/xi-crackdown-foils-shanghai-like-covid-unrest-in-xinjiang-tibet>

Rollout of Covid-19 booster vaccines for over-60s and pregnant women begins

Pregnant women and people over 60 will begin receiving their second booster vaccination against Covid-19 from today. The Health Service Executive has urged those eligible to get the vaccine. Since last week, people who are over 60 and women who are pregnant have been able to book their appointments through the HSE. The injections are being administered at vaccination centres and at participating pharmacies around the country. HSE Chief Clinical Officer Dr Colm Henry has urged those eligible to take up the offer.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/coronavirus/2022/0815/1315741-covid-ireland/>

Lancet study finds 40 percent of U.S. COVID-19 deaths were avoidable.

The report assailed Trump for his response to the pandemic, but emphasized that the disastrous response to the virus's spread was the result of years of destructive public policy decisions on health that extended well beyond the Trump years. From the Lancet: Many of the cases and deaths were avoidable. Instead of galvanizing the U.S. populace to fight the pandemic, President Trump publicly dismissed its threat (despite privately acknowledging it), discouraged action as infection spread, and eschewed international cooperation. His refusal to develop a national strategy worsened shortages of personal protective equipment and diagnostic tests. President Trump politicized mask-wearing and school reopenings and convened indoor events attended by thousands, where masks were discouraged and physical distancing was impossible.

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/02/lancet-study-40-percent-u-s-covid-19-coronavirus-deaths-avoidable-unnecessary.html>

Scotland's winter Covid vaccine programme kicks off - list of people eligible

Letters inviting people for a Covid-19 winter booster jab will be landing on doorsteps this week. Those aged 65 and over and frontline health and social care staff will be first in line to receive appointment times in the post. The Scottish Government said the move is to protect the most vulnerable from the virus, and to ease the pressure on hospitals ahead of any potential surges in infections over the winter period.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/lifestyle/health-fitness/scotlands-winter-covid-vaccine-programme-27744412>

Japan travel sector calls for 'hugely damaging' Covid-19 entry curbs to end as economy rebounds

Japan's economy grew at an annualised rate of 2.2 per cent in the second quarter of 2022, with private consumption up 1.1 per cent, official data shows. Travel sector says the government should remove entry curbs immediately so more tourists can visit Japan and help boost the economy,

spending.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/article/3188948/japan-travel-sector-calls-hugely-damaging-covid-19-entry-curbs-en>
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Over 20 million COVID-19 jabs wasted — DOH

The Department of Health reported Monday that over 20 million donated and procured COVID-19 vaccine doses were wasted in the Philippines. A total of 20,660,354 COVID-19 vaccines were wasted as of August 12, Health Undersecretary Carol Tanio told the Senate committee on health and demography. Broken down, 6% of the donated COVID-19 jabs, 22% of the vaccines purchased by local governments, and 40% of the shots procured by the private sector had expired. Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire, officer-in-charge of the DOH, said the 134 million vaccine doses procured by the national government did not have any wastage.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/08/15/2202809/over-20-million-covid-19-jabs-wasted-doh>

CORONAVIRUS/Taiwan to ease rules for last four days of arrival COVID-19 protocol

Travelers arriving in Taiwan will face slightly less restrictive protocols on where they can stay starting Sept. 1, the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) announced Monday. After entering Taiwan and remaining in quarantine for the standard three days, travelers will be allowed to spend the four-day "self-initiated epidemic prevention" period on a one person to a room basis, and will not need permission to change locations, the CECC said. At present, arrivals must complete both the three- and four-day periods on a one person per residence basis (if home quarantining) and need to apply for permission from local authorities if they wish to spend the two periods at different locations. (Current quarantine rules)

<https://focustaiwan.tw/society/202208150017>

How to Assess Covid-19 Risks After Easing of CDC Guidelines

The easing of federal Covid-19 guidelines places responsibility ever more squarely on individuals to determine their own risk tolerance and behaviors. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has dropped a recommendation to quarantine after Covid exposure regardless of vaccination status and de-emphasized social distancing. The new guidelines largely mirror what much of the U.S. population has already been doing as vaccines, prior infection and treatments have reduced the risk of severe disease even as the virus continues to circulate at high levels in much of the country. Many employers hope the move will boost their return-to-work pushes. Many U.S. schools and colleges had already been eliminating Covid protocols as they prepare for students to return in the fall.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-to-assess-covid-19-risks-after-easing-of-cdc-guidelines-11660446933>

Partisan Exits

Australia's PM says former PM Morrison took on secret ministerial roles during COVID

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has sought legal advice following reports that his predecessor Scott Morrison secretly held key ministerial roles during the COVID-19 pandemic, duplicating some portfolios. Ministers are traditionally sworn in at a ceremony by the governor-general but that did not happen in the case of the additional roles, and Albanese said it was unprecedented that key cabinet members were not aware of the appointments.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australias-pm-says-former-pm-morrison-took-secret-ministerial-roles-during-covid-2022-08-15/>

China Surveillance in Xinjiang, Tibet Used to Prevent Shanghai-Like Covid Unrest

To combat fresh outbreaks of Covid-19 in outlying areas like Xinjiang and Tibet, Chinese authorities are drawing on a security apparatus previously used to quell dissent against authorities in Beijing. Broad surveillance measures used over the years against Tibetan Buddhists and mainly Muslim

Uyghurs, both minority groups in China, are helping enforce lockdown rules among people long at risk of arbitrary detention. That has helped ensure there's no public displays of anger like those seen earlier this year during the monthslong lockdown in the financial hub of Shanghai. "It's ironic but very convenient for the CCP that it first constructed Uyghur ethno-national identity as a religious extremist 'thought virus,' took draconian steps to eradicate it, and then a real virus came along for which similar techniques were useful," said James Millward, professor of history at Georgetown University, referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-15/xi-crackdown-foils-shanghai-like-covid-unrest-in-xinjiang-tibet>

Scientific Viewpoint

UK Approves First Bivalent COVID-19 Booster Vaccine

The United Kingdom has approved Moderna's bivalent COVID-19 vaccine, which targets the original variant and Omicron. The United Kingdom's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) announced on August 15, 2022 that it has approved a bivalent version of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine that targets both the original and Omicron strains of the virus. The decision follows an endorsement of the booster from the UK's Commission on Human Medicines, the government's independent scientific advisory board. According to an agency press release, the decision was based on a clinical trial which demonstrated that the booster triggers a strong immune response against the original COVID-19 strain and BA.1, the first Omicron strain. It also demonstrated a good immune response against Omicron sub-variants BA.4 and BA.5. Side-effects and overall safety profile were found to be the same as those in the original vaccine.

<https://www.pharmtech.com/view/uk-approves-first-bivalent-covid-19-booster-vaccine>

Lack of evidence for AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine says UK Department of Health

The UK's Department of Health and Social Care has decided not to buy AstraZeneca's COVID-19 drug, Evusheld, due to a lack of evidence about the vaccine's effectiveness against the Omicron variant. Evusheld - tixagevimab co-packaged with cilgavimab - is a preventative treatment that is given before people have been exposed to the virus. Patient groups and charities have called upon the government to reassess its position due to the potential impact the decision will have on clinically vulnerable people during the winter. Developed by AstraZeneca, Evusheld is a combination of two antibodies that work against COVID-19 by boosting protection for those with weakened immune systems, including those who are organ transplant recipients or blood cancer patients.

https://www.pmlive.com/pharma_news/lack_of_evidence_for_astrazenecas_covid-19_vaccine_says_uk_department_of_health_1453348

Novavax seeks U.S. authorization for COVID vaccine booster

Novavax Inc said on Monday it had filed for U.S. authorization for use of its COVID-19 vaccine as a booster dose in people who had either received its shots or a different vaccine. The application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration comes in the face of a slow rollout in the United States, where the Novavax vaccine was authorized in July, despite expectations that it would convince vaccine skeptics to get inoculated.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-seeks-us-authorization-covid-vaccine-booster-2022-08-15/>

Bharat Biotech seeks approval for intranasal coronavirus vaccine

Bharat Biotech has submitted data from Phase 3 clinical trials of BBV154, its intranasal Covid vaccine candidate, to the drug regulator. It has sought approval both as a primary two-dose vaccine, and a heterologous booster shot. A heterologous booster implies that the third or subsequent dose of the vaccine is different from its primary dose. Typically, the primary dose comprises two shots. The Hyderabad-based company claimed that BBV154, which is stable at 2-8 degrees Celsius, is proven to be safe, well-tolerated and immunogenic in the subjects under controlled clinical trials.

“Being an intranasal vaccine, BBV154 may produce local antibodies in the upper respiratory tract. These may provide the potential to reduce infection and transmission. Further studies are being planned,” the company noted on Monday.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/bharat-biotech-seeks-approval-for-intranasal-coronavirus-vaccine-122081500813_1.html

U.K. Approves Moderna’s Covid-19 Vaccine Targeted at Omicron

The U.K. became the first country to approve Moderna Inc.’s Omicron-targeting Covid-19 vaccine as a booster shot, paving the way for the variant shot to play a role in a planned fall vaccination campaign to shore up immune defenses against the virus. The so-called bivalent vaccine is directed against both the original strain of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, and the first Omicron variant, also known as BA.1, which drove large waves of infection over the winter. “What this bivalent vaccine gives us is a sharpened tool in our armory to help protect us against this disease as the virus continues to evolve,” June Raine, chief executive of Britain’s Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, said Monday.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-k-approves-moderna-omicron-containing-covid-19-booster-vaccine-11660564620?mod=newsviewer_click

Saliva-based COVID-19 test approved by Health Canada could reduce discomfort of nasal swab

Early during the pandemic, Neil Saxvy's son Matthew broke his arm and had to go to the hospital. Because of COVID-19, he needed a PCR test, which meant an eye-watering swab high up in his nostrils. The young boy did not enjoy the experience. "Ever since then he's wanted nothing to do with the test," Saxvy said. It's made testing — which occurs pretty regularly for kids in school settings over the course of years-long pandemic — more of a hassle. But on Saturday, the entire Saxvy family, including wife Anita and daughter Leah, did a much less invasive PCR test in Toronto. This one involved spitting into a cup and feeding their saliva into a machine.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/saliva-based-covid-19-test-approved-by-health-canada-could-reduce-discomfort-of-nasal-swab-1.6550926>

Is COVID-19 more deadly for children than the flu?

Dr Norman Swan explains key findings in new studies about COVID-19 and its effects on children.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-15/is-covid-19-more-deadly-for-children-than-the-flu/14020084>

BCG Vaccine for Tuberculosis Offers Covid-19 Protection, Study Suggests

A widely used tuberculosis vaccine protected people with Type 1 diabetes from Covid-19, according to a Massachusetts General Hospital study published Monday that further illustrates the potential immune-enhancing powers of the shot, called BCG. The vaccine, a weakened version of the tuberculosis bacterium that infects cows, is given more than 100 million times a year around the globe to infants, but it isn't part of the standard vaccination program in the U.S. Doctors have long suspected it has additional effects beyond tuberculosis prevention. When the Covid-19 pandemic struck in early 2020, the Mass General team was already studying whether BCG could treat Type 1 diabetes by helping eliminate harmful immune cells that attack the pancreas.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/bcg-vaccine-for-tuberculosis-offers-covid-19-protection-study-suggests-11660565173>

Superior protection with 'mix-and-match' COVID-19 booster strategy

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic was caused by the sudden global outbreak of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Since SARS-CoV-2 emerged at the end of 2019, scientists have worked relentlessly to develop several vaccines to reduce the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and protect individuals from severe COVID-19. Recently, a rapid decline in the level of antibodies elicited by vaccination with messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccines has been observed. In a new Jama Network Open study, researchers discuss the durability and

immunogenicity of homologous and heterologous booster regimens with the Johnson & Johnson Ad26.COV2.S and Pfizer-BioNTech BNT162b2 vaccines.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220814/Superior-protection-with-mix-and-match-COVID-19-booster-strategy.aspx>

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Novavax Inc said on Monday it had filed for U.S. authorization for use of its COVID-19 vaccine as a booster dose in people who had either received its shots or a different vaccine. The application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration comes in the face of a slow rollout in the United States, where the Novavax vaccine was authorized in July, despite expectations that it would convince vaccine skeptics to get inoculated.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-seeks-us-authorization-covid-vaccine-booster-2022-08-15/>

Why is COVID-19 more severe in people older than 50?

The adaptive immune system mounts pathogen-specific humoral and cellular responses to combat infections. Upon identification of a new virus, B- and T-cells will elicit specific responses to the infection. A new PNAS journal study reports that the reduced efficiency of the immune response against the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) could be due to the reduced diversity of both B- and T-cells. This reduction in T-cell diversity was observed only in subjects over 50 years of age who are at an increased risk of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) morbidity and mortality.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220814/Why-is-COVID-19-more-severe-in-people-older-than-50.aspx>

UK first to approve Omicron COVID shot with Moderna nod

Britain, the first country to approve a coronavirus vaccine in late 2020, has now also given the first green light to a variant-adapted shot that targets both the original and Omicron version of the virus. The UK medicines regulator (MHRA) gave the so-called bivalent vaccine made by U.S. drug company Moderna conditional approval as a booster for adults on Monday. Later on Monday, the UK's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) backed the use of the variant-adapted shot in the country's booster campaign starting September.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/variant-adapted-covid-vaccine-wins-first-approval-britain-2022-08-15/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Ikea Shanghai Lockdown: Panic After China Authorities Try to Quarantine Shoppers

Scenes of mayhem unfolded in an Ikea in Shanghai as health authorities tried to lock down the store on Saturday and quarantine those on site after learning someone who had been in contact with a Covid-19 patient had visited. News of the flash shutdown sent shoppers fleeing and screaming in an effort to get out of the building before the doors were locked, videos on social media showed. Shanghai's 25 million residents are well versed in lockdowns, after being barred from leaving their homes for two months this spring in an effort to eradicate the virus.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-15/panic-in-ikea-as-shanghai-locks-down-store-on-remote-covid-risk>

China Covid-19 Cases Top 2000 as More Lockdowns Imposed

China reported more than 2,000 local Covid-19 cases on Friday as infections in the southern Hainan island edged higher despite stricter curbs imposed earlier this week. The southern province, a popular tourist destination, reported 1,426 cases. More than 1,230 of them were in the beach resort city of Sanya, where more restrictions were added on Thursday. Hainan's authorities had aimed to eliminate community transmission by Aug. 12.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-13/china-local-covid-19-cases-top-2-000-as-more-lockdowns-imposed>

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S.Korea reports 62078 new COVID-19 cases

South Korea recorded 62,078 new COVID-19 cases as of midnight Sunday compared to 24 hours ago, raising the total number of infections to 21,418,036, the health authorities said Monday. The daily caseload was down from 119,603 in the previous day due to fewer virus tests on the weekend, but it was higher than 55,262 tallied a week earlier, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA). For the past week, the daily average number of confirmed cases was 124,829.

<https://english.news.cn/20220815/b1ebf80dddbf4d60a61fc2faa3a3d75d/c.html>

New Lockdown

IKEA shoppers rush out of Shanghai store after lockdown attempt due to COVID-19 risk

There were chaotic scenes at an IKEA outlet in Shanghai on Saturday (Aug 13) when authorities tried to lock down the store after learning that a customer had been in close contact with a COVID-19 case. Videos circulating on Chinese social media showed customers pushing past security guards and running out of the store in panic as an announcement blared over its sound system saying the mall was being locked down due to COVID-19 contact tracing. Guards were seen closing the doors to prevent people from leaving, but a crowd forced their way through and rushed out.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/ikea-shanghai-shoppers-store-lock-down-covid-19-exposure-2881416>