

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

20th Aug 2020

News Highlights

Rates of depression in the UK double during coronavirus lockdown

A survey of more than 3,500 people carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has indicated that almost a fifth of British adults were experiencing some form of depression in June 2020, [during the national coronavirus lockdown imposed in the UK](#). This figure was more than double the number reported prior to the pandemic.

Rising cases of coronavirus put Europe on the back foot

Most of Europe is seeing a surge in new Covid-19 infections since July, after they seemingly had beaten back the virus in March and April with lockdowns and restrictions. On average, [close to 11,000 daily new cases were reported from the five largest European nations over the last seven days](#), more than double the numbers since the end of July and the biggest sustained rise since March and April, when the pandemic was at its peak.

Smell loss associated with coronavirus different from cold and flu symptoms

European researchers say that while some of the symptoms associated with Covid-19 are similar to that of a seasonal cold or flu, the sudden and severe loss of smell is unique to coronavirus patients. Additionally, [Covid-19 patients suffer from a 'true' loss of taste](#), meaning that their taste is not just impaired because the sense of smell is out of action, as is the case with people who suffer from cold and flu.

UAE sees 'alarming' recent surge in Covid-19 cases despite falling trend

The UAE health minister termed an increase in coronavirus cases over the last two weeks as 'alarming,' as the country registered 365 news cases and two deaths over the past 24 hours. [The country has registered a total of 64,906 cases since the start of the pandemic](#), with cases peaking in mid-May, but seeing periodic spikes amidst a generally falling trend.

Lockdown Exit

Inside the French Riviera's pandemic party problem

From Saint-Tropez to Marseille and Nice, parties across the French Riviera this summer have been making international headlines. In conversations with Business Insider, several French residents described a scene of non-stop partying and minimal mask-wearing. In recent weeks, restaurants and night clubs across Saint-Tropez have been forced to close down.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/french-riviera-pandemic-party-problem-saint-tropez-marseille-2020-8>

Notre Dame becomes latest university to suspend in-person classes

The University of Notre Dame on Tuesday suspended in-person classes and moved them online for at least two weeks after seeing a surge in coronavirus cases, the latest university to roll back campus reopenings. Notre Dame University President John Jenkins announced the decision after the prestigious Catholic university near South Bend, Indiana, reported a spike of 80 positive test results on Monday, taking the total number of confirmed cases to 147 since Aug. 3, according to the

university's website. The results from 418 tests represented a positivity rate of 19 percent at the school with overall positivity at around 16 percent since Aug. 3.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa/notre-dame-becomes-latest-university-to-suspend-in-person-classes-idUKKCN25E2NA>

Why China's economic recovery from coronavirus is widening the wealth gap

Amanda Wang's family businesses — a call centre and two restaurants in Beijing — are grappling with a plunge in revenue following the coronavirus outbreak. She imposed a company-wide 30 per cent pay cut on about 120 workers in July even after receiving tax cuts and employment subsidies from the government designed to help companies survive the pandemic. "My biggest challenge is a lack of business and policy support [from the government] isn't helpful [on this]," says Ms Wang, referring to her decision to cut workers' salaries. "I have to make savings where I can." Yet Ms Wang had no qualms about renewing her annual Rmb150,000 (\$21,000) membership at a downtown beauty salon in the Chinese capital. "I am not going to cut corners on my basic needs," says the 41-year-old, who in July sold one of her six apartments in Beijing for a profit of Rmb3m. "There are ways to make up for the income loss."

<https://www.ft.com/content/e0e2940a-17cb-40ed-8d27-3722c9349a5d>

Wuhan pool parties bring post-lockdown relief in China

Night-time pool parties are proving popular in the Chinese city hardest hit by the coronavirus outbreak as residents in Wuhan seek relief from lockdown. For more than two months, 11 million residents endured a strict lockdown as coronavirus raced around the city in central China. Now, some are letting loose en masse at night-time pool parties at a popular amusement park chain. The Wuhan Maya Beach Water Park reopened in late June and the crowds have picked up this month.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/world-news/wuhan-pool-parties-bring-post-lockdown-relief-in-china-39462019.html>

Millions in India face eviction amid coronavirus recovery push

Thousands of people were evicted across India during lockdowns to contain the coronavirus pandemic, with millions more at risk of being uprooted as authorities push infrastructure projects to spur economic growth, housing rights campaigners said. At least 20,000 people were evicted from their homes between March 16 and July 31, despite court orders that banned such actions during lockdowns, according to a report published by the Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) in Delhi on Tuesday. In the last three years for which HLRN has records, at least 568,000 were forcibly removed from their homes across India, or 22 people every hour. Last year alone, more than 107,600 people were evicted. "India's grave housing crisis has been exacerbated by the forced eviction and home demolition of marginalised, low-income communities - even during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Shivani Chaudhry, HLRN's executive director.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-landrights-eviction/millions-in-india-face-eviction-amid-coronavirus-recovery-push-idUSKCN25E1QY>

Millions return to schools lacking handwashing facilities: UN

A joint report (PDF) published last week by the WHO and UNICEF, the UN children's fund, revealed that 43 percent of schools worldwide lacked facilities for basic handwashing with soap and water in 2019, affecting 818 million children - more than a third of them in sub-Saharan Africa. In the least-developed countries, seven out of 10 schools lack basic handwashing facilities, and half of all schools lack basic sanitation and water services, the agencies said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/millions-return-schools-lacking-handwashing-facilities-report-200818083028369.html>

COVID-19 pandemic causes mental health crisis in Americas, says WHO official

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a mental health crisis in the Americas due to heightened stress

and use of drugs and alcohol during six months of lockdowns and stay-at-home measures, the World Health Organization's regional director said on Tuesday. The pandemic also has brought a related problem in a surge in domestic violence against women, Carissa Etienne said in a virtual briefing from the Pan American Health Organization in Washington. "The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a mental health crisis in our region at a scale we've never seen before," she said. "It is urgent that mental health support is considered a critical component of the pandemic response."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-latam/covid-19-pandemic-causes-mental-health-crisis-in-america-s-says-who-official-idUKKCN25E248>

Exit Strategies

Britain to bring in mass testing to curb spread of COVID-19

Britain plans to bring in regular, population-wide testing for COVID-19 so it can suppress the spread of the virus and ease restrictions that have crippled its economy without triggering a second wave in one of the worst-hit countries in the world. Health minister Matt Hancock said the government was trialling a range of new, faster tests that can give instant results and hoped to roll them out towards the end of the year. "The mass testing, population testing, where we make it the norm that people get tested regularly, allowing us therefore to allow some of the freedoms back, is a huge project in government right now," he told BBC Radio. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government has been criticised by political opponents and health experts for being too slow to go into lockdown and in rolling out testing to know how far the virus had spread.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-testing/britain-to-bring-in-mass-testing-to-curb-spread-of-covid-19-idUKKCN25F0KR>

Coronavirus: Home testing for coronavirus to be ramped up to 150,000 per fortnight

More people across the UK will be offered coronavirus tests in a bid to keep track of local outbreaks and reduce infection rates ahead of winter. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey will test 150,000 people per fortnight by October and will extend to cover Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Currently, 28,000 people are tested for coronavirus per fortnight in England. The survey is separate from the mass testing programme of people with symptoms.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-uk-testing-to-be-ramped-up-to-150-000-per-fortnight-12052213>

Angela Merkel to back plans extending Germany's furlough scheme to 24 months

German chancellor Angela Merkel is said to back a proposal that would extend the country's furlough scheme to 24 months. Roughly 10.1 million workers have signed up to Kurzarbeit, or "short-work" in English, since companies were forced to close in late March during a nationwide lockdown over the coronavirus.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/germany-extend-furlough-scheme-to-24-months-1-6799376>

All Workers In France Must Wear Masks Starting Sept. 1

The French government says people will be required to wear face masks in workplaces, following a sharp rise in COVID-19 infections since the country began lifting lockdown restrictions in July.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/08/19/903790777/all-workers-in-france-must-wear-masks-starting-sept-1>

COVID vaccine will relieve states from 'lockdown addiction'

Sky News host Peta Credlin says an effective COVID vaccine which can move swiftly across the globe would allow national and state leaders currently "addicted to lockdown" to declare victory and let normal life resume. The Prime Minister announced on Wednesday the federal government signed "a letter of intent," which would allow 25 million Australians free access to a vaccine "in the event that those trials prove successful". Ms Credlin said the vaccine - which is in phase three of development by Oxford University - could allow the public to start picking up the pieces and getting workers back into jobs. "Rather than forced to live as health officials and police dictate," she said.

https://www.skynews.com.au/details/_6182461399001

Canada's hardest-hit province for COVID-19 launches plan to combat second wave

The Canadian province of Quebec on Tuesday announced plans to tackle earlier mistakes in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, while preparing its health sector against a possible second wave of coronavirus in the autumn. Quebec, once the country's hardest-hit province for COVID-19, will boost public health sector hiring, reduce screening delays, and ensure staff like orderlies can no longer work at multiple long-term care facilities, a practice previously blamed for spreading the virus, Health Minister Christian Dubé told reporters. Canada has flattened its curve of coronavirus cases since the spring, but some of the country's 10 provinces have reported higher numbers of COVID-19 infections recently, as the economy restarts and restrictions on social gathering are relaxed.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-quebec/canadas-hardest-hit-province-for-covid-19-launches-plan-to-combat-second-wave-idUSKCN25E2M1>

WHO: Coronavirus herd immunity requires effective vaccine

The World Health Organization says the planet is nowhere near the amount of coronavirus immunity needed to induce herd immunity, where enough of the population would have antibodies to stop the spread. Herd immunity is typically achieved with vaccination and most scientists estimate at least 70% of the population must have antibodies to prevent an outbreak. But some experts have suggested that even if half the population had immunity, there might be a protective effect. WHO's emergencies chief Dr. Michael Ryan largely dismissed that theory at a press briefing on Tuesday, saying we should not live "in hope" of achieving herd immunity.

<https://www.newschannel10.com/2020/08/18/who-herd-immunity-requires-effective-vaccine/>

Partisan Exits

Coronavirus: Boris Johnson told to 'get a grip' by Heathrow Airport boss as testing facility unveiled

Boris Johnson has been told to "get a grip" of his coronavirus quarantine policy as Heathrow Airport pushes for the 14-day isolation period to be shortened. The travel hub's chief executive told Sky News the prime minister needs to act swiftly to stop "holding back the recovery of the UK economy" due to the restrictions on many travellers arriving in the country. The airport has revealed plans for a new testing facility which it hopes will lead to the end of the two-week mandatory quarantine for those returning from countries removed from the UK's safe list.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-heathrow-airport-unveils-plans-for-covid-19-testing-facility-to-replace-quarantine-measures-12052133>

Virus Rages in South America With Governments Grasping for Clues

From mask rules that are a hodgepodge to inconsistent social distancing, South America's response to the novel coronavirus has been all over the map. While the actual scope of the disease is unknown because of overall low testing, there are clear losers and a few early winners in a region that was already in bad shape heading into the crisis.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-18/virus-rages-in-south-america-with-governments-grasping-for-clues>

Council leaders fail in last minute plea to end Aberdeen lockdown ahead of first minister's press conference

The leaders of Aberdeen City Council have revealed they "do not support" an extension of the local lockdown measures – only minutes before First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced it would remain in place.

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen/2420956/council-leaders-fail-in-last-minute-plea-to-end-aberdeen-lockdown-ahead-of-first-ministers-press-conference/>

First days of New Zealand lockdown were unlawful, High Court finds

The New Zealand government exceeded its powers telling residents to stay at home in the first nine days of the coronavirus lockdown, the High Court has found. Public announcements Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and others made between March 26 and April 3 were justified, but went beyond the actual lockdown order made by Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield forbidding congregating, except with social distancing and shutting non-essential businesses.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/oceania/first-days-of-new-zealand-lockdown-were-unlawful-court-finds-20200819-p55nap.html>

New Zealand: First 9 days of coronavirus lockdown illegal but justified, says court

The lockdown in New Zealand for the first nine days imposed in March, restricting people to their homes to contain the spread of the coronavirus, was illegal but justified, a court said on Wednesday, according to Reuters. The court said that an order for restricting people at home was not passed till April 3, while calls for the same were made by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and other officials since March 26. So, the residents of New Zealand were unlawfully restricted to their homes for the first nine days, it added. "The government was trying to educate people about the health risks and transition them quickly to take actions that curtailed normal freedoms like staying at home to stop the spread of the virus," Attorney General David Parker said after the verdict. "In the end, the measures taken by the government worked to eliminate Covid-19, save lives and minimise damage to our economy."

<https://scroll.in/latest/970797/new-zealand-first-9-days-of-coronavirus-lockdown-illegal-but-justified-says-court>

England axes health agency criticised for COVID-19 response

England will scrap the government agency responsible for responding to public health emergencies after the country has suffered the highest death rate in Europe from the coronavirus pandemic. Public Health England, a cornerstone of the state-run health system with responsibility for managing infectious disease outbreaks, will have many of its functions merged with the government's contact tracing service into a new body to be known as the National Institute for Health Protection. "The National Institute for Health Protection will have a single and relentless mission, protecting people from external threats to this country's health; external threats like biological weapons, pandemics, and of course, infectious diseases," said Matt Hancock, Britain's health minister. Dido Harding, the former chief executive of internet provider TalkTalk and the current head of the contact tracing service, will run the new institute.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-body/england-axes-health-agency-criticised-for-covid-19-response-idUKKCN25E1D9>

New Zealand court rules part of early coronavirus lockdown was illegal

A New Zealand court on Wednesday found the first nine days of a hard lockdown put in place by the government earlier this year requiring people to isolate at home was justified, but unlawful. The ruling comes after Wellington lawyer Andrew Borrowdale challenged the legality of steps taken in the early stages of the five-week lockdown, including calls by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and other officials between March 26 and April 3 telling New Zealanders to stay at home. An order imposing stay at home restrictions was not passed until April 3, so New Zealanders rights and freedoms were unlawfully limited for those first nine days, the court said. "While there is no question that the requirement was a necessary, reasonable and proportionate response to the COVID-19 crisis at that time, the requirement was not prescribed by law," the court said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/UKNews1/idUKKCN25F04S>

Continued Lockdown

Coronavirus: Local lockdown in Aberdeen extended

A local lockdown in Aberdeen will be extended for another week, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has

announced. Pubs and restaurants were shut two weeks ago, and restrictions placed on travel and visits to other households, after a spike in Covid-19 cases linked to bars and nightlife in the city. Ms Sturgeon said the lockdown was having an impact - but that it was "not yet safe" to lift the restrictions. Aberdeen City Council said it did not support continuing the lockdown. A midweek review will be carried out on Sunday, and Ms Sturgeon said she hoped some restrictions could be eased next Wednesday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-53833513>

Coronavirus: Depression in the UK officially doubled during lockdown

The number of people suffering from depression symptoms in the UK doubled when the country was under a COVID-19 lockdown, official figures show. Almost a fifth of British adults — 19.2 per cent — were likely to be experiencing some form of depression in June 2020, according to a survey of more than 3,500 people carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released on Tuesday. Prior to the pandemic, fewer than one in ten said so. "Today's research provides an insight into the mental health of adults during the coronavirus pandemic. Revisiting this same group of adults before and during the pandemic provides a unique insight into how their symptoms of depression have changed over time," Tim Vizard, the ONS' principal research officer, said in a statement.

<https://www.euronews.com/2020/08/19/coronavirus-depression-in-the-uk-officially-doubled-during-lockdown>

Lockdown makes life tougher for those in rehab

Ever since Victoria declared a state of emergency on 16 March, almost every event or gathering was cancelled or postponed so as to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. While this was an inconvenience for some, it was a loss of income for others. But for an even smaller community, restrictions meant the loss of an essential tool needed for drug and alcohol recovery: social interaction. And now that Melburnians have entered into a six-week-long period of isolation with stage four restrictions in effect, it is going to be even tougher for those who require a strong social network to combat substance use.

<https://independentaustralia.net/life/life-display/lockdown-makes-life-tougher-for-those-in-rehab,14204>

Ireland ramps up COVID-19 restrictions again as cases surge

Ireland significantly tightened its nationwide coronavirus restrictions on Tuesday to try to rein in a surge in cases, urging everyone to restrict visitors to their homes, avoid public transport and older people to limit their contacts. A spike in cases over the last three weeks, after Ireland had one of Europe's lowest infection rates for several weeks, pushed its 14-day cumulative cases per 100,000 of population to 26, and led to the first local lockdown last week. The 190 new cases on Tuesday, the second highest daily rise since early May, took the rate of growth in the last two weeks to the fourth highest in Europe and meant infections would inevitably spread to the most vulnerable if it continued, Prime Minister Micheal Martin said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-ireland/ireland-ramps-up-covid-19-restrictions-again-as-cases-surge-idUSKCN25E2F1>

S. Korea tightens restrictions in Seoul area to tackle virus surge

South Korea on Tuesday ordered nightclubs, museums and buffet restaurants closed and banned large gatherings in and around the capital as a burst of new coronavirus cases sparked fears of a major second wave. The country's "trace, test and treat" approach to curbing the virus has been held up as a global model, but it is now battling several clusters mostly linked to Protestant churches. Authorities reported 246 new infections on Tuesday, taking South Korea's total to 15,761, the fifth consecutive day of triple-digit increases after several weeks with numbers generally in the 30s and 40s.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200818-s-korea-tightens-restrictions-in-seoul-area-to-tackle-virus-surge>

Scientific Viewpoint

Coronavirus: Australia orders 25 million doses of Oxford University's potential COVID-19 vaccine

Australia has ordered 25 million doses of Oxford University's potential COVID-19 vaccine, the country's prime minister said. "Under the deal, every single Australian will be able to receive the University of Oxford COVID-19 vaccine for free, should trials prove successful, safe and effective," Scott Morrison said on Wednesday. The vaccine, called AZD1222, is being developed by Britain's University of Oxford and is licensed to British-Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-australia-orders-25-million-doses-of-potential-covid-19-vaccine-12052151>

FDA approves affordable saliva-based COVID-19 test developed by Yale scientists

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a new and affordable saliva-based test for COVID-19 developed by researchers at the Yale School of Public Health. The new method for processing samples when testing for the novel coronavirus is called SalivaDirect. "The SalivaDirect test for rapid detection of SARS-CoV-2 is yet another testing innovation game-changer that will reduce the demand for scarce testing resources," said Assistant Secretary for Health and COVID-19 Testing Coordinator Admiral Brett P. Giroir, M.D., in a press release. 'I WILL NEVER FORGET': Houston ICU doc describes what it's like on COVID-19 frontlines

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/coronavirus/article/FDA-approves-affordable-saliva-based-COVID-19-15492797.php>

We know too little about Covid-19 'long-haulers.' We need a comprehensive study

"Long-haulers" is no longer just a job description for truckers. This term now refers to the growing number of people who contracted Covid-19 and have continued to have symptoms for more than 100 days – even though tests reveal no virus left in the body. Covid-19 "long-haulers" continue to struggle with debilitating symptoms, often alone, in the shadows of this devastating disease. Having escaped the worst, they nevertheless continue to struggle. It feels like a betrayal. Symptoms reported include headaches, difficulty concentrating and extreme fatigue. In one survey of 1,500 people with confirmed or suspected Covid-19, conducted by a Facebook community of long-haulers, more than half reported debilitating symptoms for more than three months. A recent CDC report found that 35% of respondents who tested positive for Covid-19 and had symptoms didn't feel like they were back to normal 2-3 weeks after testing. Although Covid-19 is considered most dangerous to the elderly or immunocompromised, the study noted that one in five respondents aged 18-34, without prior chronic medical conditions, said they hadn't completely recovered. This is particularly concerning since much of the current spread of new cases in the US is in younger people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/aug/19/we-know-too-little-about-covid-19-long-haulers-we-need-a-comprehensive-study>

Northern Ireland pharma company Fusion Antibodies working on Covid-19 research sees 79% surge in revenues

A Northern Ireland pharma company which has started work on antibody research to treat Covid-19 has revealed a 79% jump in revenues to £3.9m. But Fusion Antibodies plc, which is listed on the Alternative Investment Market, ultimately made a loss of £0.7m in the year to the end of March, it announced on Wednesday. However, the loss was down on the previous year's £1.3m deficit. The listed company, based at Springbank Industrial Estate in Belfast, specialises in pre-clinical antibody discovery, engineering and supply. Company chairman Dr Simon Douglas said the loss was down to its strategy to invest for growth. Staff numbers have grown from 38 to 47.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/northern-ireland/ni-pharma-company-fusion-antibodies-working-on-covid-19-research-sees-79-surge-in-revenues-39462262.html>

Coronavirus and MIS-C: Inflammatory condition linked to Covid-19

An inflammatory condition that has affected children during the pandemic – resulting in painful

rashes and fever – is linked to coronavirus infection, a peer-reviewed study claims. Researchers at King's College London said multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) – which is different to Kawasaki disease – is connected to previous infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19. Symptoms of MIS-C include a rash, fever and abdominal pain and scientists say that while adults are more likely to develop Covid-19 after being infected with SARS-CoV-2, children are more inclined to be struck with MIS-C. The inflammatory condition is a delayed immune response to the infection, researchers believe. More than 68% of children included in the study tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/08/19/condition-gives-children-rash-fever-linked-coronavirus-13146908/>

Coronavirus smell loss 'different from cold and flu'

The loss of smell that can accompany coronavirus is unique and different from that experienced by someone with a bad cold or flu, say European researchers who have studied the experiences of patients. When Covid-19 patients have smell loss it tends to be sudden and severe. And they usually don't have a blocked, stuffy or runny nose – most people with coronavirus can still breathe freely. Another thing that sets them apart is their "true" loss of taste. It's not that their taste is somewhat impaired because their sense of smell is out of action, say the researchers in the journal *Rhinology*. Coronavirus patients with loss of taste really cannot tell the difference between bitter or sweet.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-53810610>

World Bank: Covid-19 pushes poorer nations 'from recession to depression'

The head of the World Bank has called for a more ambitious debt relief plan for poor countries after warning that the Covid-19 recession is turning into a depression in the most challenged parts of the globe. In an interview with the *Guardian*, David Malpass raised the prospect of the first systematic write-off of debts since the 2005 Gleneagles agreement as he said fresh Bank figures due out next month would show an extra 100 million people had been pushed into poverty by the crisis. Poor countries had been worse hit by the economic fallout from Covid-19, Malpass added, and a growing debt crisis meant it was necessary to go beyond the repayment holidays offered by rich countries earlier this year. "This is worse than the financial crisis of 2008 and for Latin America worse than the debt crisis of the 1980s," the World Bank president said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/aug/19/world-bank-calls-for-greater-debt-relief-for-poorer-countries-in-wake-of-covid-19>

Covid-19 world map: which countries have the most coronavirus cases and deaths?

Since first being recorded late last year in China, the Covid-19 coronavirus has spread around the world, and been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. However, differences in testing mean that the number of cases may be understated for some countries. Obviously, larger countries tend to have higher numbers both of cases and of deaths. But there are many other factors in play, such as the demographic profiles of the countries; countries with ageing populations may be hit harder because the disease is more dangerous to older people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/19/covid-19-world-map-which-countries-have-the-most-coronavirus-cases-and-deaths>

Coronavirus vaccine: Australia secures access to Oxford-AstraZeneca trial

Australia says it has secured access to a promising coronavirus vaccine and will be able to offer free doses to its entire population of 25 million people. The vaccine is being developed by the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca and Oxford University. If clinical trials are successful, the deal with AstraZeneca would secure "early access for every Australian", Prime Minister Scott Morrison said. Mr Morrison said it was likely that vaccinations would be mandatory. Australia has recorded 450 coronavirus deaths, most from an outbreak in the state of Victoria. Earlier this month, Victoria declared a state of disaster and imposed strict lockdown measures after a surge in infections. It still

has more than 7,000 active cases, but the number of new infections has declined in the past week.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-53826846>

Australia secures deal for potential Covid-19 vaccine, will provide it free to all citizens

Australia has secured a deal with the drugmaker AstraZeneca to supply a potential Covid-19 vaccine to its entire population free of charge, the government announced Tuesday, becoming the latest country to lock in supplies of the drug should trials succeed. British-based AstraZeneca is developing the vaccine in partnership with Oxford University, with advanced trials now underway with thousands of volunteers across multiple countries. Under the deal, the Australian government would manufacture the vaccine and offer free doses to all citizens. "The Oxford vaccine is one of the most advanced and promising in the world, and under this deal we have secured early access for every Australian," said Prime Minister Scott Morrison in a statement released late Tuesday local time. "If this vaccine proves successful we will manufacture and supply vaccines straight away under our own steam and make it free for 25 million Australians."

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/19/australia/australia-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-intl-hnk-scli-scni/index.html>

Coronavirus Resurgence

France reports over 2,000 new coronavirus infections

The French health ministry reported 2,238 confirmed new coronavirus infections on Tuesday, less than recent daily highs but still at levels last seen during the March-May lockdown imposed to stem the spread of the disease. On Monday, when the number of reported cases typically falls sharply due to a lag in weekend test results, the ministry had reported just 493 new cases, after over 3,000 each on Sunday and Saturday and over 2,500 per day last Wednesday through Friday. The seven-day moving average of the case count, which smooths out daily reporting irregularities, has now been above 2,000 for five consecutive days, a level that was last seen around the middle of April.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-france-casualties/france-reports-over-2000-new-coronavirus-infections-idUKKCN25E2C2>

Global daily Covid-19 deaths are nearing levels last seen during first wave of crisis in April amid spiralling outbreaks in the Americas, data shows

Global daily Covid-19 deaths are nearing levels last seen during first wave of crisis in April amid spiralling outbreaks in the Americas, data shows. A total of 6,600 patients worldwide were dying to the disease every day in April. Outbreak in Europe squashed and deaths driven down over summer months. Pandemic has accelerated in Americas and average daily deaths now at 6,348

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8642557/Global-daily-Covid-deaths-nearing-levels-seen-April-experts-brand-wake-call.html>

Covid-19 Appeared to Be Under Control in Europe. Now It's Surging Again.

Coronavirus infections are surging again across much of Europe and governments are racing to prevent a full-fledged second wave of the pandemic —without resorting to the kind of broad lockdowns that devastated their economies in the spring. The seven-day moving average of reported new daily cases has more than doubled since the end of July in the five largest European countries, nearing 11,000. That is the biggest sustained rise on the continent since it beat back the virus's initial spike in March and April. Outbreaks are multiplying around vacation hot spots, shopping centers, parties and some workplaces. Authorities are also reporting that many cases have no known origin, undermining efforts to use contact tracing to contain the virus and indicating relatively wide community spread.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-appeared-to-be-under-control-in-europe-now-its-surging-again-11597848444?mod=newsvIEWer_click

Alarming surge in Covid-19 sparks fears of second wave - this is where infections are

rising

Worrying new data shows 15 hotspots with soaring Covid-19 infection rates where the killer virus is on the rise - including parts of locked-down Greater Manchester. Manchester and Salford, alongside Blackburn with Darwen, which has seemed to be on the right track, while Birmingham has also seen a steep hike in cases, Public Health England figures show. Kirklees has also seen an alarming surge, while Northampton has England's highest rate - thanks to an outbreak at the Greencore sandwich factory, reports MirrorOnline. There are 80 areas in England with a rate of more than 10 cases per 100,000 of the population. Of these, 53 have seen increases in the past seven days, with parts of the Midlands and London reporting a concerning increase.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/alarming-surge-covid-19-sparks-18792317>

Nicola Sturgeon announces 50 new Covid-19 cases as no deaths recorded

There were 50 new cases of coronavirus in the last 24 hours in Scotland, the First Minister has announced today. But there have now been no new deaths related to the killer virus since July. The total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases across the country now stands at 19,457. Patients currently being treated in hospital with the deadly virus stands at 248, down six, with two currently in intensive care.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-announces-50-new-22545011>

South Korea tightens Covid-19 curbs amid warning of new 'crisis'

Museums, nightclubs and karaoke bars have closed in and around South Korea's capital, Seoul, as Covid-19 cases reach a five-month high. The country reported another 297 new cases on Wednesday - the highest daily figure since March. South Korea is viewed as one of the world's coronavirus success stories for its management of the disease. But a spike in new cases linked mostly to a church has sparked concerns of a wider outbreak. Wednesday saw a three-digit increase in cases for a sixth day after weeks with numbers generally around the 40s. Of the 297 infections reported, 252 were in the greater Seoul area. Many of the new cases have been linked to the Sarang Jeil Church, whose pastor has been a vocal critic of President Moon Jae-in.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-53830982>

Coronavirus: Oldham facing full-scale lockdown if cases don't fall as it becomes UK hotspot

Oldham is facing the "very real threat" of a full-scale lockdown if its coronavirus cases don't fall, its council leader has confirmed. Comments from Labour councillor Sean Fielding that the town is "resisting" a lockdown follow those of Health Secretary Matt Hancock, who earlier warned Oldham is posing the "biggest challenge" among Greater Manchester areas. The north-west town is the UK's new coronavirus hotspot, according to the latest data from the NHS, and last week it narrowly avoided following Leicester in being placed under strict lockdown. Speaking to ITV News, Health Secretary Hancock refused to rule out a full lockdown for the town, which would include a closure of some non-essential businesses.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-08-19/coronavirus-oldham-facing-full-scale-lockdown-if-cases-dont-fall-as-it-becomes-uk-hotspot>

Oldham feared to be on brink of 'catastrophic' coronavirus lockdown

Oldham in Greater Manchester is 48 hours away from potentially being ordered into a "catastrophic" and "premature" local lockdown, its council leader has warned. Ministers are expected to decide on Thursday whether to order the closure of the town's bars, restaurants and gyms in the first local lockdown in England since hospitality businesses reopened last month. The town has the highest coronavirus infection rate in England despite restrictions on social visits imposed three weeks ago. However, figures due to be released on Wednesday show the number of new cases is declining. Sean Fielding, the council leader, said that being "pushed" into a full Leicester-style lockdown would

be disastrous for Oldham's already struggling economy and would not be "based on evidence".

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/18/oldham-feared-on-brink-catastrophic-coronavirus-lockdown>

Coronavirus digest: Germany cases at highest level in months

Sweden saw its highest death tally for 150 years in the first six months of 2020, the country's statistics office has announced. Coronavirus had claimed around 4,500 lives in Sweden by the end of June, representing a much higher proportion of the population than in neighboring Nordic countries. Overall, 51,405 people died between in the January to June period, the highest number since an 1869 famine. The death count is around 10% higher than the average over the last five years. This is still less of an increase than those seen by the UK and Spain. The country has been widely criticized for the limited restrictions put in place during the worst period of the pandemic. The death tally has since risen to over 5,800.

<https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-digest-germany-cases-at-highest-level-in-months/a-54618997>

Coronavirus lockdowns loom from Germany to South Korea with uptick in new cases

The number of coronavirus cases is shooting up around the globe, including in countries lauded for containing the spread, threatening another round of lockdowns. More than 22.1 million people have been infected and 781,366 killed worldwide, according to Johns Hopkins University. Germany saw its highest jump in new cases since May 1 on Tuesday with 1,510 confirmed infections, according to the country's disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute. One of the factors contributing to the uptick is an "increasing number of cases among travel returnees," the institute said.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/coronavirus-lockdowns-loom-germany-south-korea-uptick-new-cases-n1237252>

Italy at a crossroads as fears grow of Covid-19 second wave

It took a weekend to take Italy back three months in its struggle against the pandemic. Last week's rapid increase in coronavirus infections risks erasing the progress made by the first European country to be engulfed by Covid-19 and extending the closure of schools in September. The alarm was sounded last Saturday, when Italy registered 629 new cases in 24 hours, up from 500 on the previous two days. Such numbers recorded in a row had not been seen since May, when Italy cautiously emerged from one of the longest lockdowns in the world after more than 30,000 Covid-related deaths. On Wednesday another 642 people tested positive for the coronavirus. On Sunday the government ordered the closure of discotheques and made masks compulsory outdoors in specific areas at night - the first real restrictions since the lockdown eased. "We cannot nullify the sacrifices made in past months," said the health minister, Roberto Speranza, as the spectre of a second wave began to spread across the country.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/19/italy-at-a-crossroads-as-fears-grow-of-covid-19-second-wave>

Russia reports 4,828 new coronavirus cases

Russia reported 4,828 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday, pushing its nationwide tally to 937,321, the fourth largest in the world. Russia's coronavirus taskforce said 117 people had died over the last 24 hours, bringing its official death toll to 15,989.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-russia-cases/russia-reports-4828-new-coronavirus-cases-idUKKCN25F0UH>

Polish hospital says it'll soon run out of beds

The director of a major Polish hospital has warned that his facility is at risk of running out of beds for coronavirus patients. The country of 38 million has so far registered some 58,000 cases and 1,900 deaths, numbers which are far lower than many countries in western Europe. However, infections have been rising for weeks, with around 700 new cases per day -- up from 200-300 earlier in the summer. Marcin Jedrychowski, director of the University Hospital in Krakow, the largest and most modern facility in Poland, told the news portal Onet that his hospital has already been forced to

select patients and admit only the most severe cases.

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20200819/p2g/00m/0in/135000c>

Philippines reports 4,650 new coronavirus cases, 111 additional deaths

The Philippine health ministry on Wednesday confirmed 4,650 new coronavirus infections and 111 additional deaths. In a bulletin, the ministry said total confirmed cases have risen to 173,774, the highest in Southeast Asia, while deaths have increased to 2,795. The government on Wednesday relaxed a strict lockdown in the capital and nearby provinces, allowing more business establishments to resume operations.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-philippines-cases/philippines-reports-4650-new-coronavirus-cases-111-additional-deaths-idUKKCN25F0VP>

UAE sees 'alarming' increase in coronavirus cases

An increase in the number of coronavirus cases over the past two weeks is "alarming" and may herald further increases in the near future, the United Arab Emirates' health minister said on Tuesday. The UAE registered 365 new cases and two deaths over the last 24 hours, the government said, bringing the total number of COVID-19 infections in the Gulf state since the start of the pandemic to 64,906 with 366 deaths. New daily coronavirus cases in the UAE peaked in mid-May but the country has seen periodic spikes since then, despite a generally falling trend.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-emirates/uae-sees-alarming-increase-in-coronavirus-cases-idUKKCN25E26G?il=0>

Coronavirus: Ireland at 'tipping point' as Covid-19 cases rise

The Republic of Ireland's cabinet has reversed some of its lockdown relaxation measures as it attempts to deal with rising Covid-19 case numbers. Irish Health Minister Stephen Donnelly said: "We are at a tipping point." He added that a few weeks ago there were just 61 new reported cases for a seven day period but last week there were 533 cases. The tightening of restrictions comes ahead of the reopening of schools over the next two weeks. Taoiseach (Irish PM) Mícheál Martin said that if the current rates of Covid-19 continue to rise "it will be impossible to stop the spread of the virus to our most vulnerable and our most compromised". On Tuesday, a further coronavirus-related death was reported, bringing the Republic of Ireland's total to 1,775. There were 190 more confirmed cases of Covid-19.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-53826957>

New Lockdown

Town in Spain orders lockdown following surge in COVID-19 cases - despite majority being asymptomatic and just one remaining in hospital

Villamalea, in Albacete, has been ordered by the Government of Castilla-La Mancha to confine its 4,000 inhabitants. It comes after experts confirmed there was a worrying increase in coronavirus cases which points to community transmissions,

<https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2020/08/19/town-in-spain-orders-lockdown-following-surge-in-covid-19-cases-despite-majority-being-asymptomatic-and-just-one-remaining-in-hospital/>

Lebanon reimposes lockdown amid COVID-19 spike: ministry

Lebanese authorities on Tuesday announced a new lockdown and an overnight curfew to rein in a spike in coronavirus infections. The new measures will come into effect on Friday and last just over two weeks, the interior ministry said, adding that they would not affect the clean-up and aid effort following the devastating August 4 Beirut port blast. A curfew will be imposed from 6:00 pm (1500 GMT) to 6:00 am.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200818-lebanon-reimposes-lockdown-amid-covid-19-spike-ministry>

Auckland lockdown affecting businesses throughout NZ

When New Zealanders emerged from their five weeks of level 4 lockdown, the top priority for many was getting a break from home cooking and finally ordering that favourite takeaway. Fast food outlets reported record sales, and the flat white-deprived population ensured struggling cafes got a much-needed cash injection. But it appears there's been no such flurry of business for the hospitality sector during the new level 3 lockdown, and there are fears it could be one hurdle too many for some businesses - and not only those in Auckland.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/423887/auckland-lockdown-affecting-businesses-throughout-nz>