

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

27th Aug 2020

News Highlights

Russia to test 'approved' coronavirus vaccine on 40,000 people

Russia, which greenlit the world's first coronavirus vaccine earlier this month, after only two months of small-scale human trials, will start a new phase of clinical trials on over 40,000 people in Moscow. [The Russian Direct Investment Fund said that trials for the vaccine, called 'Sputnik V,' will also be held in five other countries.](#)

No new lockdown in Italy despite rise in cases

Health Minister, Roberto Speranza, ruled out a new nationwide lockdown in Italy, despite a sharp rise in recent coronavirus cases, as the nation struggles to emerge from a recession that has seen millions of jobs lost. [Speranza said that despite the rising cases, the situation was under control and that only 66 patients were currently in intensive care,](#) compared to 4,068 patients at the peak of the pandemic.

Women have stronger Covid-19 immune response, study shows

A new study published in the journal Nature suggests that women may mount a stronger immune system response than men against Covid-19, which may explain why women only account for about 40% of deaths globally from the virus. [Researchers found that women's immune systems produced T lymphocytes,](#) a type of white blood cell that can recognize viruses and eliminate them, while men had weaker T-cell activity and a weaker response the older they were.

New partial lockdown in Jordan as Covid-19 cases spike

Jordan will ban businesses from operating between 10pm and 6am and also impose a ban on movement from 11pm to 6am, as the country fights its worst Covid-19 outbreak since the start of the pandemic. [The state will also impose total lockdowns on areas with outbreaks on Fridays and suspend visiting hours in public hospitals across the country,](#) with the aim of reducing gatherings and the mingling of citizens, while avoiding a total nationwide lockdown.

Lockdown Exit

Thailand delays human testing for coronavirus vaccine

Thailand will delay human trials of its coronavirus vaccine due to limited production capacity at overseas facilities, a senior official said on Wednesday, but it hopes to resume trials by the end of the year. Thai health authorities had planned human testing of the vaccine by October, but must delay that by several months as factories abroad are at full capacity, said Kiat Ruxrungtham, director of the Chulalongkorn University vaccine development programme. The delay will be a setback for Thailand's push to quickly create its own vaccine and comes as developers worldwide race to complete trials and secure regulatory approval. A race is on among countries to guarantee a supply amid concern about competition for access, with Britain and the United States in the lead in securing six vaccine deals with drugmakers each.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-thailand-vaccine/thailand-delays-human-testing-for-coronavirus-vaccine-idUKKBN25M13I>

Myanmar shuts schools after biggest daily climb in coronavirus cases

Myanmar ordered all schools to close after reporting 70 new coronavirus infections on Wednesday, its biggest daily rise, as authorities try to tackle a resurgence of the virus following weeks without confirmed domestic transmission.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-myanmar/myanmar-shuts-schools-after-biggest-daily-climb-in-coronavirus-cases-idUSKBN25M0E8>

India: Health workers alarmed over 'black holes' in COVID-19 apps

Health officials and lawyers have expressed worry about unclear terms on issues like data retention and sharing. "People were just hostile," said Kaur, who is one of more than one million Accredited Social Health Activists, or ASHA workers, on the front lines of India's battle to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus. "We didn't want to download the app, but our concerns were ignored," Kaur said in a phone interview. "There is so much information the app wants from every individual, including pictures. Many are just scared to give it now and threaten us if we persist." Considered key tools in stemming the pandemic, the rollout of Punjab's Corona Virus Alert (COVA) app and the dozens of tracing apps being used by different Indian states has been mired in concerns over privacy issues.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/india-health-workers-alarmed-black-holes-covid-19-apps-200826135111352.html>

Is Boris Johnson following the science - or following the Scots?

Boris Johnson and his ministers are well known for their mantra that they are "following the science". On the evidence of recent weeks it might be said that they are also "following the Scots". The recent Westminster/English policy U-turn on masks follows other such examples, where UK ministers now responsible only for policy in England have followed the Scottish precedent, reversing a previously decided approach, as on the wearing of face coverings on public transport, in shops and indeed on abandoning plans to send pupils back to school towards the end of the last term. Most recently, the UK's secretary of state for education, Gavin Williamson, has pleaded to be allowed to keep his job on the grounds that his counterparts in Belfast (DUP/Sinn Fein), Edinburgh (SNP) and Cardiff (Labour/Lib Dem) have been doing much the same as he has, and if they're not being sacked neither should he be dismissed from his role. There is also some suggestion that the Scottish government (as well as the devolved administrations in Wales and Northern Ireland) earlier in the year urged the English authorities to proceed more slowly in relaxing the lockdown from May onwards, and to retain more of the social distancing conventions and business support for longer. So far as their devolved powers allowed them to, this is indeed what transpired in the three mostly self-governing parts of the UK. Arguably their greater caution has resulted in better health outcomes and fewer local lockdowns.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/politics-explained/boris-johnson-coronavirus-nicola-sturgeon-scotland-lockdown-a9689871.html>

People on low incomes in UK Covid hotspots to be paid if self-isolating

People on low incomes in areas with high coronavirus infection rates will be eligible for a payment of up to £182 if they have to self-isolate, the government has announced. Under the scheme, being trialled from Tuesday in Blackburn with Darwen, Oldham and Pendle, low-paid people who test positive for Covid-19 will receive £130 for their 10-day isolation period. This rises to £182 - or £13 a day - for people they have been in close contact with, including members of their household, who have to isolate for 14 days. The move follows weeks of campaigning by regional mayors, councils and trade unions who said millions of people across the country could not afford to isolate without pay for a fortnight.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/27/people-on-low-incomes-in-uk-covid-hotspots-to-be-paid-if-self-isolating>

COVID-19 -- Scenarios for the post-lockdown period in Italy

Infection has been reduced up to 70% as of May 1st. Thanks to developed model, scenarios can be drawn regarding future containment measures. While the pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2 is still ravaging most countries of the world and containment measures are implemented worldwide, a debate is emerging on whether these measures might be partially alleviated, and in case how and when. This discussion requires appropriate models that guide decision-makers through alternative actions via scenarios of the related trajectories of the epidemic. This is the subject of a research whose results are published today in the journal Nature Communications by a team of Italian scientists from Università Ca' Foscari (Venice), Politecnico di Milano (Milan), Università di Padova (Padua), and École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Lausanne, Switzerland).

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-08/pdm-c-s082620.php

Exit Strategies

Germany extends its furlough scheme until end of 2021

Germany has extended its furlough scheme until the end of 2021 despite reservations in Angela Merkel's party about a bill that may exceed €30 billion. The measure is intended to buy time for the economy to recover after GDP contracted by 11.7 per cent over the first six months of this year. It is expected to take until late next year or early 2022 to regain the lost ground.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/germany-extends-its-furlough-scheme-until-end-of-2021-nq9m58jb8>

EU eyes initial COVID-19 vaccination for at least 40% of population

European Union nations, Britain and EU partners have agreed on a blueprint for a COVID-19 vaccination plan envisaging inoculation of at least 40% of their populations, a step that may set back the World Health Organisation's own vaccine blueprint. The EU target for early vaccinations is twice as high as the goal set by the WHO, which is aiming to buy vaccines initially for 20% of the world's most vulnerable people through a global procurement scheme. The EU estimates that the share of its population in need of initial vaccination, should a shot be developed, would be at least 40%, effectively reducing the availability of possible doses for less developed countries. There is so far no approved COVID-19 vaccine, except one authorised in Russia before large-scale trials. The supply of the vaccines that might be successful is expected to be limited for a long period as production capacities are limited.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eu-vaccination/eu-eyes-initial-covid-19-vaccination-for-at-least-40-of-population-idUKKBN25M1KW>

NYC's Virus Threat Has Faded, But Its Future Is Stuck in Limbo

The city is grasping for some semblance of its old self. Among the terrible what-ifs, there's the big one: What if the virus strikes again? Begin in the East 80s, off Madison: waiters in surgical masks hand out sanitized menus to the regulars dining al fresco. Across town, in the West 70s, the sirens have yielded to the familiar clang of jackhammers. In Central Park, the zoo, the playgrounds, even the carousel have reopened. Soon, schools across the city will too, but not fully. Squint, and you can see it: New York, once the epicenter of the nation's coronavirus outbreak, is grasping for some semblance of its old self. Five eternal months after the lockdown began, office workers have started to trickle back to midtown. A fraction of the suburban commuters are braving the Metro-North lines. Wall Street is roaring, though still mostly working from home.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-26/nyc-s-virus-threat-has-faded-but-its-future-is-stuck-in-limbo>

UK arrivals into Guernsey to be tested in next phase of lockdown exit

Passengers arriving into Guernsey from 'Group B' countries - which includes the UK and Jersey - may only need to self-isolate for as little as 24 hours in the next phase of the island's exit from lockdown. In an update to the island's lockdown strategy, inbound passengers would be tested on arrival and again on the seventh day. They would be subject to 'passive surveillance' until day 14, meaning they

must report any Covid-19 symptoms and avoid all care homes and the hospital except in the event of an emergency. Passengers coming to the island from Group A countries would still have to complete a mandatory self-isolation period of 14 days. The rules for Group C will also remain the same, with no self-isolation requirement for passengers arriving from countries where an 'air bridge' is in place. Currently, this refers only to the Isle of Man.

<https://www.itv.com/news/channel/2020-08-26/uk-arrivals-into-guernsey-to-be-tested-in-next-phase-of-lockdown-exit>

Coronavirus: Face coverings U-turn for England's secondary schools

Secondary pupils will have to wear face coverings in school corridors in local lockdown areas of England, after the government reversed its guidance. Head teachers in any secondary school will also have the "flexibility" to introduce masks in their schools. Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said it followed updated advice from the World Health Organization. But Labour accused the government of "passing the buck" on decisions back to schools. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the new guidance meant that in coronavirus "hot spot" areas that "it probably does make sense in confined areas outside the classroom to use a face covering in the corridor and elsewhere".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-53907035>

Coronavirus: Lockdown eased in Wigan and parts of Lancashire

Lockdown rules are easing in Wigan, the only borough in Greater Manchester where extra restrictions imposed just under a month ago have been lifted. Rossendale and parts of Blackburn with Darwen, in Lancashire, have also had restrictions eased, the Department for Health and Social care said. Wigan Council leader David Molyneux, thanked residents for being "responsible, patient and kind". Tighter rules were reintroduced after a regional increase in Covid-19 cases. Mr Molyneux said residents had "done their bit to reduce the spread of the virus." "I know it hasn't been easy but by working together and following the rules we've managed to keep our loved ones safe," he said.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-53908486>

Schools learn the lessons from lockdown, want to start and finish earlier

A northern beaches high school has proposed ending the school day at 2pm, saying a European model of earlier start and finish times would make students more independent and give teachers more time for one-on-one feedback. But some parents are worried the move would not suit junior school students, who are less independent learners, while the timetable would challenge working parents relying on 3pm public transport. Pittwater High School principal Jane Ferris said compressed timetables introduced during the COVID-19 lockdown had made her reflect on "the European model", where schools such as Sweden and Germany start around 8am and finish after lunchtime. The school found many students enjoyed having blocks of time to catch up on work or prepare for assignments, while teachers had greater opportunities to give students feedback and engage parents.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/schools-learn-the-lessons-from-lockdown-want-to-start-and-finish-earlier-2020-0820-p55nrv.html>

"We will do this together:" Germany will continue subsidizing workers' wages through the end of 2021

It may have been intended as a short-term tool in Germany's fight against the pandemic's economic effects, but that's not how the government's massive wage-support program is panning out. Now recognizing that it will take at least a couple years to get the economy back to pre-pandemic levels, Angela Merkel's coalition government announced late Tuesday the extension of the current Kurzarbeit ("short time work") scheme until the end of 2021.

<https://fortune.com/2020/08/26/germany-extends-kurzarbeit-pandemic-wage-support/>

Germany Boosts Already Hefty Coronavirus Stimulus

Germany is beefing up its already formidable stimulus package to prop up its economy through the

Covid-19 pandemic, brushing away concerns from some economists that the state is keeping insolvent businesses afloat artificially. Wage subsidies for furloughed workers, the flagship measure in the country's new package, will be extended by 12 months to the end of 2021, in contrast with most other European countries, whose programs are set to expire in the coming months. Furlough programs, known in Europe as short-time work, allow companies to temporarily idle workers without resorting to payroll cuts. So far, the program has allowed Germany to avoid a spike in unemployment and could help businesses adjust faster to rising demand when the economy normalizes. The 5.6 million workers currently enrolled can earn up to 87% of their pay from benefits while working reduced hours or not at all.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/germany-boosts-already-hefty-coronavirus-stimulus-11598440184>

Coronavirus: How are other countries getting children back to class?

French schoolchildren will be returning to school on 1 September with a somewhat relaxed version of the rules under which some of them went back to school in May. For example, there will no longer be a limit on class sizes, and distancing is not compulsory in situations where it would stop a school being able to fit all its pupils in. The exception to that is the use of masks, which will be compulsory indoors for staff and students over the age of 11, even if they manage to stay more than 1m apart. This means teachers will take lessons wearing masks. Schools are no longer forced to prevent different classes and groups of students from mixing, but they are encouraged to stagger start and finish times to prevent large groups building up. Floors, desks and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as door handles, must be cleaned and disinfected at least once a day.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-53892357>

Saving lives or UK economy from Covid a 'false choice', MPs warn

Saving lives or the economy in the coronavirus pandemic is a "false choice", MPs have warned as a study confirms the UK to have one of the highest excess death rates combined with the worst projected hit to the economy. Data analysed by the Guardian shows the UK has effectively endured the worst of both worlds, with 610 excess deaths per million while GDP is set to fall by 11.5% this year. This places it narrowly ahead of Italy and Spain, which also have high excess death figures and devastating economic forecasts.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/26/saving-lives-or-uk-economy-from-covid-a-false-choice-mps-warn>

Developing countries don't want to wait for superpowers' vaccines

After COVID-19's emergence in Buenos Aires led to a strict lockdown in March, Juliana Cassataro and her fellow vaccine researchers grew concerned. The U.S., Europe and China had already revved up their quests to obtain shots; how far back in line would Argentina have to wait for supplies? "We did not want to stay in our homes," said Cassataro, a scientist at the National University of San Martin in the nation's capital. "We wanted to use our knowledge to help in this pandemic." Determined to give Latin America its own protection from the fast-spreading virus, Cassataro's team — 10 women and two men — quickly got to work. A government grant of \$100,000 in May paid for initial studies, and human trials could start in about six months.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/26/world/science-health-world/developing-countries-coronavirus-vaccines/>

UK school pupils WILL wear face masks if local area in lockdown

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said face coverings will be compulsory. Decision on whether to wear masks in most schools to be down to headteachers. The eleventh-hour U-turn followed new advice from World Health Organisation

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8663779/Secondary-pupils-wear-face-coverings-classrooms-local-area-goes-lockdown.html>

Covid 19 coronavirus: The Government targets South Auckland in new virus testing blitz

The Government is embarking on a week-long Covid-19 testing blitz, promising to test 70,000 people in a bid to "further tighten the screws on this elusive virus". The approach will be "aggressively targeted," according to Health Minister Chris Hipkins, with a specific focus on South Auckland. Officials will be testing asymptomatic people in this region - a new strategy for this outbreak - and will target specific regions, rather than only people with Covid-19 symptoms.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12359543

England schools in COVID hotspots to bring in face masks after government U-turn

It may have been intended as a short-term tool in Germany's fight against the pandemic's economic effects, but that's not how the government's massive wage-support program is panning out. Now recognizing that it will take at least a couple years to get the economy back to pre-pandemic levels, Angela Merkel's coalition government announced late Tuesday the extension of the current Kurzarbeit ("short time work") scheme until the end of 2021.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-education/england-schools-in-covid-hotspots-to-bring-in-face-masks-after-government-u-turn-idUKKBN25M0ND>

Column: Public confidence, often inscrutable, pivotal for recovery

Public confidence in virus control, rather than the length and stringency of government lockdowns, may be the best way to gauge how economies emerge from this year's pandemic - though tracking that confidence can be a bewildering business. Apparent gaps between what people are saying and doing complicate the task facing economists in assessing confidence, and how economies are expected to heal - at least before the arrival of a game-changing vaccine that's still likely to be at least six months away. Britain provided an example of this confusion last week, with retail sales volumes returning to pre-pandemic levels in July despite consumer confidence polls remaining mired in gloom close to 10-year lows for the past two months. There's a similar picture in the United States, where consumer confidence readings are also stuck near six-year lows even as retail sales return to their highest on record in July.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-global-confidence/column-public-confidence-often-inscrutable-pivotal-for-recovery-idUKKBN25M0YI>

Partisan Exits

Berlin bans protest against coronavirus curbs

The city of Berlin will put thousands of police on the streets at the weekend to enforce a ban on demonstrations opposing measures imposed to stem the coronavirus pandemic after marchers at a recent rally failed to wear masks or keep their distance. Andreas Geisel, the Berlin interior senator, said the authorities had decided to ban the protest after weighing up the importance of the right to freedom of assembly with the need to protect people against infection. "We are still in the middle of a pandemic with rising infection figures," he said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany-protest/berlin-bans-protest-against-coronavirus-curbs-idUKKBN25M1F6?il=0>

'Freedom Day' protests against coronavirus lockdown slammed by Daniel Andrews

Tens of thousands of Australians are preparing to participate in "Freedom Day" protests against coronavirus restrictions. Predominantly in Victoria - but with others planned elsewhere across Australia - COVID sceptics are voicing their intention to rally. The date they have marked in their calendars is September 5.

<https://7news.com.au/lifestyle/health-wellbeing/freedom-day-protests-against-coronavirus-lockdown-slammed-by-daniel-andrews-c-1265108>

U.S. health agency says testing not needed for some exposed to COVID-19, drawing criticism

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said this week that people exposed to COVID-19 but not symptomatic may not need to be tested, shocking doctors and politicians and prompting accusations the guidance was politically motivated. The advice marks a reversal of the agency's previous position recommending testing for all close contacts of people diagnosed with COVID-19. Admiral Brett Giroir, the assistant secretary for health at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), said the goal was "appropriate testing," not more testing for its own sake, and that there was no political pressure from the administration behind the decision. CNN and The New York Times reported on Wednesday that U.S. public health officials were ordered by high-level members of the Trump administration to push forward with the changes.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-cdc-testing/u-s-health-agency-says-testing-not-needed-for-some-exposed-to-covid-19-drawing-criticism-idUKKBN25M2IV>

Continued Lockdown

Victorian economy could lose four years of growth due to virus lockdown

Lockdowns to stop the spread of coronavirus across Victoria could punch a \$41 billion hole in the state's economy and drag it back to where it was in 2016 with fresh warnings its COVID-19 outbreak is holding back the entire nation. Forecasts from both the ANZ and the NAB suggest the Victorian economy will this year suffer the single largest economic hit of any state or territory on record that will also drive up unemployment and weigh on wages growth.

<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/federal/victorian-economy-could-lose-four-years-of-growth-due-to-virus-lockdown-20200826-p55phc.html>

Ukraine bans foreigners, extends lockdown measures to fight COVID-19: government meeting

Ukraine on Wednesday imposed a temporary ban on most foreigners from entering the country until Sept. 28 and extended lockdown measures until the end of October to contain a recent spike in coronavirus cases. Speaking at a televised cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Denys Shmygal also said the government would need to take a decision on Thursday on whether to ban major public events in September. "The rise in coronavirus infections we have seen in recent weeks is forcing us to act more decisively," Shmygal said. The daily tally of new infections jumped to around 2,000 last week with a record high of 2,328 on Saturday. The total number of infections reached 110,085 on Wednesday, with 2,354 deaths.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-ukraine/ukraine-bans-foreigners-extends-lockdown-measures-to-fight-covid-19-government-meeting-idUKKBN25M1HP>

Scientific Viewpoint

Russia Starts Trials of Approved COVID-19 Vaccine on 40,000 People

Russia starts a new phase of clinic trials of Russia's approved COVID-19 vaccine called "Sputnik V" that will involve more than 40,000 people in Moscow, the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) said on Wednesday. The RDIF, which is backing the vaccine, said similar trials would be held in five other countries. The vaccine has been hailed as safe and effective by Russian authorities and scientists following two months of small-scale human trials, the results of which have not been made public yet.

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/08/26/world/europe/26reuters-health-coronavirus-russia-vaccine-putin.html>

VBI Vaccines selects two COVID-19 vaccine candidates for human trials

VBI Vaccines Inc said on Wednesday it expected to begin human testing of two of its experimental COVID-19 vaccine candidates at the end of the year. The two candidates, VBI-2901 and VBI-2902, were selected after three pre-clinical mouse studies induced neutralizing antibodies after a single dose, the company said. The activity was analyzed using a plaque reduction neutralization test, considered the gold standard for measuring antibodies that can neutralize a virus, the company

said. VBI said its manufacturing partner, Therapure Biomanufacturing, will begin making bulk vaccines in September for use through mid-stage trials.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-vaccine-vbi-vaccin/vbi-vaccines-selects-two-covid-19-vaccine-candidates-for-human-trials-idUKKBN25M1P9>

Covid-19 vaccine trials may begin in Southampton this autumn

A coronavirus vaccine candidate developed by scientists in Southampton could begin clinical trials in the city in the autumn. A £1.9 million funding boost from Innovate UK, the Government's innovation agency, has provided support for a collaboration between Cambridge spin-out company DIOSynVax, the University of Cambridge and the University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust. The cash will allow the team to take the vaccine candidate to clinical trial. This will take place at the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Southampton Clinical Research Facility and could begin as early as autumn this year.

<https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/18675106.covid-19-vaccine-trials-may-begin-southampton-autumn/>

Are COVID-19 Vaccines And Therapeutics Advancing Faster Than Expected

The worldwide response, both private and public, to finding a therapeutic and/or vaccine for the global pandemic has brought out the best in the global community. Contrary to historical comparable situations, it appears that this time a vaccine or vaccines may emerge in the very near future... an astronomical pace. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, infectious disease experts said that developing a vaccine for the virus would take at least 12-18 months. Now, in their continued blitzkrieg against SARS-CoV-2, the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19, several drug companies are keeping pace with their ambitious timelines, and some are moving even faster than they initially predicted. Recent articles have reflected this optimism. One such report said: "The pandemic is pushing drug companies to develop and test their wares at unparalleled speeds. "There is no reason you couldn't speed up drug development if you really focused on it, and that's what the pandemic has brought," say a CEO of a life sciences consulting firm... Never have so many groups been working on vaccines and treatments for the same disease, said an, executive director of a medical research advocacy division of a well-known Institute. "(But) We have to be cautiously optimistic."

<https://www.prnewswire.co.uk/news-releases/are-covid-19-vaccines-and-therapeutics-advancing-faster-than-expected-876602324.html>

Citriodiol-based spray can help protect against Covid-19, says MoD lab

A naturally derived mosquito repellent that was given to British soldiers in April is effective at providing protection against Covid-19, defence scientists have said. But it is unclear whether the spray would make any practical difference beyond frequent hand-washing and the use of alcohol-based hand sanitisers and personal protective equipment in insulating against the virus. The Ministry of Defence released an eight-page paper from the Porton Down-based Defence Science and Technology Lab (DSTL), which tested the efficacy of Mosi-guard, a Citriodiol-based spray, on plastic and artificial skin. Jeremy Quin, a junior defence minister, said the research found that sprays containing Citriodiol "can kill the virus".

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/26/citriodiol-based-spray-can-help-protect-against-covid-19-says-mod-lab>

Covid-19 vaccine makers lobby EU for legal protection

The European pharmaceutical industry's vaccines lobby has pushed the EU for exemptions that would protect its members from lawsuits if there are problems with any new coronavirus vaccines, according to people with knowledge of the discussions and an internal memo seen by the Financial Times. The pandemic has compressed into months vaccine research and development that can take years. Some potential vaccines are already at the phase-three testing stage — the last step before they come to regulators for approval. At the same time, governments around the world have poured

cash into research and development to try to save lives and prevent economically crippling lockdowns.

<https://www.ft.com/content/12f7da5b-92c8-4050-bcea-e726b75eef4d>

Non-woven masks better to stop Covid-19, says Japanese supercomputer

Face masks made from non-woven fabric are more effective at blocking the spread of Covid-19 via airborne respiratory droplets than other types that are commonly available, according to modelling in Japan by the world's fastest supercomputer. Fugaku, which can perform more than 415 quadrillion computations a second, conducted simulations involving three types of mask, and found that non-woven masks were better than those made of cotton and polyester at blocking spray emitted when the wearer coughs, the Nikkei Asian Review said. Non-woven masks refer to the disposable medical masks that are commonly worn in Japan during the flu season, and now during the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/26/non-woven-masks-better-to-stop-covid-19-says-japanese-supercomputer>

Obesity increases risk of Covid-19 death by 48%, study finds

Obesity increases the risk of dying of Covid-19 by nearly 50% and may make vaccines against the disease less effective, according to a comprehensive study using global data. The findings, which the lead researcher described as "scary", show that the risks for people with obesity are greater than previously thought. The study - a collaborative effort between the University of North Carolina (UNC), Saudi Health Council and World Bank - will increase pressure on governments to tackle obesity, including in the UK where Boris Johnson has put himself at the head of a drive to reduce the nation's weight. It emerged ahead of a report from the Institute for Public Policy Research that calls on the government to go further than its recent initiatives, which include restrictions on junk food advertising and supermarket offers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/26/obesity-increases-risk-of-covid-19-death-by-48-study-finds>

Coronavirus: Two patients in Europe catch COVID-19 for a second time - reports

Two patients in Europe have reportedly been confirmed as having been reinfected with the coronavirus, with scientists admitting it is "not good news". A patient in the Netherlands said to have caught the virus for a second time is an older person with a weakened immune system, according to Dutch national broadcaster NOS. The other person - in Belgium - was said to have experienced mild symptoms after catching the virus again in June, having reportedly first been infected in the second week of March.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-two-patients-in-europe-catch-covid-19-for-a-second-time-reports-12056933>

Coronavirus: UK dropped WHO guidance on alcohol-based hand sanitisers before lockdown

Official advice on what hand sanitiser to use against coronavirus was watered down by the government 10 days before lockdown and no longer matches World Health Organisation (WHO) standards. WHO says hand sanitiser should contain at least 60% alcohol to be effective against COVID-19 and has published tests showing it takes 20 to 30 seconds to kill the virus on hands. A Sky News investigation has found hundreds of thousands of bottles of alcohol-free hand sanitiser, which take up to two minutes to kill coronavirus, are being used in schools, homes and businesses.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-uk-dropped-who-guidance-on-alcohol-based-hand-sanitisers-before-lockdown-12056746>

A model for keeping the pandemic in check in Italy

In April, a team led by Professor Andrea Rinaldo, the head of EPFL's Laboratory of Ecohydrology (ECHO), published a paper that presented a model for the spread of COVID-19 in Italy. Since then, the model has been used to investigate different potential outcomes of the pandemic's progression

depending on the measures put in place. The researchers, from the Politecnico di Milano, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, the University of Padua and EPFL, published these latest results today in Nature Communications.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-08-pandemic-italy.html>

A Cure For Covid-19 Could Be Right Under Our Noses

Nobody wants to go back to a national coronavirus lockdown. France's Emmanuel Macron and Spain's Pedro Sanchez are ruling out blanket stay-at-home restrictions, even as Covid-19 cases surge higher. Their motives are clear: Another round of widespread lockdowns would tank the economy and split society, and would also be an admission of defeat from politicians and public-health officials who — like Sanchez — insist we are “better prepared” to control the epidemic than we were in the dark days of spring. The less draconian strategy of combining preventative measures, while waiting for a vaccine to emerge, is a commendable one. But there are limits here, too. Mask policies are becoming tougher and more complicated, risking confusion and hostility. International travel curbs, which haven't always proven effective or easy to enforce, are piling up again. And while testing and tracing are vital for improving our ability to catch cases, resource gaps remain. Spain is enlisting the army to help its efforts.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-08-26/second-wave-the-agonizing-wait-for-better-coronavirus-treatments>

Abbott Cleared for Fast \$5 Covid Test That Avoids Lab Delay

A 15-minute Covid test from Abbott Laboratories that will be priced at just \$5 has been granted emergency authorization for use in the U.S., a breakthrough that could ease the bottleneck that has crimped much of the nation's testing capacity. The product, dubbed BinaxNOW, works without relying on laboratory equipment at a time when labs can take as long as two weeks to produce results. It uses a nasal swab and a small reactive card, and it can be administered by a range of health-care workers, including pharmacists, at almost any location.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-26/abbott-gets-ok-on-5-15-minute-covid-test-that-avoids-lab-delay>

Women may mount stronger COVID-19 immune response

A new study looking at male and female immune responses to the new coronavirus may shed new light on why men are more likely to become seriously ill with COVID-19, researchers said Wednesday. Since early in the pandemic it has been clear that men, particularly older men, are at a far higher risk of dying from the virus than women of a similar age, but scientists have not yet been able to pinpoint exactly why. A new study published in the journal Nature noted that globally men account for about 60 percent of deaths from COVID-19 and looked at whether differences in immune responses could explain why.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-08-women-mount-stronger-covid-immune.html>

Insect spray chemical can kill coronavirus: UK study

A chemical used in insect repellent can kill the strain of coronavirus that causes COVID-19, according to a preliminary study by Britain's defense laboratory published on Wednesday. Scientists at the Defense Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) found that Citriodiol, the active ingredient in repellents such as Mosi-guard, had anti-viral properties if mixed with the virus in the liquid phase and on a test surface. "Mixing a virus suspension with Mosi-guard spray or selected constituent components resulted in a reduction in SARS-CoV-2," said the study. At a high concentration, "Mosi-guard gave a significant decrease... resulting in no recoverable virus," it added.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-08-insect-chemical-coronavirus-uk.html>

Australian coronavirus antibody therapy aims for trial in early 2021

Australian researchers hope to start human trials of a coronavirus antibody therapy in early 2021. A

large-scale trial of a vaccine could begin by the end of this year. Antibody therapies would be most useful for the elderly and people with weakened immune systems.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/26/australian-coronavirus-antibody-therapy-aims-for-trial-in-early-2021.html>

Cambridge coronavirus vaccine clinical trials could begin in the autumn

A £1.9 million funding boost from Innovate UK, the Government's innovation agency, has provided support for a collaboration between Cambridge spin-out company DIOSynVax, the University of Cambridge and the University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust. The research team used banks of genetic sequences of all known coronaviruses, including those from bats, the natural hosts of many relatives of human coronaviruses, to develop their vaccine candidate called DIOS-CoVax2. They have developed libraries of computer-generated antigen structures which can train the immune system to target key regions of the virus and system to make good anti-viral responses. These immune responses include neutralising antibodies, which block virus infection, and T-cells, which remove virus-infected cells.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/cambridge-coronavirus-vaccine-clinical-trials-autumn-a4533216.html>

FDA chief apologises for overstating benefits of plasma on Covid-19

The top doctor at the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has apologised for overstating the benefits of plasma for treating Covid-19 patients. FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn came under fire after his agency on Sunday gave emergency authorisation to use convalescent plasma on Covid patients. Echoing President Donald Trump, Mr Hahn touted the treatment as life-saving. Scientists quickly questioned the data provided by Mr Hahn, who suggested plasma could reduce deaths by 35%. This claim exaggerated preliminary findings from a clinic at the Mayo Clinic. "I personally could have done a better job and should have done a better job at that press conference explaining what the data show regarding convalescent plasma," Mr Hahn told CBS News on Tuesday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-53911565>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Ontario sees 88 new COVID-19 cases, mostly in Toronto, Peel and Ottawa

Ontario has revealed its plan to manage potential COVID-19 outbreaks in schools, which describes scenarios in which select students will be sent home and entire schools shut down as a result of positive cases. The strategy calls for all members of a class cohort to be sent home to self-isolate in the result of a single positive case among the group. An entire school may also be shut down if the local public health unit finds evidence of "potential widespread transmission," such as a number of positive cases with no known source outside the school. That determination will be at the discretion of local authorities, and not dependent on a particular case count or statistical threshold. At the province's daily news conference on Wednesday, Education Minister Stephen Lecce acknowledged a difficult few months for children and offered reassurances to parents. "Know if your child returns to school, they will be safe," said Lecce.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/covid-19-coronavirus-ontario-august-26-school-outbreaks-1.5700360>

Another 72 people diagnosed with Covid-19 in Northern Ireland

Another 72 people have been diagnosed with Covid-19 in Northern Ireland. Health minister Robin Swann has expressed concern about the rising number of infections over recent weeks in areas like Belfast. The Stormont executive has relaxed a number of coronavirus restrictions but moved to cut the numbers allowed to congregate indoors and outdoors earlier this month in response to the virus' resurgence. A total of 384 have tested positive over the last seven days, the Department of Health said.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/another-72-people-diagnosed-with-covid-19-in-northern-ireland-39480525.html>

Italy Rules Out a New Lockdown Despite Surge in Virus Cases

Italy has ruled out imposing a new nationwide lockdown despite an upsurge in coronavirus cases, as the country struggles to emerge from the worst recession in living memory. The increase in contagion has been limited, with very low impact on health services, Health Minister Roberto Speranza said in an interview with Bloomberg News. “I exclude the hypothesis of a lockdown for our country now,” Speranza, 41, said at his Rome office Wednesday. “We have few cases and the situation is under control, with pressure on hospitals that is very low, minimal.” The minister noted that during the peak of the virus crisis Italy had 4,068 patients in intensive care, compared with just 66 as of Tuesday.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/onweb/italy-rules-out-a-new-lockdown-despite-upsurge-in-virus-cases>

Spain divided on pandemic response as coronavirus spreads

Spain is fighting back a second wave of the coronavirus — with no consensus on the way forward. The spread of the virus has accelerated in Spain this summer, with 2,415 new cases diagnosed just on Tuesday. The country now has Europe’s highest incidence of COVID-19, with 173 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in the last two weeks. Regions such as Catalonia have reported more than 1,000 cases per day for four days in a row, while the number is surging in Madrid and the Basque Country.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/coronavirus-flourishes-in-spanish-summer-as-response-splinters-among-regions/>

Sanchez Rejects New Spanish Lockdown

Spain is reemerging as the epicenter of Europe’s coronavirus outbreak, but the Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez has rejected calls for another national lockdown. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel is extending the country’s job support program until the end of next year. Bloomberg’s Maria Tadeo reports on “Bloomberg Markets: European Open.”

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2020-08-26/sanchez-rejects-new-spanish-lockdown-video>

Italy rules out a new lockdown despite surge in virus cases

Italy has ruled out imposing a new nationwide lockdown despite an upsurge in coronavirus cases, as the country struggles to emerge from the worst recession in living memory. The increase in contagion has been limited, with very low impact on health services, Health Minister Roberto Speranza said in an interview with Bloomberg News. “I exclude the hypothesis of a lockdown for our country now,” Speranza, 41, said at his Rome office Wednesday. “We have few cases and the situation is under control, with pressure on hospitals that is very low, minimal.” The minister noted that during the peak of the virus crisis Italy had 4,068 patients in intensive care, compared with just 66 as of Tuesday. “A generalized lockdown is not a prospect for us, also because we have reinforced the health service, we are faster at doing tests,” said Speranza, a lawmaker from junior coalition party Article One. “We’re also doing tests at airports for people who come from at-risk countries.” The average age of people who’ve tested positive in the last week is 30, and most have mild symptoms or none at all, he said.

<https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/italy-rules-out-a-new-lockdown-despite-surge-in-virus-cases-1.1485108>

Second wave of coronavirus could hit France in November: government advisor

A second wave of the coronavirus pandemic could hit France in November, a government advisor told local media on Wednesday, as the city of Marseille tightened restrictions to fight the outbreak. Authorities in Marseille said late on Tuesday that bars and restaurants would have shorter opening times, and they also broadened mandatory mask-wearing in the southern port city between Aug. 26 and Sept. 30. “There are fears of a second wave in November,” Professor Jean-François Delfraissy, who heads the scientific council that advises the government on the pandemic, told France 2 television on Wednesday. France has the seventh-highest COVID-19 death toll in the world, and the government is monitoring the figures closely to see if fresh restrictions or lockdown are needed.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-france/second-wave-of-coronavirus-could-hit-france-in-november-government-advisor-idUSKBN25M0L4>

French PM urges population to 'take responsibility' for controlling coronavirus

France's prime minister urged the population to take "responsibility" for limiting the Covid-19 outbreak by wearing masks to protect one another, saying a lockdown cannot be ruled out. In an interview with France Inter, Jean Castex said people who resisted mask-wearing, now compulsory in the workplace, enclosed public spaces and on public transport, should "think of others".

<https://www.thelocal.fr/20200826/french-pm-urges-population-to-take-responsibility-for-controlling-coronavirus>

20 French cities urged to prepare local plans for lockdown

Government advisory body the Conseil Scientifique said the 20 largest cities in France must devise local lockdown plans in case of a second wave of the virus – and possible future pandemics. Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer said health and safety measures in schools could be ramped up in line with local virus rates, possibly resulting in a return to distance learning. A spokeswoman for Toulouse told Connexion plans they had been told to draw up concerned authorities would deliver services if another lockdown became necessary. "The plan we have been asked to prepare is not concerned with the rules of a lockdown, only with how we can deliver services like looking after old people in their homes, cleaning schools, collecting rubbish and so on," she said. "The Prime Minister's office will lay down the law on how a lockdown would work."

<https://www.connexionfrance.com/French-news/20-French-cities-urged-to-prepare-local-plans-for-lockdown>

South Korean Stocks, Won Spooked by Fears of Potential Lockdown

South Korean stocks and the currency could come under pressure as policy makers consider stricter social-distancing measures and a lockdown amid a flareup in Covid-19 cases. Such concerns saw the benchmark Kospi index and the won slip early on Wednesday, although losses were pared after a senior health ministry official denied market rumors that authorities will raise social-distancing rules to the highest level.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-26/south-korean-stocks-won-spooked-by-fears-of-potential-lockdown>

Australian coronavirus antibody therapy aims for trial in early 2021

Australian researchers hope to start human trials of a coronavirus antibody therapy in early 2021, while a large-scale trial of a vaccine could begin by the end of this year, scientists said on Wednesday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-australia-state/australian-coronavirus-antibody-therapy-aims-for-trial-in-early-2021-idUKKBN25L2WB>

France wants to avoid nationwide lockdown due to epidemic - PM

The French government wants to avoid a new nationwide lockdown due to the new coronavirus epidemic, Prime Minister Jean Castex said on Wednesday. Speaking at the Medef employers' federation's annual end-of-summer conference, Castex also said that a normal restart to the school year was a precondition for restarting the economy.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/france-economy/france-wants-to-avoid-nationwide-lockdown-due-to-epidemic-pm-idUSP6N2D402A>

How India's Silicon Valley saw its COVID-19 success come undone

On June 9, an Indian health education minister posted an infographic on Twitter showing COVID-19 infections and deaths in the city of Bengaluru were running about half the rate in New Zealand, a country acclaimed globally for reining in the disease. The city — which has more than double the population of New Zealand — "stumps the Kiwis," said the caption to the image posted by Sudhakar K., who is responsible for medical education in the southern state of Karnataka. Bengaluru, known to

many as Bangalore, is the capital of the state. His tweet was liked and retweeted by thousands. But the celebration was short-lived. At the time, only about 450 cases of the novel coronavirus had been recorded among Bangalore's population of more than 12.5 million, compared with more than 260,000 cases across India and about 1,150 in New Zealand.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-india-bengaluru/how-indias-silicon-valley-saw-its-covid-19-success-come-undone-idUKKBN25M019>

France reports 5,429 new coronavirus infections, new post-lockdown high

The French health ministry said it had registered 5,429 new coronavirus infections over the past 24 hours, a new post-lockdown high and a level of new infections not seen since the height of the epidemic in early April. The total number of people infected with the virus in France now stands at 253,587. The health ministry said figures for the cumulative death toll and for COVID-19 hospitalisations for Wednesday were not available yet due to a technical glitch. On Tuesday, the ministry reported the cumulative number of deaths had risen by 16 to 30,544 and it said 4,600 people were in hospital with COVID-19, including 410 in intensive care.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-france-casualties/france-reports-5429-new-coronavirus-infections-new-post-lockdown-high-idUKKBN25M2GX>

New Lockdown

Outdoor drinking banned as lockdown tightens in Manchester

Drinking outdoors has been banned in Manchester city centre over the Bank Holiday weekend due to coronavirus safety fears. Police will enforce the new measures over the weekend, fearing too many revellers will be out drinking in open spaces and breaking social distancing guidelines. However Mancunians will still be allowed to drink in pubs and restaurants. People in the city are already banned from meeting people from different households indoors or in private gardens after the Government re-imposed lockdown restrictions in large parts of the north after a spike in Covid-19 cases. Inspector Jonathan Shilvock said: 'Unfortunately, due to the current pandemic, events taking place over the bank holiday weekend have had to be cancelled for fears around public health and a possible lack of social distancing.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/08/26/outdoor-drinking-banned-lockdown-tightens-manchester-13181185/>

Gran Canaria and other popular tourist destinations in Spain have gone into voluntary lockdown - here's why

Certain regions of Spain, including popular tourist destinations, have embarked on new voluntary lockdowns in order to control outbreaks of coronavirus. Las Palmas and Valleseco (both in Gran Canaria), Tielmes in Madrid, and La Barquilla in Cáceres are currently all in voluntary lockdown. Gran Canaria has had the biggest number of coronavirus outbreaks of all the Canary Islands. While the tourist resort of Valleseco has only seen three positive cases of the virus, the local mayor Dámaso Arencibia Lantigua has said he doesn't want to take any chances, due to the high number of cases of Covid-19 elsewhere on the island.

<https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/gran-canaria-and-other-popular-tourist-destinations-spain-have-gone-voluntary-lockdown-heres-why-2952606>

Myanmar expands Rakhine virus lockdown to cover one million

Myanmar expanded a lockdown in conflict-racked Rakhine state to cover four more townships on Wednesday, halting the movement of about 1 million people as the number of coronavirus cases climbs steadily. One hundred new infections were confirmed across Myanmar in the last 24 hours -- bringing the total to 574 -- with the northwestern state registering the bulk. Rakhine is one of the poorest states in the country, with substandard healthcare facilities and a lack of access to education in some remote parts.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200826-myanmar-expands-rakhine-virus-lockdown-to-cover-one-million>

Jordan reimposes partial lockdown as Covid-19 infections rise

Jordan is set to reimpose restrictions and extend curfew hours from Tuesday in response to the worst coronavirus outbreak the kingdom has seen since the start of the pandemic. A ban on movement will be in force from 11pm to 6am and businesses will not be allowed to operate between 10pm and 6am as part of a series of sweeping measures to contain a nationwide surge in Covid-19 cases, with new infections rising from fewer than 10 to between 20 and 35 each day. Total lockdowns will be imposed on Fridays in areas with outbreaks, starting with Amman and Zarqa this week. Public hospitals across Jordan have suspended visiting hours as a precautionary measure. The restrictions aim to limit social gatherings and reduce “mixing” of citizens while avoiding a complete nationwide lockdown, government spokesman Amjad Adaileh said, while noting “the social and economic harm full lockdowns cause”.

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/jordan-reimposes-partial-lockdown-as-covid-19-infections-rise-1.1067915>