

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

16th Oct 2020

News Highlights

Thousands of deaths averted because of lockdown linked air pollution reduction, study says

According to new research published in The Lancet Planetary Health, tens of thousands of people may have averted premature deaths in China and Europe as particulate matter reduced in the atmosphere, [due to the Covid-19 lockdowns earlier in the year](#). Particulate matter dropped by close to 30% in China and by 17% in Europe in the early part of the year, as industrial and transport-related emissions all dropped significantly because of lockdowns.

Cinemas re-open in India after months as Covid deaths drop

More than seven months after having to shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic, cinemas reopened in several parts of India as the country reported a steep decrease in daily deaths. [More than 111,000 people have died so far of Covid-19 in India but the health ministry reported only 680 deaths in the past 24 hours](#), the lowest daily increase in fatalities in almost three months.

Blood type O may have lower risk of coronavirus infection, studies say

Two independent studies conducted by researchers in Denmark and Canada seem to suggest that people with blood type O may be less vulnerable to Covid-19 and are less likely to get severely ill because of the virus. [The research indicated that people with blood types A and AB are most vulnerable to the disease](#) and may shed light on why the illness affects some people more disproportionately than others

WHO cautions of more TB deaths even as Covid-19 pandemic rages on

The WHO has warned that a shortage of funds and disruptions caused due to the coronavirus pandemic may result in a 'dramatic increase' in tuberculosis (TB) deaths over the coming years. [As the pandemic swept through the globe in the early part of the year, countries imposed lockdowns which](#), according to the WHO, led to a big drop in the reporting and monitoring of new TB cases and may lead to higher deaths in the future.

Lockdown Exit

Finnish expert answers 7 questions about coronavirus vaccines

According to a survey by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) last spring, around 70 percent of respondents said they would take a vaccine if authorities recommended it. However, many still remember more than a decade ago the serious side effects of the H1N1 "swine flu" vaccine, Pandemrix, which was found to have multiplied the risk of narcolepsy, particularly among young people, a situation that damaged the public's confidence in vaccines as well as health authorities. The director of the Vaccine Research Center at Tampere University, Mika Rämetsä, said the centre advises decision makers about new vaccines, but does not participate in policy-making. He noted that the centre is not currently conducting its own coronavirus vaccine study.

https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finnish_expert_answers_7_questions_about_coronavirus_vaccines/11594443

Coronavirus: Boris Johnson losing grip on strategy as top medical adviser tells local leaders it will not work

Boris Johnson's coronavirus strategy was unravelling after one of the prime minister's top medical advisers told regional leaders it would not work and a national lockdown was needed. More than half of the population of England will soon be subjected to heightened restrictions under the prime minister's three-tier regional system, after areas including London, Essex and York were told to move to "high" alert status from Saturday. But Mr Johnson was forced to back down on plans to put Greater Manchester and Lancashire into the toughest curbs alongside Merseyside after civic leaders demanded more financial support for the thousands of workers whose employers would be forced to shut down. And councils in the northeast united to say that they too would reject tier 3 status.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/coronavirus-restrictions-boris-johnson-jonathan-van-tam-manchester-london-b1053195.html>

WHO fears more tuberculosis deaths as COVID-19 pandemic continues

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned of a "dramatic increase" in tuberculosis (TB) deaths in the coming years, as a result of the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic and a continuing shortage of funds in its annual report on global efforts to combat the disease. The WHO said there were "significant reductions" in the reporting and monitoring of new TB cases in the first half of 2020, as countries imposed lockdowns to curb the spread of COVID-19. Professor Achilles Kapanidis, from Oxford's Department of Physics, said the test would be "simple, extremely rapid, and cost-effective".

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/15/tb-story-who>

Indian cinemas reopen amid fewest coronavirus deaths in 11 weeks

After seven months of total blackout, cinemas have reopened in several parts of India as the country reported its lowest daily increase in coronavirus deaths in 11 weeks. The reopening of movie theatres on Thursday came as India's health ministry reported 680 deaths in the past 24 hours, the lowest number in nearly three months, raising the country's death toll since the pandemic began to 111,266.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/15/indian-cinemas-reopen-amid-fewest-coronavirus-deaths-in-11-weeks>

Coronavirus: France reports more than 30,000 new infections

France has reported a large jump in new Covid-19 cases ahead of a night-time curfew being imposed on Paris and eight other cities on Saturday. A further 30,621 infections were confirmed on Thursday, up from 22,591 the day before. The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that tough restrictions are "absolutely necessary" to save lives. Millions in Europe have been told they must live under strict new measures as governments battle a second wave. From Saturday, socialising indoors will be banned in London, as the UK capital and other areas of England will be put under a higher Covid alert.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54557549>

Coronavirus testing lab 'chaotic and dangerous', scientist claims

A scientist who processed coronavirus swab samples at one of the UK's largest labs has alleged working practices were "chaotic and dangerous". He highlighted overcrowded biosecure workspaces, poor safety protocols and a lack of suitable PPE. The Health and Safety Executive has uncovered safety breaches at the lighthouse lab in Milton Keynes. The UK Biocentre, which runs the lab, said strict safety measures were in place and improvements were being made.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54552620>

Fauci warns Americans to rethink Thanksgiving amid coronavirus surge

Anthony Fauci warned on Thursday that Americans should rethink their usual plans for traditional Thanksgiving gatherings, citing increased coronavirus infections and hospitalizations. Fauci, the

most senior public health official on the White House coronavirus taskforce, told ABC News that given the rise in cases in almost three dozen US states, “we’ve really got to double down on fundamental public health measures that we talk about every day, because they can make a difference”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/15/anthony-fauci-coronavirus-thanksgiving-trump>

Exit Strategies

South Africa puts public works, jobs at heart of COVID-19 recovery plan

South Africa will embark on a massive public works and job-creation drive in response to the coronavirus crisis, President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Thursday, unveiling a plan to return Africa’s most industrialised economy to growth. South Africa was in recession before it recorded its first coronavirus infection in March, with one of the world’s strictest lockdowns and a global drop in demand for its exports causing GDP to fall by more than 17% in annual terms in the April-June quarter, when over 2 million jobs were lost. Ramaphosa’s government has been in talks with business and labour leaders for months trying to plot a path to recovery.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/safrica-economy/update-2-south-africa-puts-public-works-jobs-at-heart-of-covid-19-recovery-plan-idUKL8N2H64HA>

Why complacency and lifting restrictions could be driving India's high COVID-19 numbers

On Tuesday, India added 55,342 COVID-19 cases in 24 hours, bringing its total number of confirmed infections to 7.17 million, according to data from the country's Ministry of Health. These daily new infections may be off their recent peaks and were the lowest numbers in almost two months, but India is the second worst-affected country after the United States, and it is set to have the largest caseload in a matter of weeks. India's high number of new cases is being driven by the ongoing lifting of lockdown restrictions and complacency around following precautions to prevent the spread of the virus, epidemiologists say. Restrictions have been steadily eased in recent months in an effort to revive livelihoods, but they have yet to be completely lifted, and the economy remains sluggish.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/india-pandemic-lockdown-numbers-1.5760164>

Japan mulls lowering international travel advisories issued over pandemic

Japan is considering lowering travel advisories that it issued for all countries and regions in response to the novel coronavirus pandemic, government officials said Thursday. The ministry may lower the travel advisory to Level 1, asking citizens to exercise caution or lift it completely. As for more specific travel alerts for infectious diseases, 159 countries and regions are now placed at Level 3, warning against all travel. The ministry is expected to lower the alert by one level for Vietnam and some other countries that have a low number of infections, according to the officials.

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/10/f084aee85cd5-urgent-japan-mulls-lowering-intl-travel-advisories-issued-over-pandemic.html>

Thousands of stranded Australians could get ticket home under new Darwin quarantine deal

A push to expand the intake of stranded Australians trying to get home is facing delays after Friday's scheduled National Cabinet meeting was postponed. Thousands of Australians stranded overseas could soon return home under a deal to allow people to quarantine near Darwin. The ABC reported on Thursday up to 1000 people a month would isolate at the NT's Howard Springs facility after returning home on commercial and charter flights.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/thousands-of-stranded-australians-could-get-ticket-home-under-new-darwin-quarantine-deal>

Victorian 'pivot' opens path out of lockdown

Victoria's COVID-19 response has retreated from an undeclared ambition of eliminating the virus

before Christmas to a more pragmatic and achievable aim of suppressing its spread to levels the state can live with safely. Senior epidemiologists say the government's conflicting public health message – Premier Daniel Andrews talking about 10 daily cases being the new five and five being the new zero – reflects the unrealistic targets it set when the road map out of lockdown was set two months ago. The overarching problem, say epidemiologists, is that the government was quietly pursuing an elimination strategy for the virus. The terms elimination and suppression – or "aggressive suppression" as the national cabinet and the Victorian government have preferred – can be confusing, but experts say there has been a clear change in approach in recent weeks.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/victorian-pivot-opens-path-out-of-lockdown-20201014-p5654v.html>

Coronavirus deaths almost double in a day in Italy, at least nine European nations see record cases

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland all recorded record numbers of infections. In addition, many countries are seeing increased hospitalisations and deaths. Italy recorded another 83 deaths Thursday, nearly double the 43 on Wednesday. Merkel lost her temper Wednesday night after state leader refused to sign off on her lockdown proposal: 'What we've agreed is not enough to ward off disaster'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8844857/amp/Coronavirus-deaths-double-day-Italy-nine-European-nations-record-cases.html>

Partisan Exits

How the White House's Herd Immunity Strategy Would Destroy the US Economy

This week, the White House embraced the Great Barrington declaration calling for a herd immunity strategy that would allow COVID-19 to spread among healthy young people while shielding the elderly and vulnerable. But the scientific evidence shows that the approach could not only lead to nearly 3 million American deaths but would create significant deaths among healthy young people while generating unprecedented economic shocks.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2020/10/15/how-the-white-houses-herd-immunity-strategy-would-destroy-the-us-economy/>

Donald Trump insists US will not lockdown again as death toll approaches 217,000

Donald Trump insists America will not lockdown again - despite cases soaring across the country. The president does not have the power to stop individual states going into lockdown if they wish to do so to control cases. The US on Wednesday reported more than 59,000 new infections as its death toll approached 217,000. The spike has been driven by a resurgence of infections in the Midwest and other areas of the country. "We're not doing any more," he said on Fox, when asked about the prospect of says of regional shutdowns. Trump continues to trail his challenger Joe Biden by as much as 17 points in the national polls.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/us-news/donald-trump-insists-not-lockdown-22852315>

Stronger political alliances are forming in northern England as local lockdown anger grows

As COVID-19 cases have risen sharply in large parts of the north of England, local leaders have united to challenge government policy. Representatives from across the north have come together questioning the government's decision to impose local lockdowns in their region. They have particularly criticised central government for failing to provide enough funding to cope with the economic impacts of lockdown and the lack of financial support for people unable to work.

<https://theconversation.com/stronger-political-alliances-are-forming-in-northern-england-as-local-lockdown-anger-grows-147965>

French police search politicians' homes in coronavirus inquiry

French police have searched the homes and offices of French officials including the former prime

minister as part of an investigation into the government's handling of the coronavirus crisis. Current and former ministers have been targeted by at least 90 formal legal complaints from civic groups and members of the public over their response to the health emergency. Investigators targeted the home of former PM Édouard Philippe on Thursday as well as the current health minister, Olivier Véran, the former health minister Agnès Buzyn, the former government spokeswoman Sibeth Ndiaye and the head of France's health authority, Jérôme Salomon. Salomon became known as Monsieur Covid for his daily health briefings at the height of the epidemic in March and April.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/15/french-police-search-officials-homes-coronavirus-inquiry>

Coronavirus: French police raid ministers' homes in pandemic inquiry

French police have raided the homes of senior government and health officials as part of an investigation into their handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Health Minister Olivier Véran and the director of the national health agency, Jérôme Salomon, are among those whose properties were searched on Thursday. The raids came after a court launched an inquiry earlier this year into the government's handling of the pandemic. It has faced criticism over shortages of equipment and slow response times. Prime Minister Jean Castex is also under investigation, French media report, as is his predecessor Edouard Philippe and Mr Véran's predecessor Agnès Buzyn.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54535358>

Victoria records six coronavirus cases no deaths as a former staffer who quit lifts lid on lockdown

Victoria recorded just six new coronavirus cases and no deaths on Thursday. Pressure mounting to end strict lockdown as residents are desperate to get out. Health authorities said 14-day average must be at five for restrictions to ease. Sanjeev Sabhlok resigned from Victorian Treasury department in September. He has rallied online against Melbourne's draconian COVID-19 lockdowns. He said Premier Daniel Andrews was 'whimsy' and warned him to resign.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8841205/Victoria-records-six-coronavirus-cases-no-deaths-former-staffer-quit-lifts-lid-lockdown.html>

Trump Overstates W.H.O. Position on Lockdowns

This week, President Trump exaggerated a position taken by the World Health Organization, saying that the agency had vindicated his derision of lockdowns during the coronavirus pandemic. "The World Health Organization just admitted that I was right," the president tweeted. "Lockdowns are killing countries all over the world. The cure cannot be worse than the problem itself." Mr. Trump's message was rapidly shared by thousands online, including the commentator Lou Dobbs and Representative Andy Biggs, Republican of Arizona, who echoed the president's rallying cry to "open up" and described the closings as "pseudoscientific" and "tyrannical." Since the early days of the pandemic, the president has dismissed lockdowns as unnecessary and harmful, even while the virus continued to blaze across the nation.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/14/technology/trump-coronavirus-who-lockdown.html>

Coronavirus: We're arguing over lockdown versus herd immunity when it's the UK's test, trace and isolate regime that's failing

If you are depressed by the prospect of a winter of lockdown limbo, you might be even more depressed to consider that it could have been avoided altogether. Not by having a "circuit break" now or a four-tier traffic light system. Not through harsher penalties for those flouting self-isolation rules. Not even by just "letting the virus rip" through the population while we "shield the vulnerable" indoors, as was last week advocated by the scientifically dubious "Great Barrington Declaration".

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18795149.coronavirus-arguing-lockdown-versus-herd-immunity-uks-test-trace-isolate-regime-failing/>

Continued Lockdown

Lockdown is a 'disaster that causes more pain than it stops'

Sky News host Andrew Bolt says lockdown is “a disaster that causes more pain than it stops”, and it should now “be crystal clear that fighting this virus with lockdowns is a terrible, terrible, terrible mistake”. Mr Bolt said in Victoria, 500 doctors have sent another open letter to Premier Daniel Andrews warning that the Melbourne lockdown, which has been going for six weeks, is causing severe harm. Anaesthetist Dr Eamonn Matthieson said “I think there’s been a massive collateral damage in the health and mental health spaces in particular due to the lockdowns. “There are growing number, a very large numbers of doctors who are gravely concerned about the impact of these lockdowns and we are calling for them to cease, we believe they are disproportionate and unscientific,” Dr Matthias said.

https://www.skynews.com.au/details/_6200823417001

Scientific Viewpoint

Covid-19: Scientists develop test for that can identify virus in five minutes

Scientists have developed a new rapid test for coronavirus that detects and identifies viruses in less than five minutes. The test, created by researchers from Oxford University’s department of physics, is able to differentiate Sars-CoV-2, the virus responsible for Covid-19, from negative clinical samples. It is also able to tell it apart from other viruses such as flu and seasonal human coronaviruses, according to the study. Working directly on throat swabs from Covid-19 patients, without the need for genome extraction, purification or amplification of the viruses, the method starts with the rapid labelling of virus particles in the sample with short fluorescent DNA strands.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-10-15/covid-19-scientists-develop-test-for-that-can-identify-virus-in-five-minutes>

Fauci says letting Covid-19 spread to achieve herd immunity is 'ridiculous'

Dr Anthony Fauci made the comments on GMA on Thursday when asked about the anti-lockdown Great Barrington Declaration that was published earlier this week. He made the comments on Thursday when asked about the anti-lockdown Great Barrington Declaration that was published earlier this week. The declaration, which was written by experts at Oxford, Harvard and Stanford, calls for the protection of people most at risk of dying from Covid-19. It argues that the rest of the population should be able to return to life as normal. Fauci said the declaration hides that fact that 30% of the population have underlying health conditions that make them more susceptible to Covid-19. It comes as the United States reached its highest number of daily Covid-19 infections in two months with more than 59,000 cases reported on Wednesday. Deaths, however, continue to trend downward nationally with an average of more than 700 Americans dying per day

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8843769/Fauci-says-letting-Covid-19-spread-achieve-herd-immunity-ridiculous.html>

Early approval of a COVID-19 vaccine could stymie the hunt for better ones

Success in the push to find a COVID-19 vaccine at record-breaking speed could hand the world a new problem. The first vaccine to cross the finish line might be only marginally effective, yet it could become the enemy of the good—or even the great—candidates in the wings by disrupting ongoing studies. In all likelihood, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or other regulators will issue the first COVID-19 vaccine approval or emergency use authorization (EUA) for one vaccine while many other candidates have clinical trials still underway or in the planning. At that point, ongoing studies of any vaccine—including that first one—could become unethical because half the participants would get a placebo, at a time a vaccine with established efficacy will be available. “It’s a very vexing issue,” says Christine Grady, who heads the bioethics department at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Center, which organized a “grand rounds” webinar on the challenges last week.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/10/early-approval-covid-19-vaccine-could-stymie-hunt-better-ones>

Scientific consensus on the COVID-19 pandemic: we need to act now

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) has infected more than 35 million people globally, with more than 1 million deaths recorded by WHO as of Oct 12, 2020. As a second wave of COVID-19 affects Europe, and with winter approaching, we need clear communication about the risks posed by COVID-19 and effective strategies to combat them. Here, we share our view of the current evidence-based consensus on COVID-19.

[https://www.thelancet.com/lancet/article/S0140-6736\(20\)32153-x](https://www.thelancet.com/lancet/article/S0140-6736(20)32153-x)

Lockdown was not effective strategy against Covid-19 in South Africa, new evidence suggests

Given the age demographics in African countries, and the existing data on those the disease affects most (primarily the elderly), Africa's population would be less susceptible to Covid-19 than its counterparts in Europe and the USA. A hard lockdown was ...

<https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/health/lockdown-was-not-effective-strategy-against-covid-19-in-south-africa-new-evidence-suggests-542324f6-d5e3-49a4-b930-caaac85aa5f3>

Did Lockdowns Lower Premature Births? A New Study Adds Evidence

Some public health researchers are seeing hints that the coronavirus pandemic might help solve a longstanding puzzle: What causes premature birth? Studies in Ireland and Denmark this summer showed that preterm births decreased in the spring during lockdowns to stop the spread of the virus in those countries. Anecdotally, doctors around the world reported similar drops. They speculated that reduced stress on mothers, cleaner air or better hygiene might have contributed. A large study from the Netherlands, published on Tuesday in The Lancet Public Health, has yielded even stronger evidence of an association between the lockdowns and a smaller number of early births.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/15/health/covid-premature-births-lockdown.html>

UK doctors and health experts back Covid-19 'circuit breaker'

Hospital doctors and public health experts have backed growing calls for a "circuit breaker" to stem the resurgence of Covid-19 and protect the NHS, as fresh signs of a cabinet split emerged. As up to 95% of intensive care beds were reported to be full in some hospitals in Liverpool – half with coronavirus patients – growing concerns were raised about the NHS becoming overwhelmed. This week Liverpool said it would scale back non-urgent operations. Labour backed the idea of a circuit breaker – a short lockdown severing some social contact – on Tuesday but cabinet ministers are understood to be split over its effectiveness and the desire to protect the economy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/oct/15/uk-doctors-and-health-experts-back-covid-19-circuit-breaker>

Full lockdowns should be a 'very, very last resort' and can be avoided, WHO's Europe chief says

Europe is introducing more and more restrictive measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus and lockdowns are the next possible step. Full-scale lockdowns should be a "very, very last resort." Any national lockdowns must consider direct risks and "collateral damage" associated with the pandemic, such as the mental health impact and domestic violence.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/10/15/lockdowns-should-be-last-resort-whos-europe-chief-says.html>

'Act now on lockdown' - Birmingham scientist calls for urgent restrictions

The Birmingham scientist who has set up the city's first testing lab for coronavirus has joined a clamour for tougher restrictions, saying we are at a critical moment. Prof Alan McNally, director of Birmingham University's world-class microbiology and infection institute, previously called for pubs, restaurants and gyms to shut and travel to be limited as part of lockdown moves to reduce infection spread. He is among the 80-plus international scientists and researchers to sign a letter published in today's The Lancet setting out the evidence for urgent action. The letter implores the Government to do more or risk continuing misery. The signatories condemn a "herd immunity" approach as "a

dangerous fallacy unsupported by scientific evidence".

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/act-now-lockdown-birmingham-scientist-19106482>

Coronavirus: New Zealand's 'go hard and go early' COVID-19 response 'unprecedented internationally' - study

On March 14, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said New Zealand's strategy in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic would be to "go hard and go early". Despite claims from her opponents we didn't, new research has found not only that we did, but we went the hardest and earliest of anyone. "The speed and intensity of the national response to limit the epidemic is unprecedented internationally," a new study published this week in prestigious medical journal The Lancet said. "It is likely this early, intense response, which also enabled relatively rapid easing while maintaining strict border controls, prevented the burden of disease experienced in other high-income countries with slower lockdown implementation."

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2020/10/coronavirus-new-zealand-s-go-hard-and-go-early-covid-19-response-unprecedented-internationally-study.html>

People with blood type O may have lower risk of Covid-19 infection and severe illness, studies suggest

People with blood type O may be less vulnerable to Covid-19 and have a reduced likelihood of getting severely ill from the virus, according to two new studies. The two independent studies, carried out by researchers in Denmark and Canada and published in the journal Blood Advances, found that individuals with blood types A and AB are most vulnerable to the disease. The research provides further evidence that a person's blood type may play a role in their susceptibility to coronavirus and could shed further light on why the illness proves deadly for some but others only experience mild symptoms, or none at all.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/studies-coronavirus-infection-symptoms-blood-type-a4571031.html>

University of Oxford scientists develop five-minute coronavirus test

Scientists from the University of Oxford have developed a five-minute coronavirus test. Researchers said the test could be used for mass testing programmes at airports and businesses. The university said it hoped to start product development of the testing device in early 2021 and have an approved device available six months afterwards. The device is able to detect the virus and distinguish it from other viruses with high accuracy, the researchers said in a pre-print study.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/five-minute-coronavirus-test-oxford-scientists-a4571226.html>

Ending Covid-19 via herd immunity is 'a dangerous fallacy'

The concept of ending the Covid pandemic through herd immunity is "a dangerous fallacy unsupported by scientific evidence", say 80 researchers in a warning letter published by a leading medical journal. The international signatories of the open letter in the Lancet say the interest in herd immunity comes from "widespread demoralisation and diminishing trust" as a result of restrictions being reimposed in many countries because of surging infections in a second wave. The suggestion that the way out is by protecting the vulnerable and allowing the virus to transmit among those less at risk is flawed, they say. "Uncontrolled transmission in younger people risks significant morbidity and mortality across the whole population. In addition to the human cost, this would impact the workforce as a whole and overwhelm the ability of healthcare systems to provide acute and routine care."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/14/ending-covid-19-via-herd-immunity-is-a-dangerous-fallacy>

Safety and Immunogenicity of Two RNA-Based Covid-19 Vaccine Candidates

The safety and immunogenicity data from this U.S. phase 1 trial of two vaccine candidates in younger and older adults, added to earlier interim safety and immunogenicity data regarding BNT162b1 in younger adults from trials in Germany and the United States, support the selection of

BNT162b2 for advancement to a pivotal phase 2-3 safety and efficacy evaluation.

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2027906>

Study shows nearly 90% of people are asymptomatic with COVID-19

The 'silent transmission' of COVID-19 is of huge concern as researchers have found nearly 90% of people with the condition do not have the symptoms. People who have a persistent cough, high temperature and lose their sense of smell or taste are being told to stay home to protect other people and stop the spread.

<https://www.diabetes.co.uk/news/2020/oct/study-shows-nearly-90-per-cent-of-people-are-asymptomatic-with-covid-19.html>

Coronavirus: UK may have 'missed the boat' for circuit breaker lockdown, govt scientist warns

The UK may have already "missed the boat" for a pre-planned lockdown, forcing the government to introduce emergency restrictions like the ones in March, a leading government scientific advisor has warned. Professor Graham Medley, who sits on the Scientific Group for Emergencies (SAGE), told journalists that a two-week "circuit breaker" lockdown could "buy time" to improve systems such as Test and Trace. But, he said, with coronavirus cases rising exponentially across the country, the UK might have run out of time to act pre-emptively.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-uk-may-have-missed-the-boat-for-circuit-breaker-lockdown-govt-scientist-warns-12104153>

COVID-19 lockdowns averted tens of thousands of premature deaths related to air pollution

Lockdowns initiated to curb the spread of the coronavirus in China and Europe at the beginning of the pandemic improved air quality, averting tens of thousands of deaths in regions where air pollution has a significant impact on mortality, a new study shows. According to research published in The Lancet Planetary Health, scientists at the University of Notre Dame found that particulate matter concentrations in China dropped by an unprecedented 29.7 percent, and by 17.1 percent in parts of Europe, during lockdowns that took place between Feb. 1 and March 31 in China and Feb. 21 to May 17 in Europe. Particulate matter (PM2.5)—tiny airborne particles smaller than 1/10,000 of an inch in diameter—comes from various combustion-related sources including industrial emissions, transportation, wildfires and chemical reactions of pollutants in the atmosphere.

<https://phys.org/news/2020-10-covid-lockdowns-averted-tens-thousands.html>

Coronavirus: How China is testing 9,000,000 people in five days

China is currently in the process of testing an entire city of 9 million people for coronavirus in five days. The country, which appears to have largely brought the virus under control, is mass testing in Qingdao after 12 new cases broke out there linked to a hospital treating patients from abroad. Six had symptoms and six did not. As of today more than 4.2 million tests have been carried out in the northern port city, with no new cases of Covid-19 found among the almost 2 million sets of results received so far. China has adopted an impressive mass testing process which has been seen nowhere else in the world.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/10/14/how-china-is-testing-9000000-people-for-coronavirus-in-five-days-13422178/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid-19: Number of students isolating quadruples in a week

The number of students told to isolate following Covid-19 cases at Cardiff University has quadrupled in a week. On Thursday the university said 1,983 students were in isolation - up from 510 this time last week. It also said a further 73 students had tested positive on Wednesday. Last week a total of 251 of its students tested positive for the virus. Of those in isolation, 243 have reported symptoms

and 1,287 are close contacts without symptoms.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-54553439>

Pennsylvania Confirms Virus Resurges; No Plans for Lockdown

Pennsylvania is “at the start of the fall resurgence” of COVID-19, the state's health secretary said Wednesday, but does not plan to reimpose a stay-at-home order or shut down businesses again in response. Wednesday marked the ninth consecutive day that Pennsylvania’s daily case count surpassed 1,000, and the average daily number of new confirmed cases is up by more than 50% over the past two weeks, according to The COVID Tracking Project. Though some of the increased caseload is due to expanded testing, the state's hospitalization and test positivity rates are also rising. That indicates increased viral spread, Dr. Rachel Levine said.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/pennsylvania/articles/2020-10-14/pennsylvania-confirms-fall-resurgence-of-coronavirus>

'Time is running out,' EU warns, urging measures to avoid new lockdowns

The European Commission urged member nations on Thursday to step up preparations against the new surge of coronavirus infections and recommended common measures to roll out vaccines should they become available. With new cases hitting about 100,000 daily, Europe has by a wide margin overtaken the United States, where an average of more than 51,000 COVID-19 infections is reported every day. “Time is running out,” said EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides, urging greater coordination in tracing infections. “Everyone’s first priority should be to do what it takes to avoid the devastating consequences of generalised lockdowns.”

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eu-vaccination/time-is-running-out-eu-warns-urging-measures-to-avoid-new-lockdowns-idUSKBN27014Y>

Germany announces tougher coronavirus restrictions

Germany late on Wednesday announced new restrictions on public life in an effort to combat a surge in coronavirus cases. Chancellor Angela Merkel and the premiers of the country's 16 federal states agreed on limiting private gatherings to 15 attendees and a curfew for bars and restaurants from 11 p.m. in areas with a weekly rate of more than 35 new cases per 100,000 inhabitants.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/coronavirus-germany-announces-tougher-restrictions/>

Dutch hospitals ask for German help to cope with COVID-19 surge

Hospitals in the Netherlands on Thursday said they would ask their German counterparts to take patients after the number of those hospitalised with coronavirus doubled in the past week, to 1,526. “We are about to ask for the transfer of patients to hospitals in Germany again”, the head of the Dutch hospital association LNAZ told reporters.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-netherlands-hospit-idUKKBN270212>

Coronavirus: Germany sees record daily increase in new cases

Germany posted over 6,000 new cases. Levels like this have not been seen since the start of the pandemic. German citizens' behavior will influence how Christmas is celebrated this year, warned Health Minister Jens Spahn. Germany saw a record daily increase in new coronavirus cases on Thursday, reporting 6,638 new infections, according to data from the Robert Koch Institute, the agency responsible for disease control and prevention. Germany's previous record daily increase was 6,294 on March 28. The country also reported 33 new deaths, bringing the total number of fatalities to 9,710.

<https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-germany-sees-record-daily-increase-in-new-cases/a-55281550>

Italy Posts Record Virus Cases as Europe Struggles With Pandemic

Italy is being removed from the UK’s travel corridor in a fresh blow to holidaymakers who will have to quarantine for a fortnight on their return from the country. In a move revealed earlier by the

Guardian, Italy – which this week recorded its highest ever daily tally of Covid-19 cases – is being dropped from the dwindling list of locations that UK travellers can visit without facing quarantine when they come home. Italy last week imposed new requirements meaning visitors from the UK and some other nations must provide evidence of a negative Covid test taken 72 hours before travel – although some Italian airports have been providing tests on arrival.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-10-14/italy-wednesday-new-virus-cases-are-most-since-outbreak-began>

Italy poised to be removed from England's travel corridor

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<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/oct/15/italy-poised-to-be-removed-from-englands-travel-corridor>

Spanish Health Ministry reports nearly 12,000 new coronavirus infections, adds 209 victims to the death toll

A total of 11,970 new coronavirus cases were reported by the Spanish Health Ministry on Wednesday, toward the higher scale of the numbers seen over recent weeks. On Tuesday new infections came in at 7,118, a figure that may have been artificially low due to underreporting over the long weekend (Monday was a national holiday in Spain). In total, there have been 908,056 confirmed coronavirus infections in the country since the pandemic took hold.

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-10-15/spanish-health-ministry-reports-nearly-12000-new-coronavirus-infections-adds-209-victims-to-the-death-toll.html>

Belgium warned not to be 'excessive' with new measures

Following announcements of stricter measures in France and the Netherlands, Belgium needs “a resolute policy” to manage the second wave of coronavirus infections, without becoming “excessive,” according to virologist Marc Van Ranst. After the Netherlands announced that it would go in “partial lockdown” from Wednesday evening and France declared the public health state of emergency, calls to follow the neighbouring countries' example have been rising in Belgium.

<https://www.brusselstimes.com/news/belgium-all-news/135848/belgium-needs-resolute-policy-to-fight-second-covid-19-wave-marc-van-ranst-france-netherlands-lockdown/>

India's COVID-19 infections surpass 7.3M mark

Amid the country's coronavirus count crossing 7.3 million, movie theaters along with additional activities started in several parts of the country on Thursday as part of allowing the fifth round of easing the restrictions called Unlock-5. According to an Indian Health Ministry update early Thursday, more than 67,000 cases were registered in the last 24 hours taking the total number of infections to 7,307,097, with 680 additional deaths in the country. The government last month allowed opening of cinemas, theaters, and multiplexes with up to 50% of seating capacity as well as entertainment parks, and swimming pools for training of sportspeople. The government also authorized the state governments to take a call to reopen the schools from Thursday. In the country's financial hub Mumbai, officials said the state government has allowed the metro operation and services to resume from Oct. 19.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/indias-covid-19-infections-surpass-73m-mark/2006923>

Britain's Covid-19 strategy simply adds up to many more jobless people

It's the textbook example of being caught between a rock and a hard place. The number of people

being treated for Covid-19 in hospital is rising fast and is currently higher than it was when the UK went into full national lockdown on 23 March. Worse is to come. Simultaneously, the threat of mass unemployment looms ever larger. More workers were made redundant in the three months to August than at any time since the period when the banks almost went bust a decade ago. Worse is to come here, too. Opinion is divided on what to do next. There are those who think the second wave of Covid is potentially so serious that a full national lockdown is necessary, whatever the cost. Labour's plan for a two- or three-week circuit breaker is really a national lockdown, merely a time-limited one.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/oct/15/britains-covid-19-strategy-jobless-people-virus-economic>

Oil dips as surging coronavirus cases threaten demand recovery

Oil prices eased on Thursday as new restrictions to stem a surge in COVID-19 infections dimmed the outlook for economic growth and fuel demand. Traders said prices pared earlier losses after the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported an increase in U.S. petroleum demand last week that helped reduce crude stockpiles, while distillate inventories dropped by the most since 2003 as Hurricane Delta cut oil production and shut Gulf Coast refineries. "The (EIA) report halted the (price) slide, which was threatening to turn into an avalanche earlier this morning," said Robert Yawger, director of energy futures at Mizuho in New York.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-global-oil/oil-slips-as-new-lockdown-measures-threaten-demand-recovery-idUKKBN270028?il=0>

Curfews and lockdowns as shaken Europe overtakes U.S. in virus surge

France imposed curfews while other European nations are closing schools, cancelling surgeries and enlisting student medics as overwhelmed authorities face the nightmare scenario of a COVID-19 resurgence at the onset of winter. With new cases hitting about 100,000 daily, Europe has by a wide margin overtaken the United States, where more than 51,000 COVID-19 infections are reported on average every day. As cases in France climbed rapidly, President Emmanuel Macron announced night curfews for four weeks from Saturday in Paris and other major cities, affecting almost one-third of the country's 67 million people.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus/curfews-and-lockdowns-as-shaken-europe-overtakes-us-in-virus-surge-idUKKBN26Z1F8>

New Lockdown

Coronavirus UK: Student lockdown so they can go home for Christmas

Universities across the UK will reportedly be plunged into a two-week lockdown before Christmas to allow students to return home to their families. The lockdown will take place from December 8 to December 22 and will involve classes being taught online only. The plans are said to be in their 'early stages', reports the Guardian. Prime Minister Boris Johnson previously said 'plans are being put in place to allow students home safely for Christmas' as many hundreds of students across the country have been forced to self-isolate due to soaring coronavirus cases.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/10/15/students-to-be-put-into-two-week-lockdown-so-they-can-go-home-for-christmas-13425123/>

Europe scrambles to control coronavirus second wave, with a state of emergency and lockdowns

European leaders have been put in a panic by surging coronavirus infections in the region. France has declared a national state of health emergency, the U.K. appearing to approach a second national lockdown and Germany introducing further rules to restrict the spread of the virus. Europe now has over 7.2 million confirmed cases of Covid-19, according to the World Health Organization.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/15/europes-coronavirus-crisis-france-state-of-emergency-uk-lockdown.html>

Coronavirus: France declares state of emergency as night-time lockdown imposed on Paris and eight other cities

A state of emergency has been declared in France, and President Emmanuel Macron has announced a curfew between 9pm and 6am for the areas worst-affected by coronavirus. Ile-de-France and eight metropolitan areas - including Grenoble, Lille, Lyon, Aix-Marseille, Saint Etienne and Toulouse - will face the curfews for four weeks, starting on Saturday. During the curfew hours, people will not be allowed to go to restaurants or visit friends - but there will be no restrictions on public transport or on people travelling within regions.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-france-declares-state-of-emergency-as-night-time-lockdown-imposed-on-eight-cities-12104167>

'Out of control': Europe scrambles to control coronavirus second wave, with a state of emergency and lockdowns

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<https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/15/europe-coronavirus-crisis-france-state-of-emergency-uk-lockdown.html>

'Last party' for Dutch as new virus lockdown starts

Dutch people drank and danced to pumping techno music Wednesday in the final minutes before all bars, restaurants and cannabis 'coffeeshops' closed as part of a partial coronavirus lockdown. Many of the revellers who flocked to terrace cafes in a main square in The Hague said they backed the measures, which took effect at 10.00pm but that they wanted to party first.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/last-party-for-dutch-as-new-virus-lockdown-starts/articleshow/78673058.cms>

For a 'circuit breaker' lockdown to work in the UK we need to be honest about what it's for - buying time

The pressure is mounting on the Government to introduce a two-week national lockdown, or "circuit breaker", to limit individuals' contacts and thus suppress transmission of coronavirus. Such a lockdown will inevitably cause even more economic and social hardship to the country. But as unpalatable as it is, and as much as I hate the idea, I am reluctantly coming to the same conclusion.

<https://inews.co.uk/opinion/circuit-breaker-lockdown-uk-covid-meaning-buy-time-721132>

'Things will get worse': London goes into stricter lockdown

London, the world's international financial capital, will enter a tighter COVID-19 lockdown from midnight on Friday as Prime Minister Boris Johnson seeks to tackle a swiftly accelerating second coronavirus wave. The respiratory pandemic, which emerged in China last year and has killed over a million people worldwide, is spreading in most parts of Britain, whose official death toll of 43,155 is the highest in Europe. Anger, though, is rising over the economic, social and health costs of the biggest curtailment of freedoms since World War Two. One former government adviser warned some people would have trouble clothing their children soon.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain/things-will-get-worse-london-goes-into-stricter-lockdown-idUSKBN2700NZ>

Lockdown or a drip feed of Covid restrictions? One path is better for the economy

Governments across Europe are choosing between two vastly different strategies as a second wave of Covid-19 arrives in force. Most are imposing limited local restrictions and keeping their economies open. But in the UK and Ireland, scientific advisers have pushed for second national lockdowns, despite fears of an economic shock. The crisis, which hit Europe for the first time in early spring, is back — but this time around, many people feel that locking down society is too high a price to pay.

Yet most medical and economic experts CNN spoke to agree that, in the long run, a short lockdown is better than a constant battle to contain the pandemic. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is one of those trying to avoid a second nationwide lockdown in England.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/15/business/lockdown-economy-johnson-uk-intl/index.html>

London to be placed in tier 2 COVID-19 lockdown with millions banned from mixing indoors

Millions of people will be banned from mixing indoors, with London due to be placed under tier 2 COVID-19 restrictions from this weekend. London will move from tier 1 to tier 2, or from "medium" to "high" alert, from 12:01am on Saturday under the new tiered system announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson earlier this week. Tier 2 means different households will be banned from mixing indoors, including inside homes, pubs and restaurants, and Londoners will also be told to avoid public transport and making non-essential travel.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-15/london-tier-2-covid-19-lockdown-with-millions-banned-from-mixing/12772826>

'Difficult winter ahead': London goes into stricter lockdown

* UK changing lockdown tiers to fight fast virus spread * London moves to 'high' alert from 'medium' on Saturday * Decision on stricter lockdown of Manchester put off * Concerns grow over economic hardships under lockdowns (Updates with London going into stricter coronavirus lockdown)

<https://news.trust.org/item/20201015102738-a63xe>

London to move to stricter COVID-19 lockdown shortly, mayor says

London's mayor Sadiq Khan said he expects the government will announce later on Thursday that London will shortly move to stricter lockdown restrictions. "It is my expectation that the government will today announce that London will shortly be moving into tier 2 or the high alert level of restrictions," Khan said.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/london-move-stricter-covid-19-092011038.html>

Northern Ireland imposes strictest UK lockdown, Irish border curbs follow

Northern Ireland announced the strictest COVID-19 restrictions seen in the United Kingdom since early summer on Wednesday, closing schools for two weeks, restaurants for four weeks and leading Ireland to respond by tightening curbs in bordering counties. The British-ruled region of Northern Ireland has become one of Europe's biggest COVID-19 hotspots in recent weeks. Its health minister described the situation last Friday as becoming graver by the hour. The health department reported a record amount of daily cases on Wednesday with 1,217 new infections bringing the number of cases per 100,000 people in the past seven days to 356. Four more deaths were also announced.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKKBN26Z181>

More UK cities may face stricter lockdown - but at what cost?

London, the world's international financial capital, will enter a tighter COVID-19 lockdown from midnight on Friday as Prime Minister Boris Johnson seeks to tackle a swiftly accelerating second coronavirus wave.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain/more-uk-cities-may-face-stricter-lockdown-but-at-what-cost-idUKKBN270003>