

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

19th Nov 2020

News Highlights

New Zealand reports three new coronavirus cases in managed isolation

New Zealand has reported three new cases of Covid-19 among people returning from the UK and Dubai, all of whom tested positive during managed isolation. [More than 21,000 tests have taken place in the community since Auckland's central business district was placed under quasi-lockdown conditions](#) and passengers must now wear a mask when travelling on buses, ferries, trains and planes in Auckland.

British Medical Association urges ban on household-mixing and travel between tiers post lockdown

The British Medical Association (BMA) has said that mixing between two households and travel between tiers should be banned after lockdown in England until an effective coronavirus vaccine is officially launched. [The association has warned that hospitals and GPs risk being overwhelmed without tough action](#) and that lessons learnt from the lax exit from the previous lockdown need to be implemented.

Pfizer announces 95% success rate of Covid-19 vaccine as trial ends

Pfizer and BioNTech said final trial results of the coronavirus vaccine being developed by them indicated a 95% success rate [with the vaccine's efficacy found to be consistent across different ages and ethnicities with no serious side effects](#). The drugmakers could secure emergency U.S. and European authorisation from both markets as early as next month.

Face masks provide limited protection to wearer, Danish study says

A study released by Danish researchers has indicated that face masks only provide limited protection against Covid-19 to the wearer. However, the researchers also said that the test results should not be used to discourage people from wearing masks in order to not infect others. [Previous research has also indicated that masks provide limited protection for the person wearing it](#), but can dramatically reduce the risk to others if the wearer is infected.

Lockdown Exit

Covid vaccines should not be seen as 'unicorn' solution, says WHO chief - video

Michael Ryan, the head of the World Health Organization's emergencies programme, has said that while vaccines are effective tools, they are not the lone solution to ending the coronavirus pandemic. 'Some people think that vaccines will be, in a sense, the solution, the unicorn we've all been chasing,' he said during a virtual briefing in Geneva on Wednesday, warning other measures such as social distancing needed to be maintained. It comes after positive efficacy results from late-stage trials of two potential Covid-19 vaccines

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2020/nov/18/covid-vaccines-should-not-be-seen-as-unicorn-solution-says-who-chief-video>

Covid 19 coronavirus: Three new cases in managed isolation

In New Zealand, there are three new cases of Covid-19 all detected in recent returnees in managed

isolation. There are no new community cases today. Of the recent returnees who have tested positive for Covid-19: One person arrived from the United Kingdom via Dubai on November 14, two people arrived from Dubai on November 14. All three people tested positive during routine testing around day 3 of their time in managed isolation.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-coronavirus-three-new-cases-in-managed-isolation/ZFNEZAYQPAKLYIANGRLFQSPDU4/>

'Where there's a will there's a way' as English doctors prepare COVID vaccine roll-out

English doctors are grappling with the prospect of seven-day service, -75 degree Celsius freezers and vaccines known as "Talent" and "Courageous" as they prepare for an unprecedented logistical challenge: the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccinations. Health minister Matt Hancock has set a target for England's National Health Service that it should be ready to administer vaccines by Dec. 1, although he has said his central expectation is for the bulk of the roll-out to happen next year. Any distribution of vaccines would also require approval from the country's medical watchdog, the MHRA. On Wednesday, NHS England medical director Stephen Powis confirmed that general practitioners (GPs), pharmacies and large-scale inoculation centres could all be involved in the vaccine roll-out, adding more details would be given in the coming days

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-vaccines/where-theres-a-will-theres-a-way-as-english-doctors-prepare-covid-vaccine-roll-out-idUKKBN27Y27V>

England will need five days of lockdown for each day relaxed at Christmas: adviser

England will need five extra days of lockdown measures to stop COVID-19 infections spreading for each day they are relaxed over the Christmas period to allow people to see their families, a senior government health adviser has warned. Susan Hopkins, deputy director of the national infections service at Public Health England, told reporters on Wednesday that the advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies would mean two days of tighter restrictions.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-christmas/england-will-need-five-days-of-lockdown-for-each-day-relaxed-at-christmas-adviser-idUKKBN27Y2NT>

Japan to monitor virus cases, hospitals before any emergency declaration decision

Japan will not immediately declare a health emergency following a record rise in coronavirus cases, and will continue to monitor infection rates and the capacity of hospitals to cope, the government's chief spokesman said on Thursday. "We will respond appropriately based on conditions," Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato told a regular press briefing. Coronavirus infections in Japan hit a record daily high of 2,201 cases on Wednesday, public broadcaster NHK reported. Almost a quarter of those were in Tokyo, which is expected to raise its pandemic alert level on Thursday, according to local media reports.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-japan/japan-to-monitor-virus-cases-hospitals-before-any-emergency-declaration-decision-idUKKBN27Z0BW>

Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine deliveries could start 'before Christmas'

Pfizer Inc PFE.N and BioNTech 22UAY.DE could secure emergency U.S. and European authorization for their COVID-19 vaccine next month after final trial results showed it had a 95% success rate and no serious side effects, the drugmakers said on Wednesday. The vaccine's efficacy was found to be consistent across different ages and ethnicities - a promising sign given the disease has disproportionately hurt the elderly and certain groups including Black people. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration could grant emergency-use by the middle of December, BioNTech Chief Executive Ugur Sahin told Reuters TV. Conditional approval in the European Union could be secured in the second half of December, he added.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-vaccines-pfizer/pfizer-biontech-vaccine-deliveries-could-start-before-christmas-idUSKBN27Y1LH>

U.S. surpasses 250,000 coronavirus deaths as virus mortality rate surges

The United States has recorded a quarter-million Covid-19 deaths, the latest NBC News numbers showed Wednesday, and the death rate has been accelerating in recent weeks as cases have been surging across the country. The 250,000th death was logged Wednesday morning, the data revealed. In the last four weeks there has been a 42 percent increase in the number of fatalities, from a weekly average of 821 per day in early October to last week's average of 1,167 per day, according to an NBC News analysis of the available data.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-surpasses-250-000-coronavirus-deaths-virus-mortality-rate-n1248109>

Covid: Plaid Cymru calls for extra support for infection hotspots

People self-isolating in Covid hotspots should be given a "topped-up" grant of £800, Plaid Cymru has said. It wants a package of extra support for ex-industrial areas with high infection rates, such as Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent and Rhondda Cynon Taf. These areas, the party said, should be prioritised for mass testing, with more resources for test and trace teams. Ministers said they had put national support measures in place and provided an extra £15.7m for contact tracing. Anyone in Wales is able to claim £500 if they have to stay off work due to coronavirus.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-54973391>

Exit Strategies

Ban household-mixing and travel between tiers after lockdown, BMA urges

Mixing between more than two households and travel between tiers should be banned in England until a vaccine is rolled out to prevent the NHS being swamped after lockdown, the main doctors' organisation has warned. With ministers due to announce next week a return to regional tiers of coronavirus restrictions from 2 December, the British Medical Association (BMA) said that without tough action, hospitals and GPs will become overwhelmed. A BMA report argues that robust measures will be needed until an effective vaccine is widely available, and that ministers must learn from what it called the over-lax exit from the last lockdown.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/nov/17/prepare-for-a-low-key-christmas-england-covid-experts-warn>

Coronavirus: Doctors spell out how to exit England's lockdown

In England, lifting lockdown must be handled better this time round to avoid a surge in Covid that could overwhelm the NHS, doctors say. The British Medical Association has published a blueprint for how it thinks England should proceed with any easing. It includes replacing the "rule of six" with a two-households restriction to reduce social mixing and banning travel between different local lockdown tiers. Government has yet to say if or exactly how England will exit on 2 December. It will decide next week, based on whether cases have fallen enough and how much strain hospitals are under.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54973530>

Is lockdown working? London businesses urge Government to give city a chance amid claims curbs are helping

In England, lockdown is starting to work in the battle against Covid-19, a Cabinet minister claimed today, as business chiefs appealed for London to be given a chance to recover when restrictions are lifted. Official data is understood to show that the number of coronavirus infections in the community in England is still growing but less quickly in recent weeks. Business chiefs warned that London must be put into a tier which will allow the city to reopen. Jace Tyrrell, who is chief executive of New West End Company, said: "Our hope is that the Government will recognise that the capital can be safely and sustainably reopened for business from December 3.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/lockdown-working-london-businesses-b73190.html>

'Hope for easing of lockdown over Christmas 'as ministers plan brief relaxation of Covid

restrictions'

In England, families may be able to mix in “bubbles” at Christmas under plans for a brief relaxation of coronavirus restrictions over the festive period, according to reports. Britons could get up to five days of loosened measures starting from December 24 under the new proposals reportedly being considered by ministers. Government chiefs are also considering allowing families made up of up to two or three households to meet for Christmas. It comes after Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he wanted to “ensure people can spend time with close family over Christmas”.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/hope-for-christmas-gettogethers-as-ministers-plan-brief-relaxation-of-coronaviruses-restrictions-over-festive-period-b72890.html>

UK households will face ban from mixing after lockdown - the Telegraph

British households will be banned from mixing when the lockdown ends under government's plans to rescue Christmas, the Telegraph reported here on Tuesday. Ministers are planning to announce an “end of lockdown package” next week, according to the report. The package will also include a schedule for UK’s vaccination programme and an expansion of mass testing, which is expected to soften the blow of further restrictions, the report added. Under current social distancing guidance, meetings of larger groups are against the law, though people from different households can gather in groups.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-lockdown-idUKKBN27X33C>

'The cow can't tell my secrets' - UK care farms a lifeline during pandemic

Care farms nestled in the British countryside are providing a lifeline for people struggling with mental health during the pandemic, allowing them to swap therapy sessions on Zoom for the joys of fresh air, mucking out cow sheds and cuddling donkeys. With vital public services for vulnerable people shut down or reduced to video calls because of social distancing measures, care farms have been able to stay open as activities take place in wide open spaces. At Future Roots in the southern county of Dorset, 14-year-old Liam Holt has found that spending time outdoors working with animals and other people has had a transformational effect on his state of mind.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/instant-article/idUKKBN27Z0AV>

South Australia virus lockdown begins amid hopes to curb outbreak

One of Australia’s strictest lockdowns began on Thursday with outdoor gatherings, weddings, funerals, takeaway food all coming to a standstill as authorities try to stifle the latest flare-up of the novel coronavirus. Images on social media showed empty streets in Adelaide, the capital of South Australia state, on day one of the state-wide lockdown. Residents flocked to supermarkets to load up with supplies until late on Wednesday. The state, home to about 1.8 million people, has recorded 23 cases from the latest cluster. There were no new infections to report on Thursday while 3,200 close contacts of the infected were in quarantine, the state’s chief public health officer, Nicola Spurrier, told a news conference.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-australia/south-australia-virus-lockdown-begins-amid-hopes-to-curb-outbreak-idUKKBN27Z01A?il=0>

How a vaccine could upend real estate markets -- again

In just a matter of months the coronavirus pandemic dramatically changed the landscape of the housing market, especially in big cities. But now news of a promising vaccine could turn the market on its head again. Nationally, home prices have never been higher, driven up as surging demand due to record low mortgage rates comes up against historically low inventory of homes for sale. But the most expensive urban areas have been experiencing the opposite problem. Cities like New York and San Francisco have seen higher vacancy rates and lower rents and sale prices as many people, untethered from office jobs, retreated to the suburbs and less densely populated areas.

https://edition.cnn.com/2020/11/18/success/vaccine-real-estate-new-york-city/index.html?utm_term=link&utm_conte

Partisan Exits

COVID-19: 'High priority' procurement for firms recommended by MPs and advisers

Companies recommended by MPs, peers and advisers were given priority to win government contracts as it scrambled to respond to the coronavirus outbreak, the public spending watchdog has found. A National Audit Office (NAO) investigation into pandemic procurement concludes that normal standards of transparency were waived as departments awarded 8,600 contracts worth £18bn to tackle COVID-19. Deals worth £10.5bn were granted without competitive tender.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-high-priority-procurement-for-firms-recommended-by-mps-and-advisers-12135051>

Police fire water cannon at anti-lockdown protesters in Germany

German police have deployed water cannon to disperse a mass anti-lockdown protest outside Berlin's Brandenburg Gate. Scores of protesters gathered to oppose the government's coronavirus restrictions as German MPs debated a bill to provide the legal underpinning for the government to issue social distancing rules, require masks in public and close stores and other venues. In scenes replicated across the continent and the world, those opposed to the measures took to the streets despite popular support for measures to quell the spread of the virus. Officers said the crowd refused to listen to their requests to wear masks and keep their distance from one another in line with regulations.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-lockdown-protest-berlin-police-b1724879.html>

German police fire water cannons at protesters as thousands gather in Berlin anti-lockdown rally

Thousands gathered at Brandenburg Gate to protest covid restrictions in Germany as case numbers rose. Police used water cannons to break up the huge crowds with some protesters throwing flares. Demonstration came as government debated a bill that would make mask wearing, social distancing and shop closures enforceable by law

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8961759/amp/German-police-fire-water-cannons-protesters-thousands-gather-Berlin-anti-lockdown-rally.html>

Conspiracy Video Goes Viral in Threat to France's Vaccine Push

A documentary questioning the purpose of coronavirus vaccines has gone viral in France after endorsements from politicians and celebrities, some of whom later withdrew their support. "Hold Up" got more than 4 million views on Google's YouTube and other platforms over a couple of days last week, helped along on social media by public figures including lawmakers, former First Lady Carla Bruni--Sarkozy and actor Sophie Marceau. Suspicions over the safety and effectiveness of vaccines are widespread in France. In a study released this week by the liberal think tank Fondation Jean-Jaures, 43% of respondents said they would refuse to get a shot -- 7 percentage points more than in the U.S., and twice as many as in the U.K.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/politics/conspiracy-video-goes-viral-in-threat-to-france-s-vaccine-push>

Continued Lockdown

'Students feel vulnerable': how Covid-19 has put a strain on mental health

From self-isolation with flatmates they barely know and halls of residences emptying out over lockdown to struggles to get the wifi to work for Zoom lectures, the start to the 2020 term has been riddled with uncertainty for most university students. Just one thing's for sure: it's been a strange few weeks. It's perhaps unsurprising that students across campuses have been grappling with loneliness, anxiety and depression as a result of their experiences. "Students aren't just disappointed that their university experience looks different in terms of teaching and learning,

they're also asking: 'What does it mean for all the other things I wanted out of uni? The people I could have met? The sports and societies I could have joined?'" said Hillary Gyebi-Ababio, vice-president for higher education at the National Union of Students.

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/nov/18/students-feel-vulnerable-how-covid-19-has-put-a-strain-on-mental-health>

Lockdown loneliness reaches record levels

The week after the clocks went back saw Britain's highest levels of acute loneliness in the pandemic, Office for National Statistics figures suggest. The start of November, with darker evenings, saw 8% of adults who were "always or often lonely" - representing 4.2 million people. This was the peak in this measure of loneliness since the lockdown in March. Loneliness Minister Baroness Barran says the next few months will be "incredibly challenging"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-54973709>

Poor areas of England face 'permanent' lockdown, says public health chief

Some of England's poorest areas face being trapped in coronavirus restrictions "permanently" unless the government tackles deep-rooted inequalities that are driving high transmission, according to a public health chief. Prof Dominic Harrison, the director of public health at Blackburn with Darwen council, said the government's "pointlessly punishing" approach would keep areas such as his under strict measures up to next summer. He told the Guardian: "We do need the restrictions, but what we need is something that is going to be more effective, more helpful, less pointlessly punishing than continued controls that aren't going to be effective, or that are unlikely to be effective in the medium term and cause continued and further economic damage."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/18/poor-areas-of-england-face-permanent-lockdown-says-blackburn-public-health-chief>

French government spokesman says: unwinding lockdown not for now

French government spokesman Gabriel Attal said on Wednesday that the unwinding of lockdown was not for the near future. Attal also told reporters that President Emmanuel Macron would address the nation next week regarding the coronavirus situation in France.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-france/french-government-spokesman-says-unwinding-lockdown-not-for-now-idUKKBN27Y1PD>

Dutch PM Rutte: coronavirus lockdown to continue into December

Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Tuesday said most of the country's current coronavirus lockdown measures must remain in place through mid-December, despite a recent decline in the number of new cases. "It's nice what we've achieved together," Rutte said at a press conference after health officials reported that new cases had declined 15 percent in the past week. "But if you look around in Europe, the picture is pretty sombre", he said, with most countries strengthening rather than loosening measures. Earlier on Tuesday the National Institute for Health (RIVM) said in its weekly update there were 37,706 new cases in the week to Nov. 17, the smallest number since early October.

https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-netherlands/dutch-pm-rutte-coronavirus-lockdown-to-continue-int-o-december-idUKKBN27X2P5?feedType=mktg&feedName=worldNews&WT.mc_id=Partner-Google

Scientific Viewpoint

Cipla launches 'Covi-G' for COVID-19 rapid antibody detection

Cipla Limited today announced that it signed a licensing agreement with a Belgium-based firm, Multi G for the distribution of their COVID-19 Rapid Antibody test kit, across most Emerging markets and Europe. This licencing agreement is part of Cipla's efforts to enhance global access to life- saving treatments and diagnostic infrastructure for patients in need. As part of this agreement, Cipla will be

responsible for distribution of the COVID-19 rapid antibody kit that will be manufactured by MultiG. It is marketed under the brand name 'Covi-G', this was among the earliest Antibody kits to declare CE-compliance and is awaiting approval by ICH country regulators. It has been commercialised in 20+ countries already, with sensitivity and specificity exceeding 92%. It tests for both IgM and IgG antibodies, using a single-prick blood test using of the test result indicator visual interpretation. The kit gives results within 10 minutes.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/in/news-releases/cipla-launches-covi-g-for-covid-19-rapid-antibody-detection-809446057.html>

Pfizer's Covid-19 Vaccine 95% Effective in Final Results, Company to Seek Approval Within Days

Pfizer Inc. said it will ask health regulators to authorize its experimental Covid-19 vaccine within days, after reporting the shot was 95% effective in its pivotal study and showed signs of being safe. The company's plans, announced Wednesday, mean the shot is on track to go into distribution by the end of the year, if the regulators permit.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/pfizers-covid-19-vaccine-95-effective-in-final-results-company-to-seek-approval-within-days-11605699996?mod=hp_lead_pos1

Pfizer ends its COVID-19 vaccine trial with a 95% success rate

Pfizer Inc PFE.N and BioNTech 22UAY.DE could secure emergency U.S. and European authorization for their COVID-19 vaccine next month after final trial results showed it had a 95% success rate and no serious side effects, the drugmakers said on Wednesday. The vaccine's efficacy was found to be consistent across different ages and ethnicities - a promising sign given the disease has disproportionately hurt the elderly and certain groups including Black people. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration could grant emergency-use by the middle of December, BioNTech Chief Executive Ugur Sahin told Reuters TV. Conditional approval in the European Union could be secured in the second half of December, he added.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-vaccines-pfizer-idUKKBN27Y1HK>

Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine has 95% efficacy and is safe, further analysis shows

The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19 performs even better than previously thought, with 95% efficacy, equalling the early results from Moderna on Monday, according to an analysis of the final data from their trials, which paves the way for regulators to grant an emergency licence and vaccination campaigns to begin. The news will excite scientists, public health experts and politicians. Pfizer/BioNTech say they also have the necessary safety data that regulatory bodies require, and will submit the vaccine for emergency approval within days to the US Food and Drug Administration and other regulators around the world.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/18/pfizer-covid-19-vaccine-95-effective-and-safe-further-tests-show>

Covid-19 vaccine: who are countries prioritising for first doses?

Hope that the first effective vaccines against Covid-19 could begin being distributed late this year or early in 2021 has led countries, including the UK, to announce who will be vaccinated first. While the World Health Organization has set out general guidelines for vaccination priority, different countries have set their own criteria. That includes the United States, where the Centers for Disease Control's Vaccination Program interim playbook, issued at the end of last month, identified minority ethnic groups - who have been shown to be more susceptible as a potential "critical population" - for priority consideration along with care homes, prisons and psychiatric facilities residents and workers, health workers and the over-65s and those with pre-existing conditions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/18/covid-19-vaccine-who-are-countries-prioritising-for-first-doses>

Covid-19: Chinese vaccine 'successful in mid-stage trials'

A Covid-19 vaccine developed in China has shown success in mid-stage trials, researchers say.

There are several vaccines being developed in China, some of which are already being administered. According to the researchers, the Sinovac Biotech vaccine led to a quick immune response during trials with around 700 people. The announcement comes after European and US vaccines reported successful data from large late-stage trials. Three vaccines, developed in the US, Germany and Russia, have all released data suggesting efficiency of more than 90%, after trials with tens of thousands of people.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-54982910>

Dolly Parton 'honoured and proud' to help Covid-19 battle

Country star Dolly Parton has said she feels "very honoured and proud" to have given money to research into one of the most promising Covid-19 vaccines. In April she announced she was giving \$1m (£750,000) to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. That was one of the trial sites for the Moderna vaccine, which is nearly 95% effective according to early data. Speaking on BBC One's The One Show on Tuesday, Parton said she was "so excited" to hear the news.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-54974987>

'Incredible milestone for science.' Pfizer and BioNTech update their promising COVID-19 vaccine result

As opposed to the vague initial report last week that their vaccine had greater than 90% efficacy, Pfizer and BioNTech are providing more specific data now that the study has reached enough COVID-19 cases to end. In all, the trial had 162 confirmed cases of symptomatic COVID-19 in the placebo group versus eight among those who received the two scheduled doses of the vaccine. The efficacy, which was measured 7 days after the second dose of the vaccine, was the same in different races and ethnicities, the companies say—although subgroup analyses always have more uncertainty. Nine of the 10 people who had severe cases of COVID-19 during the trial received the placebo, which indicates that even if the vaccine fails to prevent symptomatic disease, it still offers powerful protection from serious harm. No serious side effects surfaced, the companies report, although 3.7% of the vaccinated reported fatigue after the injections.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/11/covid-19-vaccine-trial-complete-pfizer-and-biontech-update-their-promising-result>

Chinese COVID-19 vaccine candidate appears safe, induces immune response, preliminary study finds

Results from an early-phase clinical trial of a Chinese vaccine candidate, CoronaVac, revealed that the formulation appears safe and induces an antibody response in healthy volunteers aged 18 to 59 years. According to the findings of the phase 1/2 randomised clinical trial, published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal, the vaccine candidate could induce an antibody response in participants within 28 days of the first immunisation, by giving two doses 14 days apart. The researchers, including those from the Jiangsu Provincial Center for Disease Control and Prevention in China, also found the optimum dose to generate the highest antibody responses, while taking account of side effects and production capacity.

<https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/international/chinese-covid-19-vaccine-candidate-appears-safe-induces-immune-response-preliminary-study-finds>

One in 10 parents experienced severe burnout in lockdown - Canterbury University study

Parenting can be a demanding and stressful job at any time, but a pandemic can pile additional pressure on parents, new Canterbury University research shows. UC's Dr Cara Swit surveyed parents in New Zealand as part of a global study conducted in 15 countries to assess levels of parental burnout during Covid-19 lockdowns. She found that 10.5 per cent of parents in this country experienced high levels of parental burnout, which is defined as a combination of chronic stress, exhaustion, feeling like their parenting is not as good as it was, loss of pleasure or fulfilment in

parenting, and emotional distancing from their children. “Any levels of parental burnout are concerning, so we need to understand the influences behind these figures and what can be done to support parents who are struggling,” Swit said.

<https://www.odt.co.nz/star-news/star-christchurch/one-10-parents-experienced-severe-burnout-lockdown-canterbury-university>

New Zealand had great success in containing Covid-19, but public wellbeing paid a price

People worldwide have been experiencing high levels of distress during the Covid-19 pandemic. A New Zealand survey shows that, despite eliminating the virus, people's mental health took a knock. Researchers are encouraging governments to prioritise mental wellbeing during this time

<https://m.health24.com/Medical/Infectious-diseases/Coronavirus/new-zealand-had-great-success-in-containing-covid-19-but-public-wellbeing-paid-the-price-20201118>

Early trial results show Sinovac vaccine triggers immune response

Sinovac Biotech's experimental COVID-19 vaccine CoronaVac triggered a quick immune response but the level of antibodies produced was lower than in people who had recovered from the disease, early trial results showed on Wednesday. While the early to mid-stage trials were not designed to assess the efficacy of CoronaVac, researchers said it could provide sufficient protection, based on their experience with other vaccines and data from preclinical studies with macaques.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/18/early-trial-results-show-sinovac-vaccine-triggers-immune-response>

Smoking causes three times as many cells to be infected with coronavirus, lab study suggests - despite array of research showing that it may cut the risk of getting COVID-19

UCLA researchers created models of human airways from donor stem cells Exposed some to smoke and compared impact of SARS-CoV-2 infection Found those exposed to cigarettes had three times as many cells infected Also discovered the smoke inhibits function of interferons which help the body fight the virus

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-8961541/Smoking-causes-THREE-times-cells-infected-coronavirus.html?ito=social-twitter_mailonline

Danish study finds face masks provide limited protection to wearer

A Danish study released on Wednesday found face masks provide the wearer with only limited protection against COVID-19 infection, but said this should not be used to argue against their widespread use to prevent people infecting others. In the study, which was carried out in April and May when Danish authorities did not recommend wearing face masks, 6,024 adults were divided into two groups, one wearing face masks and one control group.

https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-facemasks-idUKKBN27Y1YW?taid=5fb54782169ccd0001d2ab05&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

COVID-19: People told to open windows this winter to decrease coronavirus risk

People are being encouraged to open their windows this winter to decrease the risk of catching coronavirus. The Department for Health has released a video showing how virus particles linger in enclosed spaces. It also shows how letting fresh air in can reduce the risk of infection by more than 70%. Coronavirus is spread through the air by droplets and smaller particles known as aerosols when they are exhaled from the nose and mouth of an infected person as they breathe, speak or cough.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-people-told-to-open-windows-this-winter-to-decrease-coronavirus-risk-12135381?dcmp=snt-sf-twitter>

A rapid at-home covid-19 test – for under \$50 – just got FDA approval

People who think they were exposed to the coronavirus face a number of logistical obstacles in the United States to get tested: Many tests take days to produce results, require leaving quarantine to

visit a medical professional, or — most likely — both. That could change with Lucira Health's "All-In-One" test kit, which on Tuesday became the first rapid, at-home test authorized by the Food and Drug Administration.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/11/18/home-test-coronavirus-covid-fda/>

Hope for elderly as vaccine shows 94% protection

Experts have welcomed the news that the promising Covid vaccine candidate developed by Pfizer is effective among the elderly. Data from Pfizer and BioNTech's phase 3 trial show their vaccine is 94% effective in those aged 65 and older. Scientists have welcomed the news that older people will achieve a good level of protection, with those over 65 years deemed to be at higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19 or death. One expert said that the findings among the elderly "surpass expectations".

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/hope-for-elderly-as-vaccine-shows-94-protection-39763118.html>

Pfizer ends COVID-19 vaccine trial with 95% success rate

The results are in for a frontrunner in the race for a COVID-19 vaccine. United States pharma giant Pfizer Inc and its German partner BioNTech said on Wednesday that final results from the Phase 3 trial of their COVID-19 vaccine showed it to be 95 percent effective – the highest success rate for any pandemic candidate in late-stage trials so far.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/11/18/pfizer-ends-covid-19-vaccine-trial-with-95-success-rate>

Moderna vaccine results 'stunningly impressive': Fauci

The United States's top infectious disease scientist has hailed early trial results from Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine as "stunningly impressive" and says the findings are an emphatic validation of experimental mRNA technology that some had doubted. In an interview with AFP news agency on Monday, Anthony Fauci said he would have settled for injections that protected 70-75 percent of people from falling sick.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/17/moderna-vaccine-results-stunningly-impressive-fauci>

Coronavirus Resurgence

'A catastrophic situation': COVID-19 threatens to overwhelm Canada's health system

In July, the Canadian province of Manitoba went two weeks without a single new case of COVID-19. Theaters and casinos reopened and children soon returned to school. By October, the 1.4 million people living in a province only slightly smaller geographically than Texas had Canada's highest rate of active cases - now 512 per 100,000 people, or nearly quadruple the national rate. "In a couple of weeks, we're going to be in a catastrophic situation," said Dr. Anand Kumar, a Manitoba intensive care physician.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-canada-hospitals-idUSKBN27Y1IH>

Putin admits he is 'alarmed' by Russia's spike in Covid-19 deaths and says officials 'cannot pretend all is fine'

Putin said the rising death rate was 'alarming' after record 456 fatalities today Russia has stopped short of imposing strict new measures like much of Europe In a further blow, smoke was seen billowing from a major hospital in Russia today

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8962655/Putin-admits-alarmed-Russias-Covid-19-spike.html>

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott won't order lockdown as coronavirus cases rise

The last time case numbers were this high, Abbott closed bars and urged Texans to avoid summer holiday gatherings. This time, he's staying the course, relying on a 2-month-old blueprint to claw back reopenings regionally based on hospitalizations.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2020/11/18/texas-coronavirus-lockdown/>

As virus hits Italy's south, some flee troubled health care

Patients some wrapped in blankets that look like they came from home, moan in their beds. What appears to be medical tubing and a wad of gauze or paper towels litter the floor of San Giuliano public hospital which treats coronavirus patients in a bleak town in Italy's Neapolitan hinterland. In another surreptitiously filmed scene, 15 kilometers (9 miles) away in Naples an elderly man suspected of having COVID-19 takes his last, labored breaths in a bathroom at the emergency room of Cardarelli Hospital, his undignified end memorialized on a phone camera by a fellow patient and posted online.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/as-virus-hits-italys-south-some-flee-troubled-health-care-naples-italy-ap-hospital-blankets-b1724735.html>

Italy reports 34,283 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday, 753 deaths

Italy has registered 34,283 new coronavirus infections over the past 24 hours, the health ministry said on Wednesday, up from 32,191 the day before. The ministry also reported 753 COVID 19-related deaths, up from 731 on Tuesday and the highest daily tally since April 3, when the country was in full national lockdown. There were 234,834 coronavirus swabs carried out in the past day, the ministry said, against a previous 208,458. Italy was the first Western country to be hit by the virus and has seen 47,217 COVID-19 fatalities since its outbreak emerged in February, the second highest toll in Europe after Britain's, and 1.27 million cases.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-italy-tally-idUSKBN27Y2FY>

Brutal Covid second wave exposes Italy's shortage of intensive care staff

Italian hospitals are struggling with a shortage of intensive care specialists as the country battles a severe coronavirus second wave, while some citizens are also turning against health workers. Covid-related deaths rose by 731 on Tuesday – the highest daily toll since early April, when Italy was in complete lockdown – and by 753 on Wednesday, as weaknesses in the healthcare system across the country become more exposed. According to a study by Johns Hopkins University in the US, Italy has recorded four deaths per 100 infections – the third highest rate in the world. Tuesday's count equated to one death every two minutes. Admissions to intensive care units have almost doubled to 3,612 since 1 November and the number of people in hospital with coronavirus – 33,074 – has eclipsed that reached during the first wave.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/18/brutal-second-wave-of-covid-exposes-italys-healthcare-weaknesses>

Italy and Spain report highest daily Covid deaths of second wave

Italy and Spain have both recorded their highest daily coronavirus death tolls of the second wave, reporting 731 and 435 deaths respectively over the past 24 hours. Italy, the first western country hit by the virus, has logged 46,464 Covid deaths while Spain has logged 41,688. Such high Italian daily death figures have not been seen since 3 April, when the country was still in lockdown. The Spanish toll is well up on last week's previous second-wave record of 411 deaths.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/17/italy-spain-report-highest-daily-covid-deaths-second-wave>

France is the worst-hit country for COVID-19 cases in Europe. But these teens are angry their schools remain open

The sun had barely risen over Paris and already pepper spray filled the air. Students protesting against an alleged lack of COVID-19 protections inside schools were the target of last week's protest, but anyone nearby could feel the acrid substance in their nostrils. They tried to form a barricade of wheelie bins to block the entrance to their high school, General Lycée Colbert, in northern Paris. But police had prior warning of their plan and tried to snuff out the protest before it had even begun.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-18/france-is-the-worst-hit-in-europe-with-covid-19-heres-why/12891230>

South Korea sees biggest rise in Covid-19 cases since August

South Korea has recorded its largest daily increase in coronavirus infections in nearly three months as it gets set to tighten social distancing rules in the greater Seoul area. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 313 new cases on Wednesday, raising the country's total to 29,311, including 496 deaths. It's the first time the country's daily caseload exceeded 300 since late August. <https://www.deccanherald.com/international/world-news-politics/south-korea-sees-biggest-rise-in-covid-19-cases-since-august-917058.html>

Japan cases hit record as Tokyo plans to raise virus alert

COVID-19 cases rose to a record of more than 2,000, according to local media tallies, as the nation that had previously shown success in containing the virus now faces a rapid spread of the pathogen. <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/tokyo-to-lift-virus-alert-level-to-highest-as-cases-rise-nikkei-1.1523929>

Tokyo to raise alert as Japan sets daily record with 2000-plus COVID-19 cases

Japan set a daily record with more than 2,000 new COVID-19 cases — including a new high of 493 in the capital — on Wednesday, following reports Tokyo was expected to raise its virus alert to the highest level Thursday amid an ongoing surge of infections. Prior to Wednesday, record nationwide tallies had been reported for three consecutive days through Saturday, with the figure hitting 1,737 on that day. While the final figure for Wednesday was yet to be confirmed, local media tallies showed the figure had risen above the 2,000 threshold. But much of the focus has been on the capital and the surge in cases there. While raising the virus alert level, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government may also call on businesses to close early, according to local media reports. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/11/18/national/tokyo-coronavirus-alert-level/>

Ireland has only one way to avoid entering third lockdown

The whole of Europe is in a disastrous second wave of Covid-19 and a second lockdown. On past experience, it is likely to head into a third wave and third lockdown in January, which will bring further and unimaginable damage to us all, and a collapse of confidence in our medical advisers and governments. Vaccines and anti-virals will not arrive in time to avoid this catastrophe, and any talk of significant relaxation of guidelines for Christmas is highly irresponsible. We must go further and face the fact that the European policy of living with Covid-19 is wrong. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/ireland-has-only-one-way-to-avoid-entering-third-lockdown-1.4411776>

Turkey says additional coronavirus measures will take effect from Nov. 20

Turkey said on Wednesday new coronavirus measures limiting the working hours of restaurants and cafes and introducing a partial lockdown on weekends will take effect from the evening of Nov. 20, according to an interior ministry statement. Restaurants, cafes, shopping malls and hairdressers will only be allowed to operate from 0700 GMT to 1700 GMT, the statement said, while restaurants and cafes will only be open for takeaway and delivery services. Under the new curbs, which will take effect from 1700 GMT on Friday, cinemas will be closed for the rest of the year. The government said on Tuesday it would impose tighter coronavirus measures as cases surged in recent weeks. Ankara reported 3,819 new symptomatic cases on Tuesday and 103 COVID-19 deaths in the country, taking the total death toll to 11,704.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-turkey/turkey-says-additional-coronavirus-measures-will-take-effect-from-nov-20-idUSL8N2I40FA>

Confirmed coronavirus infections in France surpass two million

France's cumulative number of COVID-19 cases now exceeds two million but efforts to rein in the pandemic are starting to bear fruit, its top health official said on Tuesday. Authorities have reported a total of 2,036,755 confirmed coronavirus infections, with the number of deaths in hospitals and nursing homes now at 46,273, including 437 over the past 24 hours, Director General of Health Jerome Salomon said. "Our collective efforts are starting to bear fruit, the number of new cases has been going down over a few days...We must double down our efforts to regain control of the

epidemic," Salomon told a news conference.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-france-salomon/confirmed-coronavirus-infections-in-france-surpass-two-million-idUKKBN27X2ML>

Covid Stalks U.S. Nursing Homes Again With Pandemic Redoubling

The tip of the coronavirus spear is piercing the country's long-term care facilities again in a surge that underscores the nation's repeated failure to protect its most vulnerable. States reported over 29,000 new infections last week in places such as nursing homes and assisted-living facilities, the steepest uptick since at least May, according to Covid Tracking Project data. They come as national daily case counts were higher than ever in November, with a record of more than 170,000 new cases reported Nov. 13.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-11-19/covid-stalks-u-s-nursing-homes-again-with-pandemic-redoubling>

Wedding with over 300 guests in Washington state linked to COVID-19 outbreak

A wedding in Washington state attended by over 300 people has been linked to nearly 40 COVID-19 cases so far, health officials said. The massive party was held near Ritzville, in rural Adams County, on Nov. 7, officials said. By Monday, neighboring Grant County had traced 17 cases of COVID-19 to the event, "with more being added daily," local health officials said in a news release. On Tuesday, the number of cases connected to the wedding was approaching 40, the Grant County Health District confirmed to ABC News.

https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wedding-300-guests-washington-state-linked-covid-19/story?id=74253436&cid=social_twitter_abcn

Covid: New York City closes all schools amid virus spike

New York City has been ordered to close its schools from Thursday, amid a Covid-19 spike. The decision to close the US's largest public school system comes as positive test rates for the virus surpassed the 3% threshold, officials say. It will affect some 300,000 children. New York, where 35,000 residents have died with coronavirus, was the epicentre of the outbreak in the US in the spring. It now appears to be facing a new wave. The US has more infections and more deaths from the virus than any other nation, and has reported record levels of cases in recent days.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-54995655>

New Lockdown

South Australia announces six-day Covid lockdown as 'circuit breaker' to avoid second wave

The South Australian government has announced an immediate six-day lockdown followed by a further week of tough restrictions as the state scrambles to avoid a second wave of coronavirus infections. The lockdown will take effect from midnight on Wednesday after the Parafield cluster, which started from a hotel quarantine breach, grew by two overnight to reach 22 confirmed cases. The premier, Steven Marshall, said the state needed a "circuit breaker" to allow for a contact-tracing blitz so South Australia didn't face a crisis as Victoria experienced.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/nov/18/south-australia-announces-six-day-covid-lockdown-as-circuit-breaker-to-avoid-second-wave>

South Australia introduces 6-day lockdown as COVID-19 'circuit-breaker'

The South Australian government has announced comprehensive restrictions under a six-day lockdown as it fights to stamp out a coronavirus cluster. Universities, pubs, cafes and food courts will be at a standstill, and schools will be closed to everyone but vulnerable children and children of essential workers as of midnight Wednesday, local time.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/south-australia-introduces-6-day-lockdown-as-covid-19-circuit-breaker>

Panic-buying across South Australia as state goes into lockdown

Adelaide residents have started panic-buying in supermarkets after Premier Steven Marshall announced a six-day coronavirus lockdown. South Australia is battling a cluster of 22 cases in the city's northern suburbs and will introduce the harshest restrictions the country has seen to slow the spread from midnight. The lockdown - described as 'extreme' by state chief health officer Nicola Spurrier - bans residents from leaving home for exercise and allows one shopping trip per household a day.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8960383/Panic-buying-South-Australia-state-goes-lockdown.html>

South Australia plans six-day lockdown after 'highly contagious' virus outbreak

South Australia on Wednesday declared a six-day lockdown to stamp out what the state premier described as a highly contagious outbreak of the coronavirus disease that officials linked to a returned traveller from the UK. Most businesses will close except for some food outlets, and people will be largely confined to their homes, as the state tries to avoid a more severe breakout like the one that all but shuttered neighbouring Victoria for more than 100 days. "We need this circuit breaker, this community pause," South Australian Premier Steven Marshall told media

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-australia/south-australia-orders-six-day-statewide-lockdown-against-fresh-virus-outbreak-idUKKBN27Y0F2>

Crisis-weary Beirut residents defy new lockdown despite COVID surge

Beirut's popular Sabra market teemed with shoppers this week, some of them unmasked, in apparent defiance of a full national lockdown imposed on Saturday to stem a resurgence of coronavirus infections. The Lebanese government ordered the two-week restrictions, including a 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew on Sundays, as new daily infections rose above 1,000. Lebanon reported 1,016 new infections on Monday, bringing its total to 106,446 cases and 827 deaths since Feb. 21. After city streets and roads emptied on Sunday, pedestrians were back on Monday and some motorists could be seen flouting a re-imposed odd-even licence plate alternate day driving rule.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-lebanon-lockdown/crisis-weary-beirut-residents-defy-new-lockdown-despite-covid-surge-idUKKBN27X1S9>