

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

8th Dec 2020

News Highlights

Concerns over vaccine confidence as rollouts planned

Vaccine scepticism remains a major issue in the run-up to rollout of a Covid-19 vaccine. [A University of Hamburg survey covering seven European nations found forty percent either hesitant to accept the vaccine or outright unwilling to do so.](#) With anti-vaccination activists fanning the flames could there be a real risk that vaccination campaign will be impeded?

Are U.S. vaccination targets unrealistic?

Operation Warp Speed, an initiative to ramp up development of Covid-19 vaccines and facilitate their distribution, [claims it is on track to vaccinate twenty million people in December. Yet logistical challenges make this unlikely according to some.](#) Those involved in vaccine distribution planning in multiple states say mid-January is a more likely timeframe.

Japan and South Korea to use military in Covid crackdown

Japan and South Korea will deploy their militaries in the fight against Covid-19. Japan is reporting a surge in Covid-19 cases. [South Korea, meanwhile, has witnessed triple-digit daily increases over the last month.](#) Military forces in the two countries will fill roles such as assisting in testing and tracing and plugging staffing shortages in healthcare facilities.

Breakthrough in detecting Covid-19 changes in wastewater

Scientists have developed a new method of detecting Covid-19 changes in wastewater among larger communities. [The breakthrough allows for detection as human waste will carry virus particles from those infected.](#) The new method shows there is an alignment between the concentration of particles in wastewater and new infections in the community.

Lockdown Exit

Austrian shops open after 3 weeks as lockdown loosened

Austrians lined up to enter stores on Monday as the country relaxed its coronavirus lockdown, allowing nonessential shops to reopen after three weeks. But many restrictions remain in place, and the country's leader advised people against all rushing to the shops at once. Tough lockdown measures took effect Nov. 17. The government decided last week that enough progress had been made in cutting coronavirus infections to relax some restrictions. Schools were reopened, except for older students, as were museums, libraries and some other businesses such as hairdressers. But restaurants remain closed for all but takeout and deliveries, as do bars, and hotels are only open to business travelers

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/dec/7/austrian-shops-open-after-3-weeks-as-lockdown-loos/>

UK shops reopen after lockdown - but footfall still down 30% on 2019

Britons flocked to the High Street after for the first weekend following the lifting of the nationwide lockdown - but footfall remained lower than pre-pandemic levels. The number of shoppers out this

weekend was down 30% on the same period in 2019. Crowds keen for a Christmas bargain flocked to shopping areas across the UK on Saturday with large numbers of shoppers photographed on London's Regent Street and in Manchester. Diane Wehrle, marketing director for Springboard who produced the figures, said the boost was partly down to people desperate to leave their homes after lockdown

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9026779/Britons-flocked-High-Street-shopping-centres-footfall-30-2019.html>

Christmas market closed as shopping crowds spark concern in Nottingham and London

Christmas shoppers hit the high streets in droves on the first weekend since lockdown was lifted in England, sparking concerns over social distancing. Queues formed in London's West End as crowds flooded Oxford Street and Regent Street on Saturday to make the most of non-essential shops reopening under the new tiered system. The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, was out in the West End on Saturday as a show of support for retailers, but he warned people to continue following coronavirus rules, with the majority of England under tier 2 or tier 3 restrictions, which limit social contact between households.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/christmas-shopping-oxford-street-regent-street-nottingham-coronavirus-b1766994.html>

Covid-19: One new case in managed isolation, ministry cuts back on updates

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Health is reducing the frequency of its regular Covid-19 updates to four times a week. The news comes as the ministry announced one new case of Covid-19 in New Zealand on Monday, in managed isolation. Covid-19 updates, which had been published every day at 1pm, will now be scheduled for Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. On those days, the Ministry will report cases that have tested positive in managed isolation in the preceding days since the last update.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/300176814/covid19-one-new-case-in-managed-isolation-ministry-cuts-back-on-updates>

England's malls attract Christmas shoppers after lockdown ends

Footfall across all retail destinations in England rose by 81% compared to the previous week after a second lockdown ended on Wednesday, allowing non-essential shops to begin trading again, Springboard said on Monday. Shopping centres saw the biggest boost, with a 121.3% rise from Wednesday, while high streets saw a 79.8% rise and numbers in retail parks were up 40.7%, Springboard said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-retail-springboard-idUKKBN28H1AU>

New Covid app reveals which areas could change tiers next week

A new app has revealed which areas are most likely to move into another tier next week. The ZOE Covid Symptom Study app shows how many cases there are per 100,000 people and the prevalence rate for each area in England. It also shows where these cases are rising, and which places are in tier two. This data helps experts at science company ZOE and King's College London predict which parts of the country can expect new restrictions to be brought in soon. The dashboard's most recent reports, which are presented to the Government every day, show most of England's prevalence rate falling or staying the same.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/12/07/new-app-reveals-which-areas-could-change-tiers-next-week-13715379/>

Every week coronavirus lockdowns drag on increases odds Americans will binge drink by nearly 20%

Researchers surveyed nearly 2,000 US adults between mid-March and mid-April. They found that 34% of participants reported binge drinking during coronavirus pandemic lockdowns. About 60% of binge drinkers increased their alcohol consumption during the pandemic compared to non-binge drinkers. The odds of heavy alcohol consumption among binge drinkers increased 19% for every

week of lockdown. Binge drinkers were more likely to have their job status 'negatively impacted,' to be essential workers or to have a history of depression

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9027061/Every-week-coronavirus-lockdowns-drag-increases-odds-Americans-binge-drink-nearly-20.html>

Exit Strategies

Most want masks worn on public transport

Seventy per cent of Australians think face masks should be mandatory on public transport and almost 90 per cent believe there's a moderate to high risk of COVID-19 transmission on transport networks. Tourism and Transport Forum research released on Monday found the number of commuters travelling on public transport - particularly during the national lockdown from March through to May - dropped to between 10 to 30 per cent of normal activity in capital cities.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/most-want-masks-worn-public-transport-210038120--spt.html>

Covid-19 Vaccine Rollout Faces Public Concerns Over Safety

Governments are accelerating toward approving the first vaccines to contain Covid-19, but public anxiety over the safety of the doses is threatening to undermine those efforts. A survey from the University of Hamburg showed the percentage of people hesitant or unwilling to get a Covid-19 vaccine ticking up in November to around 40% of respondents across seven European countries. An October poll by market researcher Ipsos found that nearly a third of Japanese and almost half of French respondents said they wouldn't get inoculated for the coronavirus. One of the biggest factors behind the hesitancy is the very speed at which things have been moving.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-vaccine-rollout-faces-public-concerns-over-safety-11607344315?mod=hp_lead_pos7

Well and Lloyds follow Boots in launching private COVID-19 swab tests

Well and Lloyds pharmacy have followed in the footsteps of Boots and launched private COVID-19 swab test services, the multiples have confirmed. Well announced last week (December 2) that it was introducing a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) in-pharmacy test priced at £120 - also the price of the Boots in-branch COVID-19 swab test that launched in October. Lloydspharmacy also offers an at-home COVID-19 PCR swab test kit.

<https://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news/well-lloyds-follow-boots-private-covid-19-swab-tests>

Covid-19 vaccination: Needle phobia - it's the jab, not the vaccine, some fear

A mass vaccination programme against Covid-19 is set to begin in the UK on Tuesday. While the government is working to ease the fears of those who are worried about safety, some people have a more primal fear - needles. "My heart would be racing. My mind saying, 'calm down, it's going to be fine' but also, 'it's terrifying, it's going to really hurt you'. Then 'you don't know this person, so you can't trust them'. I would be thinking of ways to get away from it." Raelene Goody, 31, who has cystic fibrosis, an inherited condition that causes lung infections and problems digesting food, regularly requires injections, including an annual flu jab.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55175483>

Lawmakers say COVID-19 relief bill won't offer \$1200 checks

With time running out, lawmakers on Sunday closed in on a proposed COVID-19 relief bill that would provide roughly \$300 in extra federal weekly unemployment benefits but not another round of \$1,200 in direct payments to most Americans, leaving that issue for President-elect Joe Biden to wrestle over with a new Congress next year. The \$908 billion aid package to be released Monday would be attached to a larger year-end spending bill needed to avert a government shutdown this coming weekend.

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-politics-coronavirus-pandemic-bernie-sanders-bills-93ae053eda56da2f24d82049>

[f846ca0e](#)

CDC beefs up indoor mask advice as COVID-19 cases surge

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today recommended universal mask use in all indoor settings, except when people are in their own homes, as part of a multipronged strategy to slow the nation's surge and speed economic recovery. The advice comes a day after the nation recorded new single-day highs for cases and deaths, as well as a record number of Americans hospitalized, and marks the first time the CDC has recommended universal mask use indoors.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/cdc-beefs-indoor-mask-advice-covid-19-cases-surge>

As UK prepares to roll out COVID-19 vaccines, scepticism remains

A sizeable minority of people believe conspiracy theories about the coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccines, some experts have warned, just as countries prepare to launch mass inoculations to get the pandemic under control. Britain begins its vaccine programme this week and others are likely to follow soon, so governments are seeking to reassure people of vaccines' safety and efficacy in order to get a critical mass to take them. In the United States, President-elect Joe Biden said he would have a coronavirus vaccine publicly to demonstrate its safety, and referred to people losing faith in the vaccine's ability to work. "What we're finding is, in the wake of the pandemic, that conspiracy beliefs may have gone mainstream, that they're no longer confined to the fringes," Daniel Freeman, Professor of Clinical Psychology at Oxford University, told Reuters.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-conspiraci/as-uk-prepares-to-roll-out-covid-19-vaccines-scepticism-remains-idUKKBN28H0FI>

On the ground, the pledge to vaccinate 20 million against Covid-19 in December seems unrealistic

Hospitals across the United States are preparing for a Covid-19 vaccine distribution timeline that's well behind official government targets as they face ongoing confusion about the process for inoculating frontline employees. Leaders of Operation Warp Speed have repeatedly said they are on track to vaccinate 20 million people in December, enough for nearly all the health care workers and long-term care residents who are first in line to get a vaccine. But those involved in vaccine planning at four health care systems, in California, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Kansas, told STAT they expect to still be giving staff their first shots in mid-January. These workers would then receive their second vaccine dose three to four weeks later, depending on the vaccine, and would receive the full immunization effects a week after that, in mid-February.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/07/pledge-to-vaccinate-20-million-against-covid19-in-december-seems-unrealistic/>

Partisan Exits

COVID-19: V-Day is a 'key moment in our fight back against this terrible disease'

People in the UK will start being vaccinated today against COVID-19, on what's being dubbed V-Day. Fifty hospitals will administer the jab from early this morning. The vaccine, developed by Pfizer/BioNTech, has been distributed across the whole of the UK.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-v-day-is-a-key-moment-in-our-fight-back-against-this-terrible-disease-12154788>

India: Unidentified disease kills one, hundreds hospitalised

One person has died and more than 400 have been taken to hospital in southern India due to an unidentified infection that caused many to fall unconscious following seizures and nausea, according to a senior health department official. The illness was detected on Saturday evening in Eluru, an ancient city in Andhra Pradesh. Since then, patients have experienced symptoms ranging from nausea and anxiety to loss of consciousness, doctors said. Government and medical authorities in Andhra Pradesh said more than 200 people were discharged at the weekend and that tests had

ruled out COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus. Further serological tests are under way. state famous for its hand-woven products.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/7/india-unidentified-disease-kill-one-hundreds-hospitalised>

Pfizer, Moderna decline invitations to White House 'Vaccine Summit'

Both Pfizer and Moderna, the two major drug manufacturers likely to receive emergency authorizations for a Covid-19 vaccine in the coming weeks, have rejected invitations from President Trump to appear at a White House "Vaccine Summit" on Tuesday, according to two sources familiar with the event's planning. The Trump administration has openly feuded with Pfizer in recent weeks over its involvement in Operation Warp Speed and the timing of a data release showing its vaccine to be highly effective, but had nonetheless invited CEO Albert Bourla to appear on a panel about the vaccine development process. Moderna CEO Stéphane Bancel was also invited, but neither he nor another company executive will attend.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/07/pfizer-moderna-decline-white-house-vaccine-summit/>

Continued Lockdown

Greece extends key lockdown measures over Christmas holidays

Greece's government said Monday it will maintain core lockdown measures through the Christmas holidays, acknowledging that monthlong restrictions have not reduced COVID-19 cases to the extent it had hoped for. Schools courts, and restaurants will remain closed through Jan. 7, government spokesman Stelios Petsas announced, while non-essential travel between Greece's administrative regions will also be banned.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greece-extends-key-lockdown-measures-over-christmas-holidays-government-greece-ap-athens-cases-b1767384.html>

France Set to Miss Goal for Lifting Lockdown as Progress Stalls

France is poised to miss a coronavirus goal set by President Emmanuel Macron as a condition for lifting the country's lockdown next week, with daily new Covid-19 cases holding at more than twice the targeted level. The government is worried about the pandemic indicators, and is mulling alternatives to a planned end of stay-at-home measures on Dec. 15, Liberation reported on Monday, citing unidentified advisers in the Health Ministry. That could go as far as delaying the end of the lockdown should cases spike, according to the newspaper.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-07/france-set-to-miss-goal-for-lifting-lockdown-as-progress-stalls>

Coronavirus France: Elderly woman fined for lockdown form error

A French court has ruled that an elderly woman diagnosed with dementia must pay a fine of €166 (£151; \$201) for having put the wrong date on her form for leaving home during lockdown. Her daughter had appealed against the original €135 fine imposed during a police check in April. In France's coronavirus lockdown, a downloadable form has to be filled in whenever a person wants to leave home. The woman, 73, was stopped while out shopping in Luxeuil, eastern France. France Bleu news reports that when police booked her they did not record that she was speaking incoherently. She was going to a supermarket about 800m - about half a mile - from her home.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-55215371>

Navajo Nation Extends Lockdown Due To "Dire" Surge Of Coronavirus

Citing an "uncontrolled spread" of coronavirus across 75 of its communities, the Navajo Nation expanded its current lockdown by three weeks in an attempt to clamp down on the spread of the virus. The order, a continuation of the Nov. 16 mandate, remains in place from Monday until Dec. 28. The government previously ordered a lockdown for the nation of over 170,000 between March and August. Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez warned in a statement Sunday the situation is severe.

<https://www.wkms.org/post/navajo-nation-extends-lockdown-due-dire-surge-coronavirus>

Denmark tightens lockdown to curb COVID-19 spike

Denmark will implement further lockdown measures in parts of the country to curb a spike in coronavirus infections, the government announced on Monday. Restaurants, museums, cinemas and other cultural institutions will have to close on Dec. 9 in 38 of 98 municipalities, including Copenhagen, and students in upper primary school, high schools and universities will be sent home.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-denmark/update-1-denmark-tightens-lockdown-to-curb-covid-19-spike-idUSL1N2IN0PW>

Greece to keep schools, restaurants shut until after Christmas

Greece said on Monday that it will not re-open schools, restaurants and courts until Jan. 7, effectively extending most of the restrictions the country imposed last month to contain the spread of coronavirus. Greece had to enforce a nationwide lockdown in November, its second this year, after an aggressive surge in COVID-19 cases. It has extended it twice since then, most recently until Dec. 14. In a televised briefing, government spokesman Stelios Petsas said the health system was still under enormous pressure and some restrictions should not be lifted until next month, including a night curfew and movement between regions.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-greece-idUKKBN28H1GR>

Debate over mulled wine heats up in Germany amid pandemic lockdown

With most Christmas markets closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, open-air mulled wine stands have popped up across Germany as bars and restaurant owners try to bring festive cheer and earn some income as the nation's "lockdown light" grinds on. But with infection numbers in Germany remaining stubbornly high, politicians fear gatherings of people drinking alcohol, often without wearing masks and sticking to social distancing rules, could hamper efforts to bring case numbers under control. "Mulled wine stands are in full swing tonight," SPD health policy expert Karl Lauterbach posted on Twitter at the weekend, referring to the situation in Cologne. "Those infected today will infect others next week. Is it similarly catastrophic in other cities?"

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany-mulled-wine/debate-over-mulled-wine-heats-up-in-germany-amid-pandemic-lockdown-idUSKBN28H1P2>

Navajo Nation implements another three-week lockdown as ICUs reach capacity amid coronavirus surge

The Navajo Nation has extended its lockdown for three more weeks to try to slow the growth of Covid-19 cases in the community that has already filled nearly all of their ICUs to capacity. "We are near a point where our health care providers are going to have to make very difficult decisions in terms of providing medical treatment to COVID-19 patients with very limited resources such as hospital beds, oxygen resources, medical personnel, and little to no options to transport patients to other regional hospitals because they are also near full capacity," Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez warned in a statement issued Sunday. A public health order issued by the Nation said it is "experiencing an alarming rise in positive COVID-19 cases and uncontrolled spread in 75 communities across the Navajo Nation."

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/07/us/navajo-nation-covid-lockdown-december/index.html>

Scientific Viewpoint

COVID-19: Scientific breakthrough in monitoring infections through wastewater

Scientists have achieved a breakthrough in sampling wastewater to detect changes in COVID-19 infections within large communities. The new method is capable of identifying the coronavirus within wastewater samples and tracking whether infection rates are growing or shrinking. Wastewater is a "robust source" of COVID-19, according to researchers, because infected people shed the virus in their stool, meaning large amounts of virus particles are flushed down the toilet.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-scientific-breakthrough-in-monitoring-infections-through-wastewater-12154189>

Chinese drugmaker gets \$500m boost to push Covid-19 vaccine

Chinese pharmaceutical company Sinovac has secured a \$515m cash injection, as one of the country's leading vaccine hopefuls looks to increase production and distribution of its Covid-19 vaccine once final-stage testing is concluded. Sino Biopharmaceutical, a Hong Kong-listed generic drugs group, said on Monday it had acquired a 15 per cent stake in Sinovac Life Sciences, the subsidiary of Sinovac that has developed a Covid-19 vaccine undergoing large-scale trials in Brazil, Pakistan, Indonesia and Chile. Sinovac's vaccine — alongside two other candidates developed by state-run group Sinopharm — is a Chinese frontrunner to be sold worldwide.

<https://www.ft.com/content/98f2b691-7def-4e03-8664-88c4dbd16bcc>

Years of research laid groundwork for speedy COVID-19 shots

How could scientists race out COVID-19 vaccines so fast without cutting corners? A head start helped -- over a decade of behind-the-scenes research that had new vaccine technology poised for a challenge just as the coronavirus erupted. "The speed is a reflection of years of work that went before," Dr. Anthony Fauci the top U.S. infectious disease expert, told The Associated Press. "That's what the public has to understand." Creating vaccines and having results from rigorous studies less than a year after the world discovered a never-before-seen disease is incredible, cutting years off normal development. But the two U.S. frontrunners are made in a way that promises speedier development may become the norm -- especially if they prove to work long-term as well as early testing suggests.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/years-of-research-laid-groundwork-for-speedy-covid19-shots-moderna-vaccines-scientists-biontech-research-b1767499.html>

Dr Fauci warns that coronavirus shots will take WEEKS to lower COVID-19 death rates as US Surgeon General begs Americans to 'hold on a little longer because vaccines are coming'

FDA regulators will meet to decide if Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine is ready to be used in the general public on December 10. If it gets emergency approval, it could be rolled out as early as this week. But the shot is given in two doses, injected 21 days apart, and doesn't become protective until about 7-10 days after the second dose. Dr Anthony Fauci warned there will be a delay between the first rollout of the vaccines and a decline in deaths, said he can 'guarantee' it will come

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9026821/COVID-19-vaccines-wont-cut-death-rates-WEEKS-Fauci-warns.html>

Prototype blood test detects people who will develop severe Covid-19

Test detects whether our immune systems are gearing up to fight SARS-CoV-2 It assesses levels of two molecules in the blood linked with our immune response People with low levels of these molecules could be at risk of more severe Covid Scientists say the test could be important during the wait for vaccines to roll out

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-9025933/Prototype-blood-test-detects-people-develop-severe-Covid-19.html>

We still need Covid-19 treatments as well as vaccines

It's a Friday morning in October and Charlotte Summers has been up since the crack of dawn. As a leading expert in respiratory and intensive care medicines, she is one of the clinical researchers responsible for advising on the UK's national treatment guidelines for Covid-19. But overnight, results of a trial by the World Health Organisation have been published concluding that remdesivir – an antiviral drug global leaders once pinned high hopes on – has "little or no effect" on patient survival.

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/covid-treatments-vaccine-charlotte-summers>

WHO looks at giving Covid-19 to healthy people to speed up vaccine trials

The World Health Organization is holding discussions on Monday about the feasibility of trials in which healthy young volunteers are deliberately infected with coronavirus to hasten vaccine development – amid questions over whether they should go ahead given the promising data from the frontrunner vaccine candidates. Some scientists have reservations about exposing volunteers to a virus for which there is no cure, although there are treatments that can help patients. However, proponents argue that the risks of Covid-19 to the young and healthy are minimal, and the benefits to society are high.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/07/who-looks-at-giving-covid-to-healthy-people-to-speed-up-vaccine-trials>

UK could suffer a 'severe' third wave of Covid in January if we 'take our foot off the pedal', SAGE scientist warns

Professor Andrew Hayward warned that the pandemic is still not over today. He said it would be 'sad' for cases to surge following the Christmas period. Covid-19 vaccine is a ray of hope for ending pandemic in the next few months.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9026075/January-severe-peak-coronavirus-infections-foot-pedal.html>

1.2M doses of China-made COVID vaccine arrive in Indonesia

Indonesia's government said 1.2 million doses of a COVID-19 vaccine developed by China-based biopharmaceutical company Sinovac Biotech arrived in the country late Sunday. President Joko Widodo said in a televised address that another 1.8 million doses of the vaccine are expected to arrive in early January. "We are very grateful, thank God, the vaccine is now available so that we can immediately curb the spread of the COVID-19 disease," Widodo said. The government is still waiting for millions of other doses of the Sinovac vaccine to arrive in the form of raw materials that will be further processed by state-owned pharmaceutical holding company PT Bio Farma.

<https://apnews.com/article/technology-indonesia-joko-widodo-coronavirus-pandemic-china-4e741b7b44447eee54bde32481418bf5>

The 12.39am email that triggered Australia's response to COVID-19

Epidemiologist Professor Jodie McVernon was in the Qantas lounge at Canberra airport on the evening of February 3, when she took an urgent call from Brendan Murphy, then the Commonwealth's chief medical officer. McVernon had for days been "obsessively" tracking information on the mysterious new virus seeping out of Wuhan, China. Murphy had a fresh task for her. "Your Prime Minister needs a projection, a future scenario, in 48 hours," he told her. McVernon's colleague, mathematical biologist Professor James McCaw, was also on the road when he received the same news. The two long-time collaborators had little more than two days to get a brief to the federal government's National Security Committee – a first stab at how the alarming new threat might evolve. It was a curtain-raiser to what would prove to be the most destructive pandemic to sweep the world since the Spanish flu 100 years before.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/the-12-39am-email-that-triggered-australia-s-response-to-covid-19-20201202-p56jzu.html>

Covid-19: 300 fewer people died during lockdown, despite less access to healthcare - Ministry of Health

Three hundred fewer people died during the Covid-19 lockdown compared to recent years, even as thousands of patient appointments were cancelled and GPs closed their doors to all but the most urgent cases. The Ministry of Health has published a report examining the impact of Covid-19 on hospital and general practice activity, which was reduced to all but the most essential services during lockdown to contain the virus, and how any changes effected patient health. As expected it showed a drastic reduction in people in hospital, with 40,000 fewer people discharged from hospital in April alone, the peak of the lockdown. Planned care in hospitals halved in April and the data shows

this reduction, as well as a reduction in emergency care, disproportionately effected Māori and Pasific people.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/123615601/covid-19-300-fewer-people-died-during-lockdown-despite-less-access-to-healthcare--ministry-of-health>

A whistleblower says the FDA isn't properly regulating vaccine facilities

While much attention has been given to approving a COVID-19 vaccine, there's been little paid to the facilities where many vaccines are manufactured. A recent investigation in Vanity Fair features a former FDA inspector turned whistleblower who says that the FDA is not doing its job. Vanity Fair Contributing Editor Katherine Eban, the author of the piece, joins Hari Sreenivasan to discuss.

https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/a-whistleblower-says-the-fda-isnt-properly-regulating-vaccine-facilities?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=pbsofficial&utm_campaign=newshour&utm_content=1607296882&fbclid=IwAR1sSyPoMkiXpED3saklJ-VS4hFayOjFrGRCNCiViCZOGPpl9x5UeHyq9Zw

A new report adds to the evidence of a coronavirus coverup in China

The truth about the origin of the coronavirus in China a year ago remains shrouded in mystery. It is not known where the virus came from, nor how it infected humans. But after people started getting sick, it is evident that the scope of the outbreak was hidden from the Chinese people and from the rest of the world. A report by Nick Paton Walsh of CNN on Dec. 1 adds to evidence of a coverup, an authoritarian system in action. CNN obtained 117 pages of internal records from the Hubei Provincial Center for Disease Control and Prevention containing tallies of cases and deaths far greater than those provided to the public and the world by the Chinese government. Wuhan is the capital and largest city of Hubei province.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/a-new-report-adds-to-the-evidence-of-a-coronavirus-coverup-in-china/2020/12/06/81d880f2-366e-11eb-8d38-6aea1adb3839_story.html

Diabetes drug linked to lower COVID-19 death rate in women

A Lancet Healthy Longevity study yesterday found that metformin—a common, generic type 2 diabetes medication used to manage blood sugar levels—is associated with significantly lower COVID-19 death risk in women, but not in men. Severe COVID-19 outcomes for people with diabetes have been widely observed, including greater risk of intensive care unit admission, intubation for mechanical ventilation, and death, possibly related to less effective glycemic, or blood sugar, control in these patients. This retrospective cohort study of 6,256 people with type 2 diabetes or obesity hospitalized for COVID-19 from Jan 1 to Jun 7 was a collaboration between the University of Minnesota Medical School and UnitedHealth Group (UHG)—a for-profit managed healthcare company based in Minnesota.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/diabetes-drug-linked-lower-covid-19-death-rate-women>

WHO hails COVID vaccine progress, urges nations to double down on mitigation

At a media briefing today, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, PhD, said decisions by country leaders in the coming days will set the course for the virus in the short term and influence when the pandemic will eventually end. He said though vaccine progress brings hope, the WHO is worried about a growing perception that the pandemic is over. "The truth is that at present, many places are witnessing very high transmission of the virus, which is putting enormous pressure on hospitals, intensive care units and health workers," he said.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/who-hails-covid-vaccine-progress-urges-nations-double-down-mitigation>

Coronavirus Resurgence

More people died in the US from COVID-19 nearly every day last week than died in the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor

COVID-19 data shows that the US daily death toll for 5 of 7 days last week topped the 2,403 lives lost in the attack that plunged the US into WWII.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/recent-daily-us-coronavirus-death-tolls-similar-to-pearl-harbor-2020-12>

L.A. County faces ‘three weeks of devastation’ before COVID-19 surge might slow, experts say

The coronavirus wave engulfing California over the last week seems to confirm that the worst of the surge is far from over. But how bad will it get? The numbers — which have reached record proportions — still don't reflect anyone who may have gotten sick during Thanksgiving. Generally, it takes two weeks after an event to determine whether coronavirus transmission occurred, and two additional weeks for hospitalization numbers to increase as a result. It also will take several weeks for the effects of the latest stay-at-home order, which began in Los Angeles County last week and in much of California just before midnight Monday.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-12-07/la-faces-devastation-covid-19-surge>

Wales considers new Covid lockdown amid rapid rise in infections

Another lockdown may be needed in Wales to stop the NHS being overwhelmed as the number of Covid-19 patients in hospital soared to a record high. There are now more than 1,800 people in Welsh hospitals with confirmed or suspected coronavirus – the highest number recorded and 400 more than the previous peak in April. Describing the situation as “incredibly serious”, the Welsh health minister, Vaughan Gething, accepted more restrictions might be needed, possibly even before Christmas. The figures come just a month after the end of a 17-day “firebreak” lockdown, which was believed at the time to have been successful and was expected to give the country a clear run up to the new year. But the Welsh government has since conceded that it might have been better to bring in other curbs when the firebreak was lifted.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/07/wales-considers-new-covid-lockdown-amid-rapid-rise-in-infections>

Are Covid cases beginning to creep back UP? Daily infections jump 19.4% in a week to 14,718 as data shows curve began to flatten BEFORE lockdown ended - but deaths continue ...

The UK's daily infection curve began to flatten roughly a week before the draconian restrictions were lifted. In contrast, 12,330 positive tests were added to the tally last Monday — meaning today's figure is a 19.4% rise. Deaths are still continuing to fall, however, as a result of the national lockdown, according to official figures

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9027041/Are-Covid-cases-beginning-creep-UP.html>

Covid Sweden: Infection rate overtakes UK, Germany and Spain

Sweden's infection rate is higher than in Britain, France, Spain, Italy or Germany Average daily deaths are once again above those in Denmark, Norway or Finland Gatherings have been limited to eight people, compared to 50 in the spring

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9025989/Swedens-Covid-infection-rate-soars-Britain-Germany-Spain.html>

South Korea Cancels Annual New Year Bell-ringing Ceremony Amid Surge In COVID-19 Cases

South Korea government announced cancellation as Seoul recorded confirmed 631 new coronavirus cases over the past 24 hours, with a noticeable spike.

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/rest-of-the-world-news/south-korea-cancels-annual-new-year-bell-ringing-ceremony-amid-surge-in-covid-19-cases.html>

South Korea reports 615 new coronavirus cases as third wave grows

South Korean President Moon Jae-in called on Monday (Dec 7) for expanded COVID-19 testing and more thorough tracing as the country struggled to control its latest and largest wave of infections.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 615 new COVID-19 cases as of midnight Sunday, capping a month of triple-digit daily increases that have led to 8,311 confirmed patients in quarantine, the most ever. Moon ordered the government to mobilise every available resource to track infections, and to expand testing by deploying the military and more people from the public service, presidential Blue House spokesman Chung Man-ho told a briefing.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/covid-19-south-korea-third-wave-more-testing-moon-jae-in-13715936>

COVID-19 clusters break out in Japan's coldest city as winter closes in

The emergence of Japan's coldest city as a COVID-19 hotspot has raised fears among health experts that it could be a sign of what the rest of the nation may face as winter sets in and more people stay indoors, raising airborne transmission risks. The city of Asahikawa, about 140 km (87 miles) north of Sapporo on the northern island of Hokkaido, is reeling from infection clusters at two hospitals and a care home. By Sunday, the number of cases recorded on the island was more than 10,000, and Asahikawa had accounted for 16% of the 256 deaths. It prompted the government to announce a plan on Monday to send nurses from Self Defense Forces to the region and western metropolis of Osaka to help fight the outbreak.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-japan-hokkaido-idUSKBN28H0D3>

South Korea, Japan to deploy military to combat COVID-19

South Korea and Japan are deploying their militaries to assist healthcare workers in combatting COVID-19, with South Korean soldiers called in to expand coronavirus testing and tracing and Japanese military nurses tapped to fill a shortage of staff at hospitals in the hard-hit regions of Hokkaido and Osaka. Moon Jae-in, the president of South Korea, on Monday ordered the government to mobilise "every available" resource to track infections and to expand testing by deploying the military and more people from the public service, presidential Blue House spokesman Chung Man-ho told a briefing.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/7/south-korea-japan-to-deploy-military-to-combat-covid-19>

Kremlin sees no need to impose broad lockdown

The Kremlin said on Monday there was no need to impose lockdown restrictions to curb the sharp rise in coronavirus cases since September and that the current set of measures in place were widely seen by authorities as enough. Infections have surged to record highs in recent weeks. Earlier on Monday authorities confirmed 28,142 new coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours, including 7,279 in Moscow.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-russia-kremlin/kremlin-sees-no-need-to-impose-broad-lockdown-idUSR4N2IJ00L>

French coronavirus infection rate unlikely to fall to lockdown threshold -minister

French BFM TV reported on Monday that Health Minister Olivier Veran has told members of parliament that it is unlikely that the number of daily new coronavirus cases will fall to 5,000 by Dec. 15. French President Emmanuel Macron has said that threshold is one of the conditions for ending a nationwide lockdown on Dec. 15. Another condition was for the number of people in intensive care to fall below 3,000. On Sunday, France registered 11,022 new cases, down from a high of over 86,000 per day a month ago. The number of people in ICUs fell by 10 to 3,220 on Sunday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-france-veran/french-coronavirus-infection-rate-unlikely-to-fall-to-lockdown-threshold-minister-idUKKBN28H1IC>

Covid-19 cases rise by 14,718 as UK records another 189 deaths

The Government said a further 189 people had died within 28 days of testing positive for Covid-19 with vaccines expected to be rolled out to public tomorrow. The latest data shows as of Monday, the UK total has suffered 61,434 deaths. The Government said that, as of 9am on Monday, there had been a further 14,718 lab-confirmed cases of coronavirus in the UK. It brings the total number of

cases in the UK to 1,737,960. Separate figures published by the UK's statistics agencies for deaths where Covid-19 has been mentioned on the death certificate, together with additional data on deaths that have occurred in recent days, show there have now been 77,000 deaths involving Covid-19 in the UK.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/covid19-cases-rise-by-14-718-as-uk-records-another-189-deaths-b207975.html>

New Lockdown

Millions of Californians put under strict Covid lockdown

Stay-at-home order will stay in place through Christmas after hospital intensive care beds filled almost to capacity. More than three-quarters of California's population are now living under the harshest lockdowns in the US, as Covid-19 cases hit record levels in the country's most populous state. Regional stay-at-home restrictions went into effect for nearly 23 million residents in southern California and 4.4 million residents in a large swath of the Central Valley on Sunday night, as ordered by the state governor, Gavin Newsom. The orders take effect on a region-by-region basis when hospital intensive care unit beds in the region dropped to below 15%.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/06/california-covid-lockdown-us-new-cases-hospitalisations-deaths-stay-at-home-order>

Tighter German Lockdown Looms as Virus Rates Remain High

Germany is looking to impose tougher measures to contain the coronavirus pandemic after a soft shutdown failed to bring contagion rates down to manageable levels. Chancellor Angela Merkel on Monday told legislators in the CDU-CSU parliamentary caucus that the current, partial lockdown is insufficient and needs to be revised with the heads of the country's 16 states, according to a person with knowledge of the discussions who asked not to be named because they were private.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-07/germany-eyes-tighter-curbs-as-soft-shutdown-fails-to-slow-spread>

Merkel warns Germany needs tougher lockdown to get through winter

German leaders came out on Monday in favour of stricter measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus, a few days after the country posted its highest one-day death toll so far. Chancellor Angela Merkel told party colleagues that existing lockdown measures - with bars and restaurants closed and shops admitting limited numbers - were too little to get the virus under control. "The situation is getting very serious: these measures will not be enough to get us through the winter," participants said she had told a meeting of her conservative bloc's legislators.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany-merkel/merkel-warns-germany-needs-tougher-lockdown-to-get-through-winter-idUSKBN28H1W1>

Southern California goes into virus lockdown

Southern California went into a strict lockdown Monday, with more than 20 million people under stay-at-home orders triggered after hospitals faced being overwhelmed by record Covid-19 cases. Governor Gavin Newsom last week announced new statewide bans on gatherings and "non-essential" activities would come into effect once 85 percent of intensive care unit beds have been filled. Under the lockdown, most offices will close and gatherings of people from different households are banned. Bars and personal services such as hair salons will be temporarily closed, and restaurants will only be allowed to offer take-out and delivery.

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20201207-southern-california-goes-into-virus-lockdown>

Los Angeles restaurant owner's tearful response to lockdown goes viral

Mayor Eric Garcetti has said he is sorry for Angela Marsden's suffering, but with the virus raging out of control he has no choice. A California restaurant owner whose tearful video complaining about her

patio being closed, while a film company shot scenes next door, has received over \$90,000 in donations from well-wishers after the clip went viral. Angela Marsden's video, showing the scene at the Pineapple Hill Saloon, in the Sherman Oaks district of Los Angeles, has been seen by 8.5 million people since she posted it on Saturday. In the clip she walks viewers around her restaurant, showing off the outdoor patio with its picnic tables under an awning.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/california-lockdown-restaurant-owner-film-set-viral-b1767069.html>

Cargo ship in lockdown off WA coast after crew member falls ill

A cargo ship is in lockdown off Western Australia after a crew member experienced flu-like symptoms overnight. The Matsuyama ship is docked at the Kwinana terminal in Fremantle with no one on board allowed to leave as they await the results of a coronavirus test for the unwell crew member. 9News Perth reports the unwell crew member is being isolated from the rest of the crew on board.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/coronavirus-wa-update-cargo-ship-in-lockdown-off-wa-coast-after-crew-member-falls-ill/bfec247a-6bc4-4371-a194-5308a396e746>

California faces strict new coronavirus lockdowns; some sheriffs push back

More than 23 million people in Southern California were preparing on Sunday for the harshest lockdowns in the United States as COVID-19 cases spiked to record levels in the country's most populous state. The restrictions in California, ordered by Governor Gavin Newsom to take effect on a region-by-region basis as hospital intensive care unit beds are filled almost to capacity, call for bars, hair and nail salons and tattoo shops to close again. As of 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, the affected regions were also required to shut down even outdoor restaurant dining. Newsom, a first-term Democrat, has threatened to withhold funds from local governments that refuse to carry out the restrictions.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-usa/california-faces-strict-new-coronavirus-lockdowns-some-sheriffs-push-back-idUSKBN28G0NH>