

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

29th Jul 2021

Overnight NewsRoundUp

New U.S. mask guidance prompted by evidence that the vaccinated can spread Delta too

- The director of the Centers for Disease Control and Protection spoke on Wednesday about evidence that vaccinated people can spread the COVID-19 Delta variant to others, after the nation's top health agency expanded on its new guidance that fully vaccinated Americans should wear masks indoors in certain places.
- [Rochelle Walensky said 'new science' observed in recent days demonstrated that new variants of the coronavirus were transmissible by people who have been fully vaccinated in some cases.](#)
- 'With prior variants, when people had these rare breakthrough infections, we didn't see the capacity of them to spread the virus to others,' Walensky told CNN.
- 'But with the Delta variant we now see in these outbreak investigations, which have been occurring over the last couple of weeks, in those investigations we have seen that if you happen to have one of those breakthrough infections you can still pass it to somebody else.'
- **The CDC revised its mask guidance on Tuesday to recommend fully vaccinated Americans wear masks in 'public indoor setting' with 'substantial and high transmission,' a shift from its earlier guidance issued on 13 May, which said vaccinated individuals did not need to wear masks in most indoor settings.**
- The move came as Joe Biden said requiring all federal workers to get a coronavirus vaccine is 'under consideration' as the Delta variant surges in the U.S. Some local and state leaders, including New York's mayor, Bill de Blasio, and the California governor, Gavin Newsom, have already announced such mandates for their government employees.
- Walensky also spoke on Wednesday about the threat of COVID-19 to children. 'If you look at the mortality rate of COVID, just this past year for children, it's more than twice the mortality rate that we see in influenza in any given year,' she said.
- On Tuesday the CDC changed its advice and now recommends that fully vaccinated people living with vulnerable household members, such as those who are immunocompromised and children, wear masks in indoor public spaces. In addition, the agency recommended everyone in K-12 schools wear masks, 'including teachers, staff, students and visitors, regardless of vaccination status,' Walensky said in a press briefing.
- 'In recent days I have seen new scientific data from recent outbreak investigations showing that the Delta variant behaves uniquely differently from past strains of the virus that cause COVID-19,' Walensky said on Tuesday, referring to scientists' discovery of the Delta strain shedding as actively in breakthrough infections as it does in unvaccinated individuals, despite the rarity of breakthrough cases.
- For months COVID cases, deaths and hospitalizations were falling steadily, but the highly infectious Delta variant of the coronavirus has fuelled steep rises in case numbers, particularly among unvaccinated Americans, making it tough among the struggles with disinformation and resistance, particularly on the political right.
- 'Nobody wants to go backward but you have to deal with the facts on the ground, and the facts on the ground are that it's a pretty scary time and there are a lot of vulnerable people,' Robert Wachter, chairman of the department of medicine at the University of California, San

Francisco told The Washington Post.

- **'I think the biggest thing we got wrong was not anticipating that 30% of the country would choose not be vaccinated.'**
- In recent weeks, a growing number of cities and towns have restored indoor masking rules. St Louis, Savannah, Georgia, and Provincetown, Massachusetts, are among the places that reimposed mask mandates this month.
- **At a White House briefing last week, the surgeon general, Vivek Murthy, said 97% of hospital admissions and 99.5% of COVID deaths were occurring among unvaccinated people.**
- More than 162.7 million Americans are vaccinated - or 49% of the population, according to the CDC.
- California and New York City announced on Monday that they would require all government employees to get the coronavirus vaccine or face weekly COVID-19 testing, and the Department of Veterans Affairs became the first major federal agency to require healthcare workers to receive the shot.
- In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that all municipal workers - including teachers and police officers - will be required to get vaccinated by mid-September or face weekly COVID-19 testing, making the city one of the largest employers in the USA to take such action.
- 'Let's be clear about why this is so important: this is about our recovery,' de Blasio said.
- California said it will similarly require proof of vaccination or weekly testing for all state workers and healthcare employees starting next month.

The Guardian - 28th July

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/28/cdc-director-new-mask-guidance-vaccinated-spreading-delta-variant>

The AP Interview: Japan minister urges vaccines for young

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As Olympics host Tokyo saw another record number of coronavirus cases Wednesday, Japan's vaccination minister said the speed of the country's inoculation campaign is less urgent than getting shots to young adults, whom some health experts are blaming for the current surge in infections. Taro Kono told The Associated Press that Japan is "overshooting" its goal of a million shots a day, so "speed doesn't matter anymore." He said Japan is averaging about 10 million shots a week after a late start that critics have blamed on extra red tape.

<https://apnews.com/article/2020-tokyo-olympics-sports-government-and-politics-japan-olympic-team-japan-c4296e91adb664dfd2504a1b8ae9b7>

Google delays return to office, mandates vaccines

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Google is postponing a return to the office for most workers until mid-October and rolling out a

policy that will eventually require everyone to be vaccinated once its sprawling campuses are fully reopened. The more highly contagious delta variant of the coronavirus is driving a dramatic spike in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. Google's Wednesday announcement was shortly followed by Facebook, which also said it will make vaccines mandatory for U.S. employees who work in offices. Exceptions will be made for medical and other reasons.

<https://apnews.com/article/lifestyle-technology-business-health-coronavirus-pandemic-3d1445717752d238d379af8c565b4283>

Youth focus of COVID-19 infections in Mexico's 3rd wave

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Hours after Mexico City authorities raised the capital's COVID-19 alert level in the face of surging infections, especially among young people, residents packed a plaza on a pleasant evening in the charming Coyoacan borough.

<https://apnews.com/article/entertainment-music-health-mexico-caribbean-e0a98064a61153bbe2f9aa55fd17299c>

CDC mask guidance met with hostility by leading Republicans

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As he rallied conservatives on Wednesday, one of the Republican Party's most prominent rising stars mocked new government recommendations calling for more widespread use of masks to blunt a coronavirus surge. "Did you not get the CDC's memo?" Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis joked before an almost entirely unmasked audience of activists and lawmakers crammed into an indoor hotel ballroom in Salt Lake City. "I don't see you guys complying." From Texas to South Dakota, Republican leaders responded with hostility and defiance to updated masking guidance from public health officials, who advise that even fully vaccinated people return to wearing masks indoors if they live in areas with high rates of virus transmission.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-coronavirus-pandemic-4a04e568985b99b35da44653175d419a>

COVID-19 still has a 'devastating toll' on the Americas: PAHO

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The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have "a devastating toll" on the Americas, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said on Wednesday, with Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, and Paraguay among the countries with the world's highest weekly death rates. PAHO Director Carissa Etienne said coronavirus cases are increasing in Guatemala, and infection and death rates in Cuba are at their highest point ever in the pandemic – adding that across the past week, more than 7,000 children and nearly 400 pregnant women have tested positive for the virus.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/28/covid-19-still-has-a-devastating-toll-on-the-americas-paho>

India contests Cambodia's claim of buffalo meat infected with COVID-19

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India on Wednesday contested Cambodia's claims that Indian buffalo meat was infected with COVID-19, saying it exports the meat only after getting COVID-free certification. Cambodia earlier this week said three out of five containers of frozen buffalo meat imported from India tested positive for coronavirus.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-contests-cambodias-claim-buffalo-meat-infected-with-covid-19-2021-07-28/>

Covid-19: Travellers fear vaccine passports will come too late

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Would-be travellers due to fly out in the coming days fear their Covid passports will come too late for their trip. The CovidCert NI app for people travelling outside of the UK went live last week. The

Department of Health (DoH) said the system went offline on Tuesday evening due to a technical problem. But applicants have said their calls and emails have gone unanswered for days. Some due to fly within days, or even hours, are weighing up whether to rebook their flights - or to go at all
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-57998569>

U.S. to ship 4 mln COVID-19 vaccine doses to Nigeria, 5.66 mln to South Africa

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The U.S. government on Wednesday will ship nearly 10 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to two of the most populous African countries - Nigeria and South Africa - as the continent battles a third wave of infections, White House officials said. Four million doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine will go to Nigeria and 5.66 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine to South Africa, the officials said

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/us-ship-4-mln-covid-19-vaccine-doses-nigeria-566-mln-south-africa-2021-07-28/>

Tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan vaccinates 90% of its population, becoming a beacon of hope for a region struggling with Covid

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Bhutan has fully vaccinated 90% of its eligible adult population in a week with Covid-19 shots, a feat that has been described as a "success story" and a "beacon of hope" for other countries in the region, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) said Tuesday. The tiny South Asian kingdom of 770,000 people is nestled in high in the Himalayas between India and China, and its high altitude, remote mountain villages, nomadic herders and extreme weather posed unique challenges to health workers delivering the vaccines safely across the country.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/28/asia/bhutan-covid-vaccine-rollout-intl-hnk/index.html>

COVID-19: Fully vaccinated travellers from amber list EU and US countries won't have to quarantine on arrival in England from Monday

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Fully vaccinated travellers from the EU and the US will not have to quarantine when arriving in England, Scotland and Wales from an amber list country. Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the change regarding US and EU arrivals will come into force from 4am on 2 August. Applicable passengers must have received two jabs with vaccines authorised by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), or in the US with vaccines authorised by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-fully-vaccinated-travellers-from-amber-list-eu-and-us-countries-wont-have-to-quarantine-on-arrival-in-england-from-monday-12366355>

COVID-19: UK to give Kenya more than 800,000 doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine

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The UK will give Kenya 817,000 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine, the government has announced. Ministers said the offer would help the nation - which has a population of around 52 million - to combat the COVID pandemic, with the first 400,000 doses due to be sent this week. There have been growing concerns that supply shortages in some African countries have held back the continuing rollout of their vaccination programmes.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uk-to-give-kenya-more-than-800-000-doses-of-oxford-astrazeneca-coronavirus-vaccine-12366110>

Kazakhstan donates 25000 doses of its QazVac coronavirus vaccine to Kyrgyzstan

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The batch of 25,000 doses of QazVac coronavirus vaccine today has arrived in Kyrgyzstan. This vaccine was donated by Kazakhstan. The handover ceremony was held in the Ministry of Health in presence of Health Minister Alymkadyr Beishenaliev, Ambassador of Kazakhstan Rapol Joshybaev, representatives of the Biological Safety Research Institute, developer of the vaccine.

https://akipress.com/news:660994:Kazakhstan_donates_25,000_doses_of_its_QazVac_coronavirus_vaccine_to_Kyrgyzstan/

Canada has coronavirus vaccine for all who eligible, earlier than promised -Trudeau

Canada has coronavirus vaccine for all who eligible, earlier than promised -Trudeau

Canada has enough coronavirus vaccine to inoculate everyone who is eligible nearly two months earlier than had been promised, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Tuesday, ahead of a likely election in which his record on fighting the pandemic will be center stage.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/canada-has-enough-covid-19-vaccines-inoculate-everyone-eligible-trudeau-2021-07-27/>

Kuwait bans unvaccinated citizens from travelling abroad

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Kuwait on Tuesday said only citizens who have been vaccinated for the coronavirus will be allowed to travel abroad starting on Aug. 1. A government statement said the rule excepted children under age of 16, those with a health ministry certificate saying they cannot be vaccinated, and pregnant women who have a pregnancy proof certificate from authorities.

https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/kuwait-bans-unvaccinated-citizens-traveling-abroad-2021-07-27/?taid=6100a88fafcfee00019ad0f9&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

States send mixed signals on COVID-19 mask recommendations

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After the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced yesterday new guidance suggesting mask use for vaccinated Americans in areas with high COVID-19 transmission, several states have signaled they will either follow or ignore the agency's recommendations—the latest sign the pandemic has become a political issue in the United States. The CDC's guidelines make it clear it is up to state and local officials to determine when and if mask use is appropriate based on a series of metrics, which take into account case rates and vaccine coverage.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/07/states-send-mixed-signals-covid-19-mask-recommendations>

Here Are The Republicans Most Likely To Refuse The Covid-19 Vaccine, Poll Finds

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Nearly 40% of Republicans are still hesitant about getting the Covid-19 vaccine or refuse to get it, a new Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI)/Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) poll finds, though certain subsets of the GOP appear notably more likely to accept or refuse the shot based on their religion, media consumption and whether or not they believe in the QAnon conspiracy theory.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2021/07/28/here-are-the-republicans-most-likely-to-refuse-the-covid-19-vaccine-poll-finds/>

Tanzania's President gets coronavirus vaccine live on TV, reversing country's year-long policy of Covid denial

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Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan on Wednesday launched the country's Covid-19 vaccination campaign after receiving just over a million Johnson & Johnson shots donated by the United States through the COVAX scheme. President Hassan was the first to receive the vaccine on

live television and reassured the country that the shots are safe. "I'm a mother of four, a grandmother of several grandchildren, and a wife, but most of all I'm the President and Commander in Chief. I wouldn't put myself in danger knowing that I have all these responsibilities as the shepherd of the nation," she said during a ceremony at State House in the city of Dar es Salaam.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/28/africa/tanzania-covid-vaccines-intl/index.html>

Johnson rejects Gove remark that Covid vaccine refusers are 'selfish'

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Boris Johnson has rejected Michael Gove's assertion that people who refuse to be vaccinated are "selfish", as he and another minister argued that it was better to encourage people to see the positive benefits of receiving the jab. In an interview with LBC radio, the prime minister was asked about comments by Gove, the Cabinet Office minister, on Tuesday, where he said: "If you can be vaccinated and you refuse to, that's a selfish act." Johnson said: "I would put it the other way round. If you get one, you're doing something massively positive, for yourself, for your family."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/28/johnson-rejects-claim-gove-covid-vaccine-refusers-are-selfish>

Coronavirus outbreaks have 'significantly reduced' vaccine hesitancy

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Coronavirus outbreaks have helped reduce vaccine hesitancy across Australia, with more people willing to get the jab amid surges in case numbers. The outbreaks in New South Wales and Victoria had "significantly reduced" the rate of vaccine hesitancy, a report by the Melbourne Institute found. The 2021 Vaccine Hesitancy Report Card showed Australia's vaccine hesitancy plummeted from 33 per cent at the end of May, to 21.5 per cent of the adult population as of July 23.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/coronavirus-vaccine-australia-outbreaks-help-to-reduce-jab-hesitancy-report-find/s/0b5b2dd3-e1aa-4e39-9454-5b0db789a387>

Nearly one-quarter of white evangelicals refuse COVID-19 vaccine: study

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Almost one quarter of white evangelicals were refusing to take the coronavirus vaccine as of June, according to data released this week by the Public Religion Research Institute and Interfaith Youth Core. The two organizations have tracked vaccine hesitancy in different religious groups since March and saw double-digit increases among all faith groups from March to June. White evangelical Protestants remain the most likely to refuse to get the vaccine at 24 percent. White evangelical Protestants and Hispanic Protestants hit the bottom of the pack for agreeing to get vaccinated with both at 56 percent, a more than 10 point increase for both groups since March. The rate of vaccination has slowed in the U.S. as health officials struggle to overcome vaccine hesitancy.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/565242-nearly-one-quarter-of-white-evangelicals-refuse-covid-19-vaccine-study>

Sydney adds four weeks to lockdown as Australia COVID-19 cases grow

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Australia's biggest city, Sydney, extended a lockdown by four weeks on Wednesday after an already protracted stay-at-home order failed to douse a COVID-19 outbreak, with authorities warning of tougher policing to stamp out non-compliance. Far from a planned exit from lockdown in three days, the city of 5 million people and neighbouring regional centres spanning 200 km (120 miles) of coastline were told to stay home until Aug. 28 following persistently high case numbers since a flare-up of the virulent Delta variant began last month. The state of New South Wales, of which Sydney is the capital, reported 177 new cases for Tuesday, from 172 on Monday

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/sydney-braces-extended-covid-19-lockdown-rest-australia-opens-2021-07-27/>

Norway again postpones end to COVID lockdown

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Norway postponed for a second time on Wednesday a planned final step in the reopening of its economy from pandemic lockdown, due to the continued spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19, the government said. "A new assessment will be made in mid-August," Health Minister Bent Høie told a news conference. Measures that will be kept in place to halt the spread of COVID-19 include bars and restaurants being limited to table service and limits of 20 people on gatherings in private homes.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-norway/update-1-norway-again-postpones-end-to-covid-lockdown-idUSL1N2P40Q4>

Bulgaria extends COVID-19 emergency until end of August

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The Bulgarian government on Wednesday extended the nationwide epidemic emergency until Aug. 31, the cabinet said in a statement. It is necessary to maintain the decline in the spread of COVID-19 achieved in the country, as well as to prepare the healthcare system to respond to a possible new pandemic wave, the statement noted. The epidemic emergency was initially declared on May 14 last year with a duration of one month, replacing the state of emergency implemented on March 13. It has already been extended several times, with the last extension to the end of July.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-07/28/c_1310092778.htm

Italian regulator endorses Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for teens

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Italian regulators approved the use of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine for children 12-17 years old, making it the second shot endorsed for adolescents, alongside that of Pfizer. Italian drug agency AIFA said it had endorsed the vaccine Spikevax for teens, fully accepting the recommendation made by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) on July 23.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/italian-regulator-endorses-moderna-covid-19-vaccine-teens-2021-07-28/>

Relaxing Covid-19 restrictions could pave way for vaccine resistance - experts

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Relaxing coronavirus restrictions could pave the way for new virus mutations that are resistant to vaccines, researchers have suggested. A new article warns against relaxing measures prematurely, and describes an "arms race" against Covid-19. Experts at the University of East Anglia and the Earlham Institute argue that rising cases could provide opportunities for the virus to evolve into even more transmissible variants.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/experts-nhs-delta-b947948.html>

Majority in India's big states with COVID-19 antibodies- survey

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More than 70% of people in eight of India's large states are estimated to have COVID-19 antibodies, a government survey showed on Wednesday, suggesting that a second surge in infections affected many more people than the reported figures. The survey, which tested a sample of the population for the presence of COVID-19 antibodies, was conducted in June and July and showed that two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion people were likely to have been exposed to the virus

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-reports-43654-new-covid-19-cases-last-24-hours-2021-07-28/>

Single Covid-19 vaccine dose as effective for clinically vulnerable, study finds

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A single dose of the coronavirus vaccine offers as much protection against severe Covid-19 to people who were shielding during the pandemic as it does for the rest of the population, a study has

found. Researchers from Public Health Scotland and the University of Edinburgh said there had been concerns that a weakened immune system may reduce the effectiveness of the coronavirus vaccines.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/single-university-of-edinburgh-cancer-b948052.html>

Health care workers who worked in COVID-19 wards more likely to contract virus, but from each other

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Health care workers who worked in COVID-19 wards were more likely to contract the virus than their peers, a new study finds. Researchers from Amsterdam University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam analyzed data from each of their university hospitals. They found that frontline workers interacting with COVID-19 patients were four times more likely to be infected than those in other areas of the medical center. However, instead of primarily contracting the virus from patients, the workers were spreading the virus among each other

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9835351/Health-care-workers-worked-COVID-19-wards-likely-contrast-virus-other.html>

Dyadic and Rubic to develop Covid-19 vaccines for African markets

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Dyadic International has entered a Covid-19 vaccine technology transfer and licencing agreement with South Africa-based company, Rubic Consortium, to discover, develop, analyse and produce cost-efficient vaccines for supply mainly to the African markets. As per the agreement, Dyadic will licence its C1 Platform to Rubic for conducting research, development, regulatory approval and marketing of Covid-19 vaccines that may be produced in South Africa and marketed in various countries on the African continent.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/dyadic-rubic-vaccines-africa/>

Pfizer data suggest third dose of Covid-19 vaccine 'strongly' boosts protection against Delta variant

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A third dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine can "strongly" boost protection against the Delta variant -- beyond the protection afforded by the standard two doses, new data released by Pfizer on Wednesday suggests. The data posted online suggest that levels of antibodies that can target the Delta variant grow fivefold in people 18 to 55 who get a third dose of the vaccine.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/28/health/pfizer-third-dose-data-bn/index.html>

Mental illness tied to higher risk of COVID hospital care, death

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The first study, published yesterday, was led by researchers from the CEReSS-Health Service Research and Quality of Life Center in Marseille, France. It consisted of 16 observational studies from seven countries involving 19,086 patients with COVID-19 and mental illness from December 2019 to July 2020. The countries were Denmark (1 study), France (2), Israel (1), South Korea (3), Spain (1), the United Kingdom (1), and the United States (7). Regardless of the primary medical risk factors for severe COVID-19, patients with mental illnesses (eg, addiction, depression) were more likely to die of COVID-19 than their peers in pooled crude and adjusted analysis (crude odds ratio [OR], 1.75; adjusted OR [aOR], 1.38). Patients with the severe mental illnesses included in the study—schizophrenia and bipolar disorder—had the highest ORs for death, with a crude OR of 2.26 and an aOR of 1.67.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/07/mental-illness-tied-higher-risk-covid-hospital-care-death>

Moderna and Novavax grapple with COVID-19 vaccine supply hiccups overseas: reports

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Halfway through the pandemic's second year, vaccine rollouts have hit their stride in some countries. Still, manufacturing problems can take an immediate toll on production and delivery timelines. Now, two COVID-19 vaccines—one authorized and the other not—are grappling with delays overseas. Moderna and Novavax are facing separate struggles to supply their COVID-19 shots outside the U.S., according to media reports and company representatives. For one, a South Korean shipment of Moderna's authorized mRNA vaccine will now arrive in August instead of late July, thanks to issues with two of the biotech's European manufacturing partners, Reuters reports.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/manufacturing/moderna-and-novavax-grapple-covid-vaccine-delays-overseas-reports>

Efficacy of Pfizer/BioNTech Covid vaccine slips to 84% after six months, data show

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The efficacy of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech fell from 96% to 84% over six months, according to data released Wednesday, a decline that could fuel Pfizer's case that a third dose will eventually be required. The data, released in a preprint that has not been reviewed by outside scientists, suggest the vaccine was 91% effective overall at preventing Covid-19 over the course of six months. In the ongoing study, which enrolled more than 44,000 volunteers, the vaccine's efficacy in preventing any Covid-19 infection that causes even minor symptoms appeared to decline by an average of 6% every two months after administration. It peaked at more than 96% within two months of vaccination and slipped to 84% after six months.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/07/28/efficacy-of-pfizer-biontech-covid-vaccine-slips-to-84-after-six-months-data-show/>

Thailand reports daily record of 16533 new coronavirus cases

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Thailand reported on Wednesday a daily record of 16,533 new coronavirus infections, bringing the country's total accumulated cases to 543,361. The country's COVID-19 task force also reported 133 new deaths, taking total fatalities to 4,397.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-reports-daily-record-16533-new-coronavirus-cases-2021-07-28/>

Indonesia is a new COVID-19 epicentre. The peak has yet to come.

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As the second wave crashes through the fourth most populated country in the world, the government of Indonesia and its citizens are struggling to respond. Competing priorities and delayed vaccination campaigns and lockdowns, among other issues, have created a dire situation. Conditions will likely get worse for many before they can improve, experts say. With more than 49,000 confirmed cases a day, Indonesia is now a major epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with Brazil and the United Kingdom, which are reporting 47,091 and 23,811 cases a day respectively.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/science-and-technology/2021/07/indonesia-is-a-new-covid-19-epicentre-the-peak-has-yet-to-come>

Myanmar junta seeks international cooperation over COVID-19 crisis

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Myanmar's military ruler is looking for greater cooperation with the international community to contain the coronavirus, state media reported on Wednesday, as the Southeast Asian country struggles with a surging wave of infections. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing called in a speech for more cooperation on prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, including with fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and "friendly countries", the Global New Light of Myanmar reported.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-junta-seeks-international-cooperation-over-covid-19-crisis-2021-07-28/>

S.Korea reports record daily COVID-19 cases as Moderna pledges vaccines

S.Korea reports record daily COVID-19 cases as Moderna pledges vaccines

South Korea on Wednesday reported 1,896 new COVID-19 cases for Tuesday, its highest-ever daily increase, as the country struggles to subdue a fourth wave of outbreaks fanned by the more contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus. The daily tally broke a previous record set on July 22 as infections are spreading beyond the capital Seoul and its neighbouring regions where the toughest social distancing rules are in place. There were 1,823 domestically transmitted cases on Tuesday and 33.5%, or 611, of the were from areas outside the capital regions

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-reports-1896-coronavirus-cases-highest-ever-daily-increase-kdca-2021-07-28/>

Thailand builds COVID-19 hospital in Bangkok airport amid surge in cases

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Thai volunteers on Wednesday turned a cargo warehouse at Bangkok's Don Muang Airport into a 1,800-bed field hospital for COVID-19 patients with less severe symptoms, as the country deals with its biggest outbreak to date. The Southeast Asian nation reported a daily record of 16,533 new cases, plus 133 new deaths on Wednesday, bringing the total accumulated cases to 543,361 and 4,397 deaths.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-builds-covid-19-hospital-bangkok-airport-amid-surge-cases-2021-07-28/>

Tokyo sets another virus record days after Olympics begin

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Tokyo reported 3,177 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday, setting an all-time high and exceeding 3,000 for the first time days after the start of the Olympics. The new cases exceeded the earlier record of 2,848 set the previous day and brought the total for the Japanese capital to 206,745 since the pandemic began early last year.

<https://apnews.com/article/2020-tokyo-olympics-sports-health-tokyo-coronavirus-pandemic-eadc681f0b23a80ef4368f628bc318e8>

One Year Later, America's Mask Supply Chain Is Still Vulnerable

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Even as the delta variant fuels a new wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the U.S., some domestic manufacturers of N95s and surgical masks are struggling to stay in business. Several companies have stopped production of masks because of declining sales as people got vaccinated, state mask mandates ended, and the flow of cheaper foreign-made masks resumed. The American Mask Manufacturers Association (AMMA), a trade group that represents more than 20 smaller manufacturers, estimates that 5,000 workers have been laid off across its member companies. DemeTech Corp., based in Miami Lakes, Fla., has alone laid off about 1,500 people, according to Luis Arguello Jr., the company's vice president. The mask makers' plight is part of a larger problem that the U.S. government faces: ensuring a reliable domestic supply of protective gear for the next crisis

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-27/covid-delta-variant-u-s-mask-makers-struggle-despite-virus-surge>

Tunisia's Saied moves on economy and COVID-19 after dismissing govt

Tunisia's Saied moves on economy and COVID-19 after dismissing govt

Saied says his actions are constitutional. France demands new PM and cabinet be named quickly.

Judicial probes into parties could complicate crisis

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/tunisia-investigates-parties-political-crisis-simmers-2021-07-28/>

Kansas governor requiring masks for state workers, buildings

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As he rallied conservatives on Wednesday, one of the Republican Party's most prominent rising stars mocked new government recommendations calling for more widespread use of masks to blunt a coronavirus surge. "Did you not get the CDC's memo?" Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis joked before an almost entirely unmasked audience of activists and lawmakers crammed into an indoor hotel ballroom in Salt Lake City. "I don't see you guys complying."

<https://apnews.com/article/government-and-politics-health-coronavirus-pandemic-kansas-a7cfbfbfcec0ea13152dffc6aa4f4fb>