

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

17th Mar 2022

Lockdown Exit

Omicron linked to rise in croup in babies; TB vaccine improves immune response to coronavirus

The following is a summary of some recent studies on COVID-19. They include research that warrants further study to corroborate the findings and that has yet to be certified by peer review. Omicron linked with croup in babies. The Omicron variant of the coronavirus is causing a dramatic rise in cases of croup, a dangerous respiratory condition usually seen in babies and toddlers, new data suggest. Croup, which causes a distinctive barking-like cough and high-pitched sounds when patients inhale, happens when viruses cause swelling in the respiratory tract that makes it hard to breathe.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/omicron-linked-rise-croup-babies-tb-vaccine-improves-immune-response-coronavirus-2022-03-16/>

In Kharkiv, critical COVID patients at the mercy of Russian bombardment

In Kharkiv's regional infectious diseases hospital, doctors escort those COVID-19 patients they can down to the bomb shelter in the basement when the air raid sirens sound. But the most seriously ill, needing constant oxygen supply, cannot be moved, even if this means leaving them vulnerable to Russian bombardment. "The ones in critical condition remain in their rooms. If we bring them down here they will simply die," said Pavlo Nartov, the hospital's director. "Most of our patients are on oxygen supply all the time. They can't be cut off from the oxygen."

<https://www.reuters.com/world/kharkiv-critical-covid-patients-mercy-russian-bombardment-2022-03-16/>

Global powers inch closer to agreement to waive Covid vaccine patents

The document detailing the compromise position suggests the negotiated form of the waiver has veered substantially away from the initial proposal first raised by India and South Africa in October 2020, which sought to suspend patents for successful Covid vaccines, treatments and diagnostics – invented by pharmaceutical giants such as Pfizer and Moderna – for the duration of the pandemic. The document details a tentative proposal that would still need final agreement from the four negotiators, as well as from all WTO member nations, to be passed. If passed, the compromised version of the waiver will see only patents for Covid-19 vaccines suspended for either three or five years, and means that treatment and testing formulas will still be subject to intellectual property protections.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/mar/16/global-powers-inch-closer-to-agreement-to-waive-covid-vaccine-patents>

Vietnam drops COVID-19 restrictions for foreign visitors

Vietnam on Wednesday scrapped quarantine and other travel restrictions for foreign visitors in an effort to fully reopen its border after two years of pandemic-related closure, the government said. Visitors entering the Southeast Asian country only need to show a negative COVID-19 test prior to arrival, according to the Health Ministry, which said the new measures were effective immediately. Visitors must monitor their own health during the first 10 days of their stay and notify medical professionals in Vietnam if they experience any COVID-19-like symptoms. Vietnam also reinstated visa exemptions and the issuance of visas on arrival similar to their pre-pandemic status.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vietnam-ap-covid-visitors-hanoi-b2036977.html>

COVID-19: Most people still taking voluntary precautions to prevent spread of COVID two years into pandemic, ONS survey shows

Two years on from the start of the pandemic, and despite the fact that almost all COVID restrictions have now been lifted, the majority of people are still taking voluntary precautions against infection. According to an ONS attitudes survey released today, most adults report taking at least one preventative measure to stop the spread of COVID-19. Around four-fifths, 81%, of people say they are still frequently washing or sanitising hands, 76% are still wearing face coverings and 57% are avoiding crowded places.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-most-people-taking-voluntary-precautions-against-infection-ons-survey-shows-12567565>

U.S., EU, India, South Africa reach compromise on COVID vaccine IP waiver text

The United States, European Union, India and South Africa have reached a consensus on key elements of a long-sought intellectual property waiver for COVID-19 vaccines, according to a proposed text reviewed by Reuters. Sources familiar with the talks described the text as a tentative agreement among the four World Trade Organization members that still needs formal approvals from the parties before it can be considered official. Any agreement must be accepted by the WTO's 164 member countries in order to be adopted. Some elements of the consensus deal, including whether the length of any patent waivers would be three years or five years, still need to be finalized, according to the text. It would apply only to patents for COVID-19 vaccines, which would be much more limited in scope than a broad proposed WTO waiver that had won backing from the United States, according to the document.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/u-s-eu-india-south-africa-reach-compromise-on-covid-vaccine-ip-waiver-text/>

Germany to secure COVID-19 vaccine production through 2029

Germany plans to spend up to 2.861 billion euros (\$3.14 billion) to ensure that COVID-19 vaccine makers have enough production capacity available to supply the country with shots in future outbreaks through 2029, the economy ministry said. Germany's cabinet approved plans on Wednesday to sign contracts with BioNTech, CureVac/GSK, Wacker/CordenPharma, Celonic and IDT, the ministry said in a statement. The contracts will maintain the ratcheted-up production capacities created during the coronavirus pandemic by paying an annual standby fee, ensuring enough vaccine can be produced quickly for the population.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-secure-covid-19-vaccine-production-through-2029-2022-03-16/>

WTO chief welcomes COVID shot patent plan, drugmakers balk

The World Trade Organization (WTO) praised a provisional deal to waive patent rights for COVID-19 vaccines after more than a year of deadlock, though drugmakers said the move risked undermining the industry's ability to respond to future health crises. The United States, the European Union, India and South Africa agreed on Tuesday on key elements for a waiver. It now needs the backing of the 164 members of the WTO, which takes decisions based on consensus, so rejection by just one country could still block an accord.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/drugmakers-condemn-plan-covid-vaccine-patent-waiver-2022-03-16/>

WHO says global rise in COVID cases is 'tip of the iceberg'

Figures showing a global rise in COVID-19 cases could herald a much bigger problem as some countries also report a drop in testing rates, the WHO said on Tuesday, warning nations to remain vigilant against the virus. After more than a month of decline, COVID cases started to increase around the world last week, the WHO said, with lockdowns in Asia and China's Jilin province battling to contain an outbreak. A combination of factors was causing the increases, including the highly transmissible Omicron variant and its cousin the BA.2 sub-variant, and the lifting of public health

and social measures, the WHO said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-says-rise-covid-cases-is-just-tip-iceberg-2022-03-16/>

China's local COVID cases decline for 2nd day as Jilin outbreak grows at slower pace

Mainland China's new local symptomatic COVID-19 cases declined for a second consecutive day, official data showed on Thursday, as a flare-up in the northeast - the worst since China's first outbreak in 2020 centred on Wuhan - grew at a slower pace. China reported 1,226 new domestically transmitted COVID-19 infections with confirmed symptoms on March. 16, data from the National Health Commission showed, down from 1,860 a day earlier. It marks the fifth day of over 1,000 such cases on the mainland. China's current case wave is still tiny by global standards, but national officials have warned that virus control is becoming increasingly difficult with more than two dozen regions reporting infections recently

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-local-covid-cases-decline-2nd-day-jilin-outbreak-grows-slower-pace-2022-03-17/>

WHO delays review of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine on Ukraine conflict

The World Health Organization (WHO) has delayed its ongoing assessment of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine for emergency use because of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, an official from the health agency said on Wednesday. The Sputnik V shot, widely used in Russia and approved in more than 60 countries, is also being reviewed by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). "We were supposed to go do inspections in Russia on March 7, and these inspections were postponed for a later date," Mariângela Simão, WHO assistant-director general for Access to Medicines and Health Products, said during a press briefing.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-delays-review-russias-sputnik-v-vaccine-ukraine-conflict-2022-03-16/>

Drugmakers condemn plan for COVID vaccine patent waiver

Global drugmakers condemned on Wednesday an initiative by four World Trade Organization members to introduce an intellectual property waiver for COVID-19 vaccines, saying it could undermine the industry's ability to respond to health crises in future.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/companies/drugmakers-condemn-plan-for-covid-vaccine-patent-waiver/ar-AAV7UnS>

New Covid Wave in China Hits Sellers of 'Quarantine Insurance'

In a country where one person inadvertently crossing paths with a Covid-19 patient can instantly put an entire apartment complex under lockdown for 14 days or more, Chinese insurers last year began offering what they called "quarantine insurance"—get locked down, receive a payout. Now, as the Omicron variant of the coronavirus spreads rapidly across the country, overwhelmed insurers are pulling the plug on the products. On Thursday, China's Public Mutual Insurance Corp. will become the latest insurer to close itself off to new premium holders, following in the footsteps of ZhongAn Online Property & Casualty Insurance Co., which stopped selling quarantine insurance on Monday. ZhongAn is an online insurer started by Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. co-founder Jack Ma, Tencent Holdings Ltd. chairman Pony Ma and Ping An Insurance Group Co. chairman Ma Mingzhe. The disappearance of the new policies reflects the speed with which new infections have swept across a country that has kept daily case counts low since the initial outbreak in Wuhan in early 2020.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-covid-wave-in-china-hits-sellers-of-quarantine-insurance-11647440373>

Exit Strategies

Long Covid Could Reveal Clues to Alzheimer's, Lyme Disease

Last week, the U.S. Congress failed to approve \$15 billion needed to continue Covid-19 precautions,

even though today's low case counts are likely to rise, as they are in Europe, with the sub-variant called BA.2. We've learned that some expensive mitigation measures, such as deep cleaning, are a waste of money, and could be scrapped, but funding for studying Covid should increase — not just for prevention measures and vaccines, but for research into the long-term consequences of infection. Some people who got Covid-19 early in the pandemic still haven't recovered, and what looked like "long Covid" might, for some people, be a permanent condition if no treatment is found.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-03-16/long-covid-could-reveal-clues-to-alzheimer-s-lyme-disease>

New Zealand to open borders to vaccinated travellers from next month

New Zealand is re-opening its borders to the world, after two years spent closed off by the pandemic. From 13 April, vaccinated tourists from Australia will be able to enter the country without isolating. From 2 May vaccinated tourists from other visa-waiver countries, including the US, UK, Germany, Canada, Japan, Singapore and others, will be allowed entry.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/16/new-zealand-to-open-borders-to-vaccinated-travellers-from-next-month>

Covid Scotland: 27000 doses of vaccine wasted in a single month as expiry dates reached

Some 13 per cent of doses given were wasted, compared to an average of just 1.5 per cent from September to January. Just half of those aged 18 to 29 have received a booster jab, while the figure for all adults is 78 per cent, below the Scottish Government benchmark of 80 per cent. In response to a "significant" increase in Covid patients, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has banned all but essential visiting in several wards at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary and Royal Alexandra Hospital from Thursday. NHS Lanarkshire has already taken this step. The majority of vaccine doses wasted in February – around 21,000 – were due to passing expiry dates, according to a new report from Public Health Scotland (PHS).

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/covid-scotland-27000-vaccine-doses-wasted-in-a-single-month-3613872>

Netherlands relaxes COVID-19 rules despite rising infection rate

Exactly two years since the restrictions were first introduced, Health Minister Ernst Kuipers declared that it is now safe to relax the measures. People are still advised to frequently wash their hands and isolate themselves when coming in contact with people who tested positive. Teleworking, COVID travel certificates, and having a negative test result to attend an event will no longer be mandatory. The new measures will come into effect next Wednesday (23 March). However, the Netherlands is still facing a rise in COVID-19 hospitalisation cases. As of Tuesday, 291 people were admitted to hospitals. There are currently 1952 hospitalised cases, 156 of which are in ICUs. This is not an isolated case as much of the EU is seeing a spike in cases.

https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/netherlands-relaxes-covid-19-rules-despite-rising-infection-rate/

Japan to fully lift COVID-19 restrictions as infections slow

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Wednesday announced plans to fully lift coronavirus restrictions on March 21 as new infections driven by the highly contagious omicron variant slow. The COVID-19 restrictions currently in place in 18 prefectures, including the Tokyo area, will end on Monday as planned, Kishida said at a news conference on Wednesday, as his government seeks to cautiously expand consumer activity to help the badly hurt economy get back on track. It will be the first time Japan has been free of virus restrictions since early January. Daily caseloads have steadily declined in Japan in recent weeks after surging to new highs exceeding 100,000 in early February. New cases have fallen by about half.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-japan-covid-tokyo-experts-b2037007.html>

UK easing COVID-19 testing, monitoring despite case uptick

After dropping nearly all coronavirus restrictions last month, Britain is now ending some of its most widespread COVID-19 testing and monitoring programs, a move some scientists fear will complicate

efforts to track the virus and detect worrisome new variants. Officials have largely dismissed those concerns, despite a recent uptick in cases across Europe, insisting that high immunization rates will help dampen future waves of disease. Based on how quickly new variants have arisen, some experts suggest the next one could arrive as early as May. They warn that U.K. authorities should be using the time to prepare, rather than winding down their pandemic defenses. Mark Woolhouse, an epidemiologist at the University of Edinburgh, called it “an unfortunate pattern” that has been seen repeatedly throughout the outbreak.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/uk-easing-covid-19-testing-monitoring-case-uptick-83474592>

U.S. will run out of key COVID treatments without more funds, White House says

The U.S. government will run out of supplies of COVID-19 treatments known as monoclonal antibodies as soon as late May and will have to scale back plans to get more unless Congress provides more funding, the White House said on Tuesday. Raising the alarm about depleted funding for the U.S. pandemic response, the White House said the government also would not have enough money to provide additional COVID-19 booster shots or variant-specific vaccines without a new injection of cash. The White House has requested \$22.5 billion in immediate emergency funding to fight the pandemic, but, after objections from Republicans and some Democrats, the money was removed from the latest government funding bill passed by lawmakers last week

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-will-run-out-key-covid-19-treatments-without-more-funds-white-house-says-2022-03-15/>

U.S. Senate votes to overturn transit mask mandate; Biden vows veto

The U.S. Senate voted 57 to 40 on Tuesday to overturn a 13-month-old public health order requiring masks on airplanes and other forms of public transportation, drawing a quick veto threat from President Joe Biden. Last week, the White House said it would extend the current COVID-19 mask requirements at airports, train stations, ride share vehicles and other transit modes through April 18 but pledged a new review. The order was set to expire on Friday. The mandate has drawn significant opposition from Republicans who note that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said last week that 98% of Americans live in places where it is safe to ditch indoor masks.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/white-house-says-biden-would-veto-bill-overturn-transport-mask-mandate-2022-03-15/>

India rolls out COVID vaccine doses for children aged 12-14

India on Wednesday started administering doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to young people aged 12 to 14 as public and private schools re-opened. The government aims to swiftly expand vaccine coverage by also dropping a restriction on booster doses for those older than 60 only if they had a co-morbidity condition. "Today is an important day in India's efforts to vaccinate our citizens," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter. The children, estimated by the government to number 50 million, will receive the Corbevax vaccine, made by Biological E, a domestic firm that secured emergency approval for its use in children.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-rolls-out-covid-vaccine-doses-children-aged-12-14-2022-03-16/>

New Zealand to reopen borders sooner than planned after years of COVID isolation

New Zealand is bringing forward the opening of its international borders to some travellers after more than two years of COVID-19 isolation, with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern saying an influx of tourists will boost the nation's economy. The change means the end of some of the toughest border controls in the world during the COVID pandemic, imposed as the government tried to keep the coronavirus out, comes months ahead of the previous schedule. New Zealand's policies helped keep infections and deaths low. But with the Omicron variant now rampant, criticism has grown as business, particularly tourism, and agricultural sectors see little value in staying shut off from the world.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-pm-ardern-announces-border-reopening-earlier-than-previous-2022-03-15/>

Japan to buy 145 mln Pfizer, Moderna COVID vaccines for 4th shots -Kyodo

Japan plans to buy a combined 145 million doses of Pfizer and Moderna coronavirus vaccines with an eye to rolling out a fourth shot, Kyodo news agency reported on Wednesday, citing a government source. Japan has not made a decision on the fourth vaccine doses as the country currently delivers its first booster shots - or third doses. Local media reports have said another booster roll-out could start this summer

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-buy-145-mln-pfizer-moderna-covid-vaccines-4th-shots-kyodo-2022-03-16/>

Japan says it will remove more COVID curbs as infections ebb

Japan said on Wednesday it is lifting COVID-19 restrictions imposed on Tokyo and 17 other prefectures as a wave of infections caused by the Omicron variant ebbs. An Omicron wave led to record infection rates in the capital and throughout Japan in February, the nation's deadliest wave of the pandemic so far. Tokyo logged 10,221 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday, down 13.6% from a week earlier. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told a news conference that quasi-emergency restrictions would be lifted as of March 21 and the country would slowly start returning to normal, since new infections had dropped substantially.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-set-remove-most-covid-restrictions-new-infections-ebb-2022-03-16/>

WTO chief welcomes COVID shot patent plan, drugmakers balk

The World Trade Organization (WTO) praised a provisional deal to waive patent rights for COVID-19 vaccines after more than a year of deadlock, though drugmakers said the move risked undermining the industry's ability to respond to future health crises. The United States, the European Union, India and South Africa agreed on Tuesday on key elements for a waiver. It now needs the backing of the 164 members of the WTO, which takes decisions based on consensus, so rejection by just one country could still block an accord.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/drugmakers-condemn-plan-covid-vaccine-patent-waiver-2022-03-16/>

Partisan Exits

Before meeting Biden, Irish PM Martin tests positive for virus

Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin tested positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday night in Washington, complicating plans to appear alongside U.S. President Joe Biden at St. Patrick's Day events at the White House. Martin had been at an Irish gala event on Wednesday night, held at the National Building Museum in Washington. Biden spoke at the event, but a White House official said the president did not have close contact with Martin while there. Others at Martin's table included U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and singer Carole King.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-pm-micheal-martin-tests-positive-covid-pa-media-2022-03-17/>

Scientific Viewpoint

Can Covid Infection Increase the Risk of Type 2 Diabetes? Study Suggests Link

Covid-19 infection appears to be linked to an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, a study suggests. But Diabetes UK said there is "still work to do to unpick the link between the two conditions". Researchers from Germany have associated the two ailments in a new paper which explores people's risk of being diagnosed with type 2 after they have had Covid. The study, published in the journal Diabetologia, examined data from more than 1,000 GP surgeries in Germany caring for a population of almost nine million patients. Between March 2020 and January 2021 there were 35,865 people with a documented case of Covid-19.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-16/covid-linked-to-type-2-diabetes-in-study>

WHO expert says Covid-19 comes in waves of four months

The Department of Health has reported 5,452 PCR-confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 8,644 positive antigen tests recorded through the HSE portal. As of 8am today, 1,081 Covid-19 patients were in hospital, with 44 being treated in ICU. In Northern Ireland, five more people who had previously tested positive for Covid-19 have died, the Department of Health said. Another 2,391 confirmed cases of the virus have also been notified in the last 24-hour reporting period. This morning, there were 515 Covid-19 patients in hospital, with four in intensive care. Taoiseach Micheál Martin has said there is concern about the increase in Covid-19 cases.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/coronavirus/2022/0316/1286757-coronavirus-ireland/>

Pets and COVID-19: Experts say vigilance needed but risks small

A pet sneezes, its nose is runny, and it seems sluggish. Could it be a normal pet illness like a cold – which can be caught by dogs and cats from human owners – or could it be COVID-19? It is a question that has sat uncomfortably on the minds of many pet owners throughout the pandemic and was resurrected again in January when authorities in Hong Kong culled hundreds of hamsters and other small animals following an outbreak of the Delta variant traced to a pet shop and warehouse.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/16/covid-animals>

Omicron sub-variant makes up 23.1% of COVID variants in U.S. - CDC

The BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron was estimated to be 23.1% of the coronavirus variants circulating in the United States as of March 12, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Tuesday. Scientists are tracking a rise in cases caused by BA.2, which is spreading rapidly in parts of Asia and Europe. According to the CDC's data, the sub-variant now makes up 39% of total cases in regions including New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. In states such as Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island, the sub-variant now makes up about 38.6% of total cases.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/omicron-sub-variant-makes-up-231-covid-variants-us-cdc-2022-03-15/>

Sinovac COVID vaccine 38% effective in young kids - Chilean study

China-based Sinovac Biotech Ltd's COVID-19 vaccine was 38.2% effective in preventing infections during the Omicron wave in children aged three to five years, a study in Chile showed. The study, published on Tuesday, has not yet been peer reviewed. The findings are in contrast to earlier studies that showed the vaccine, CoronaVac, was 74.5% effective in preventing infections in children aged 6 to 16 years, when Delta was the dominant variant. Countries are increasingly recommending booster doses in the face of the circulating Omicron variant, which the World Health Organization has said can bypass some protection imparted by vaccines. Most vaccines are still effective against severe infections.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/sinovac-covid-vaccine-38-effective-young-kids-chilean-study-2022-03-16/>

Pfizer-BioNTech seek U.S. OK for second COVID booster for 65 and older

Pfizer Inc and its German partner BioNTech SE an application with U.S. regulators seeking emergency use authorization for a second booster shot of their COVID-19 vaccine for people aged 65 and older. The submission to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration includes data collected in Israel, where a second booster is authorized for many people over age 18. read more An analysis of data from over a million adults 60 years and older showed rates of confirmed infections and severe illness were lower among individuals who received an additional booster dose of the vaccine administered at least four months after an initial booster (third) dose compared to those who received only one booster dose, the companies said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-biontech-seek-us-authorization-second-covid-bo>

[oster-shot-report-2022-03-15/](#)

Europe begins reviewing application for AstraZeneca COVID drug

Europe's drug regulator said on Tuesday it had begun reviewing AstraZeneca Plc's application for antibody-based COVID-19 therapy, a key step towards approval of the treatment in the region, but gave no timeline for a conclusion. Infections from COVID-19 are still rising in parts of the world including Europe. China posted a steep jump in daily COVID-19 infections on Tuesday, with new cases more than doubling from a day earlier to hit a two-year high. AstraZeneca's antibody cocktail, Evusheld, has already been authorised in the United States to prevent COVID-19 infections in individuals with weak immune systems or a history of severe side effects from coronavirus vaccines.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/europe-begins-reviewing-application-astrazeneca-covid-drug-2022-03-16/>

Even with omicron, coronavirus vaccines have been enormously effective

The good news is that Hong Kong's spike in coronavirus cases has begun to fade. The bad news is that, before it did, Hong Kong had one of the highest population-adjusted death tolls seen anywhere in the world since the pandemic began. In a remarkable series of tweets Monday, the Financial Times's John Burn-Murdoch illustrated the dire situation in Hong Kong since the beginning of February. He contrasted its spike in cases with a similar increase in New Zealand — but then pointed out the wide divergence in the number of those cases that resulted in death. (Notice that he shifted the case totals to align with the increase in deaths, so his graphs depict cases still rising.)

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/03/16/even-with-omicron-coronavirus-vaccines-have-been-enormously-effective/>

Diabetes & COVID-19: Scientists explore potential connection

When their 11-year-old son started losing weight and drinking lots of water, Tabitha and Bryan Balcitis chalked it up to a growth spurt and advice from his health class. But unusual crankiness and lethargy raised their concern, and tests showed his blood sugar levels were off the charts. Just six months after a mild case of COVID-19, the Crown Point, Indiana, boy was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. His parents were floored — it didn't run in the family, but autoimmune illness did and doctors said that could be a factor. Could his diabetes also be linked with the coronavirus, wondered Nolan's mom, a respiratory therapist. Turns out scientists in the U.S. and elsewhere are asking the same question and investigating whether any connection is more than a coincidence. It's clear that in those who already have diabetes, COVID-19 can worsen the condition and lead to severe complications. But there are other possible links

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-indiana-diabetes-e1193bc9891e45d589337f7a092f6c4d>

Severe COVID-19 tied to long-term depression, anxiety

A new observational follow-up study in six European countries published in The Lancet Public Health links severe COVID-19 to long-term depression and anxiety. University of Iceland at Reykjavik researchers led the study, which analyzed symptoms of depression, anxiety, COVID-related stress, and poor sleep quality among 247,249 adults, 4% of whom were diagnosed as having COVID-19 from Mar 27, 2020, to Aug 13, 2021. Participants, who were followed up for as long as 16 months (average, 5.7), lived in Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, or the United Kingdom. Most severely ill COVID-19 patients recuperated at home, but some spent time in a hospital.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/03/severe-covid-19-tied-long-term-depression-anxiety>

Newborns Catching Covid From Mothers Is 'Rare', UK Researchers Say

The risk of women passing on Covid-19 to their newborn babies is "low", according to a new study. The chance of transmitting the virus while pregnant, during labour, or after the baby is born is less than 2%, researchers said. When proper preventive steps are taken after a mother tests positive, such as the use of face masks, "infection of newborn babies is unlikely", they concluded. Academics

led by experts from the University of Birmingham reviewed data from 472 global studies, which looked at data on 952 mothers and 18,237 babies. Across the world, just 1.8% of the 14,271 babies born to mothers with Covid-19 went on to test positive themselves, the study, published in The BMJ, found.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-16/transmission-of-covid-from-mothers-to-newborns-is-rare>

Coronavirus Resurgence

One out of every nine people testing for coronavirus is positive

Israel's Health Ministry on Wednesday morning reported that on Tuesday, 6,310 new coronavirus cases were diagnosed in Israel, representing 10.93% of the coronavirus test results received that day. The infection coefficient, meanwhile, continues to rise, and on March 5, the last day for which it is available, stood at 0.9. As of Wednesday morning, 789 coronavirus patients were hospitalized, with 335 in serious condition or worse. That number includes 169 whose condition is critical, 151 who are intubated, and 23 who are on ECMO (heart and lung) machines. Since the start of the pandemic, 10,401 people have died due to coronavirus in Israel.

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/324066>

Coronavirus: Hong Kong set to run out of coffins within days

Hong Kong is running out of coffins as it fights a devastating surge in coronavirus deaths. Kwok Hoi-bong, president of the Funeral Business Association, said that the city would use up its remaining 300 coffins in the next two to three days. Families would have to delay funeral services if the problem was not be addressed, he added.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/coronavirus-hong-kong-set-to-run-out-of-coffins-within-days-g7wvzhzbf>

Germany hits record Covid infection rate since start of pandemic

Germany has recorded its highest rate of Covid-19 infections since the start of the pandemic, as mask-wearing mandates in shops, restaurants and schools will come to an end in many parts of the country this weekend. The country's disease control agency on Wednesday reported a record incidence rate of 1,607 new infections per 100,000 people over the past seven days, one of the highest in Europe. Germany's Robert Koch Institute has recorded a total of 262,593 confirmed new cases and 269 new deaths over the past 24 hours. Experts say the true number of cases could be even higher as testing facilities have reached full capacity and those who test positive with a lateral flow test are no longer required to carry out a PCR test that would show up in the statistics.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/16/germany-hits-record-covid-infection-rate-since-start-of-pandemic>

Europe thought it was done with Covid-19. But the virus isn't done with Europe

It has been two years since the Covid-19 pandemic became a reality for millions of people in Europe and many of the region's leaders now believe it is time to move on. But as countries shed restrictions, cases and hospitalizations are slowly inching up and public health experts are worried about the consequences. Covid-19 cases are rising in Britain just two weeks after UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson lifted most mitigation measures. Infections were 48% higher last week compared with the one before and hospitalizations were up 17% over the same period, CNN's Brenda Goodman and Deidre McPhillips report. The country's daily case rate -- about 55,000 a day -- is still less than a third of what it was during the Omicron peak, but cases are rising as fast as they were falling just two weeks earlier, when self-isolation rules for infected people ended in the UK.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/16/world/coronavirus-newsletter-intl-16-03-22/index.html>

France's current rebound of COVID infections should peak soon - health minister

French Health Minister Olivier Veran said on Wednesday the current rebound of daily new COVID-19 infections should peak by the end of the month, adding France had been right to lift most restrictions put in place to contain the pandemic. Tuesday, new cases over 24 hours went beyond

the 100,000 limit for the first time since a month, reaching 116,618.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/frances-current-rebound-covid-infections-should-peak-soon-health-minister-2022-03-16/>

S.Korea reports record 400741 new daily COVID cases - KDCA

South Korea reported a record 400,741 new daily COVID-19 cases, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said on Wednesday, as the country seeks to further ease social distancing rules despite a wave of Omicron infections.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-reports-record-400741-new-daily-covid-cases-kdca-2022-03-16/>

Hong Kong reports 29272 new COVID cases, 217 deaths

Hong Kong health authorities reported 29,272 COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, up from 27,765 on Tuesday and 217 deaths, compared with 228 in the previous 24 hours.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/hong-kong-reports-29272-new-covid-cases-217-deaths-2022-03-16/>

Analysis: China's COVID governance under pressure as Omicron spreads

China's public health governance is expected to come under acute pressure in coming weeks as the biggest wave of COVID-19 cases since the 2020 Wuhan outbreak stretches medical resources, tests the country's ability to contain infections and strains the economy. In the past 10 weeks, China has reported more new local symptomatic cases - more than 14,000 - than in all of 2021 amid the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, fuelling fears of hard lockdowns of cities and economic instability. Some parts of China are already feeling the crunch as they scramble to test local populations and quarantine the infected under China's strict COVID-19 playbook, despite relatively low caseloads by global standards.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-covid-governance-under-pressure-omicron-spreads-2022-03-16/>

WHO: New COVID deaths fell 17% last week, but cases rising

The number of new coronavirus deaths reported worldwide fell by 17% in the last week while COVID-19 infections rose, reversing a decline in cases that first began in January, according to the World Health Organization. In the U.N. health agency's weekly report on the pandemic issued late Tuesday, WHO said there were more than 11 million new COVID-19 infections last week - about an 8% rise - and 43,000 new deaths. The number of COVID-19 deaths globally has been dropping for the past three weeks. The biggest increase in cases were seen in the Western Pacific and Africa, where infections rose by 29% and 12% respectively. Elsewhere, cases dropped by more than 20% in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the Americas. In Europe, cases inched up by about 2%.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-europe-united-nations-world-health-organization-6f23e3e9d441e2746efc88590530786c>

New Lockdown

Covid-19 news: Nearly 30 million in China are now living in lockdown

China yesterday reported 5280 new SARS-CoV-2 cases, more than double the previous day's count and its highest daily tally since the start of the pandemic. The surge has prompted the introduction of full or partial lockdowns in various cities across the country. China has been pursuing a strict 'zero covid' strategy, which until recently had largely kept outbreaks under control. The omicron variant, however, is more transmissible than previous variants and is probably driving the current surge. Cities across the country are now in full or partial lockdowns. The north-east province Jilin is the worst affected, accounting for more than 3000 of China's new reported cases on 15 March. Speaking on 14 March, Jilin's governor vowed to "achieve community zero-Covid in a week".

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2237475-covid-19-news-nearly-30-million-in-china-are-now-living-in-lockdown/>

China's Jilin province in 'last ditch' COVID battle-party official

China's Jilin province was "in a last-ditch battle" against COVID-19, according to a senior Communist

Party official, as the northeastern region bordering North Korea and Russia accounted for three-quarters of China's total new cases on Wednesday. Authorities have called for blanket testing in Jilin, with provincial Communist Party secretary Jing Junhai urging health departments to ensure "not a single person is missed", the official Jilin Daily newspaper reported. Jilin registered 1,456 new domestically transmitted COVID-19 infections with confirmed symptoms on March 15, while new cases totalled 1,860 nationwide, National Health Commission (NHC) data showed.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/china-registers-over-1000-new-daily-covid-cases-fourth-day-2022-03-16/>

COVID curbs bite at Chinese ports, threatening global supply chains

The queues of container ships outside major Chinese ports are lengthening by the day as COVID-19 outbreaks in manufacturing export hubs threaten to unleash a fresh wave of global supply chain shocks, ship owners, logistics firms and analysts say. China is experiencing its biggest spike in COVID-19 infections since an initial outbreak in the central city of Wuhan was contained in early 2020. The spread of the highly-infectious Omicron variant this month has led to movement controls across China, including in key manufacturing hubs of Shenzhen and Dongguan, paralysing factories making goods from flash drives to car parts

<https://www.reuters.com/business/covid-curbs-bite-chinese-ports-threatening-global-supply-chains-2022-03-16/>