

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

13th Apr 2022

Lockdown Exit

A 'Zero Tolerance' Covid-19 Policy In China Leads To A Dystopian Nightmare For 26 Million Residents

A "zero tolerance" Covid-19 policy in China has caused chaos, fear, panic and dread. Shanghai, one of the largest cities in the world, with around 26 million residents, is under strict lockdown, due to draconian government orders. It's somewhat surprising, as Shanghai is a relatively wealthy area, financial hub and home to large global corporations, including Tesla and Apple. For weeks, people have been locked up in their homes and apartments. Many are unable to secure food and supplies. They are forbidden to leave. Disturbing videos are floating around TikTok and Twitter showing a dystopian surreal atmosphere.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2022/04/12/a-zero-tolerance-covid-19-policy-in-china-leads-to-a-dystopian-nightmare-for-26-million-residents/>

Shanghai tweaks lockdown rules amid COVID-19 surge

Shanghai has eased a punishing citywide lockdown that it imposed to break a surge in cases that is the biggest test of China's two-year strategy to stamp out the disease wherever it appears. Authorities in Shanghai introduced the three-tier disease control system on Monday, allowing residents in areas where no cases have been reported for 14 days to leave their homes so long as they follow health protocols and remain in their sub-district.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/12/shanghai-tweaks-lockdown-rules-amid-covid-19-surge>

Chinese Stockpile Food as Covid-19 Concerns Ripple Out From Shanghai

As Shanghai battles the country's worst Covid-19 outbreak in two years, people across the rest of China are stockpiling necessities as they brace for the prospect of similar lockdowns. In Beijing, where some residential districts have been closed in recent weeks as infections have been discovered, supermarket shelves in some parts of the city have been picked clean of toilet paper, canned foods, instant noodles and rice in recent days. In Suzhou, an industrial hub roughly two hours' drive west of Shanghai, residents swarmed supermarkets to fill their grocery baskets with instant noodles and other food on Tuesday morning, hours after local officials said they would conduct districtwide testing in one section of the city.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinese-stockpile-food-as-covid-19-concerns-ripple-out-from-shanghai-11649771421>

Novartis to cut thousands of jobs in global revamp

Swiss drugmaker Novartis will cut thousands of jobs worldwide as it combines its pharma and oncology businesses in a reorganisation announced last week, Swiss newspaper Tages-Anzeiger reported on Tuesday, citing unnamed company sources. More than 100 jobs could also disappear at Novartis's Swiss sites in Rotkreuz and Basel, the paper reported. Contacted by Reuters, a Novartis spokesperson said efficiencies would come through leaner structures and would "inevitably lead to roles being impacted", but it was too early to give specific numbers.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novartis-cut-thousands-jobs-global-revamp-paper-2022-04-12/>

200,000 Covid-19 vaccines donated to Ivory Coast

The Maltese government has donated 200,000 vaccine doses to Ivory Coast, while it continues to show solidarity with countries in need, in particular to Sub-Saharan Africa. It is the largest ever

Covid-19 vaccination donation by the government thus far with national carrier Air Malta facilitating the donation. As part of the humanitarian aid Malta is offering throughout the pandemic, AirMalta conducted its second longest direct flight to the Sub-Saharan country of Ivory Coast. The flight occurred at the beginning of April and took five hours 45 minutes to reach the destination. This was a conjoined effort by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry of Health. So far Malta has donated and delivered more than 710,000 vaccines to countries in need. These countries included Libya, Egypt, Ghana and Rwanda.

<https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2022-04-11/local-news/200-000-Covid-19-vaccines-donated-to-Ivory-Coast-6736242134>

Japan, US to exclude Russian COVID vaccines over Ukraine invasion

Japan and the United States are set to exclude Russian COVID-19 vaccines from a list of items subject to financial assistance when manufactured in developing countries, sources familiar with the plan said Tuesday. The move, which comes as Western nations step up sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, is especially aimed at dissuading India from fulfilling an agreement to produce Russian vaccines under the funding support scheme, the sources said. India has built close relations with Russia, including cooperation in the fields of energy and military technology. Japan and the United States are planning to gain India's understanding and make necessary arrangements ahead of a summit of the Quad nations, also involving Australia, according to the sources. Japan will host the summit, possibly in May.

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/04/1f0b27fe7439-japan-us-to-exclude-russian-covid-vaccines-over-ukraine-invasion.html>

Thailand Ramps Up Vaccinations as Festival Seen Fueling Covid

Thailand is rushing to vaccinate its elderly citizens and other vulnerable groups ahead of the local New Year celebrations as the festivities are seen fueling a surge in Covid cases and deaths, potentially derailing a tentative economic and tourism recovery. Millions of Thais will travel to their hometowns this week from cities such as Bangkok to join families in celebrating Songkran, the first time they can do so without any travel curbs since the outbreak of the pandemic. That's prompted the Health Ministry to warn new daily cases could jump to as high as 100,000 a day from almost 20,000 on Tuesday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-12/thailand-ramps-up-vaccinations-as-festival-seen-fueling-covid>

The Folly of World-Wide Covid Vaccination

"Many countries have lost substantial ground in providing routine immunizations, preventive services, and chronic disease management," notes a recent report by Duke University and the Covid Collaborative. Clinics that normally provide childhood immunizations and treatments for other infectious diseases have been administering Covid vaccines instead. The logistics of vaccine distribution have also diverted critical resources from things like HIV prevention, testing and treatment. While the U.S. has donated hundreds of millions of mRNA vaccines to low-income countries, these must be stored at frigid temperatures and usually administered within hours once vials are opened. Many doses have been thrown out or simply can't be distributed.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/world-wide-covid-vaccination-africa-cholera-hiv-aids-diseases-global-world-health-organization-covax-mrna-distribution-variant-mutation-funding-biden-11649707620>

CDC eases COVID travel assessment for Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Haiti

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Monday eased its COVID-19 travel ratings for Saudi Arabia, Myanmar and Haiti. The CDC said it had changed its COVID-19 travel recommendation for the three countries to "Level 1: Low" from "Level 4: Very High," which urges Americans to avoid travel to those locations. In recent weeks, the CDC has been easing ratings on a number of countries around the world as the COVID-19 pandemic recedes. The CDC also on Monday

lowered to "Level 1" ratings for Bangladesh, Philippines, and Saint Kitts and Nevis from "Level 2: Moderate."

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/cdc-eases-covid-travel-assessment-saudi-arabia-myanmar-haiti-2022-04-11/>

With aid to spend, schools look for students who need help

Schools across America are racing to make up for time they lost during the pandemic by budgeting billions of dollars for tutoring, summer camps and longer school days and trying to untangle which students need help most urgently after two years of disruptions. Many schools saw large numbers of students fall under the radar when learning went online for the pandemic. Many skipped class, tests and homework. Record numbers of families opted out of annual standardized tests, leaving some districts with little evidence of how students were doing in reading and math. Now districts are trying to address that lack of information by adding new tests, training teachers to spot learning gaps and exploring new ways to identify students who need help. In many districts, the findings are being used to guide the spending of billions of dollars in federal relief that's meant to address learning loss and can be used in myriad ways.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-entertainment-science-health-education-f09b1bf94ee9259e61056dc768295edd>

Exit Strategies

COVID-19, overdoses pushed US to highest death total ever

New research released Tuesday showed a particularly large jump in overdose deaths among 14- to 18-year-olds. Adolescent overdose death counts were fairly constant for most of the last decade, at around 500 a year, according to the paper published by the Journal of the American Medical Association. They almost doubled in 2020, to 954, and the researchers estimated that the total hit nearly 1,150 last year. Joseph Friedman, a UCLA researcher who was the paper's lead author, called the spike "unprecedented." Those teen overdose deaths were only around 1% of the U.S. total. But adolescents experienced a greater relative increase than the overall population, even though surveys suggest drug use among teens is down.

<https://apnews.com/ff2f01e401abce778bea8ac2e9c6e53e>

Shanghai Factory Closures Mount as Covid-19 Lockdowns Hit Supply Chains

More factories in and around Shanghai, including two run by an Apple Inc. supplier, are halting production because of extended Covid-19 lockdowns in the region, adding to pressure on the global supply chain. Analysts said Shanghai-area manufacturers were having more trouble getting parts delivered because China's restrictions on movement are making it difficult for trucks to enter the region. That means some factories can't operate normally even if they manage to keep workers on the job. Pegatron Corp., a major assembler of Apple products, said Tuesday it has temporarily suspended production at factories in Shanghai and nearby Jiangsu province in compliance with local government requirements.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/apple-assembler-pegatron-suspends-production-at-shanghai-jiangsu-factories-11649755451?mod=article_inline

Shanghai lets some residents leave home, cautiously eases COVID curbs

Some Shanghai residents were able to leave their homes for the first time in more than two weeks on Tuesday as the city took tentative steps towards easing a COVID-19 lockdown amid mounting worries over the economic impact of the strict curbs. With a quarter of the population under what brokerage Nomura described as "full or partial lockdowns," China's leadership is taking increasing steps to ease the economic toll of its "zero-COVID" strategy, but remains reluctant to risk larger waves of infection

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/shanghai-lets-some-residents-leave-home-cautiously-eases-covid-curbs-2022-04-12/>

UN official urges acceleration in coronavirus vaccinations

The U.N. official spearheading global vaccination efforts against the coronavirus said Monday the number of countries where 10% or less of the population has been vaccinated dropped from 34 to 18 since January and called for accelerated progress to end the pandemic. Assistant Secretary-General Ted Chaiban told the U.N. Security Council that with over 6 million lives lost to COVID-19 and just over 1 million new coronavirus infections reported to the World Health Organization in the last 24 hours, it is urgent to increase vaccinations in countries where it wasn't possible to boost rates in 2021.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-04-urges-coronavirus-vaccinations.html>

COVID vaccines: why second boosters are being offered to vulnerable people in the UK - but not young and healthy people yet

Until recently, the UK government limited a fourth dose of the COVID vaccine to people with severely weakened immune systems over the age of 16. But, following a resurgence of COVID cases in the UK, the government has followed some other countries such as Israel, Germany and Sweden, and expanded the eligibility for a second booster shot. People aged 12 and over who have a weakened immune system, care home residents and people aged 75 and over are now eligible. But if you're young and healthy you may be wondering whether you are going to be offered a fourth dose, and indeed, if a fourth dose is necessary for you. Let's take a look at what we know so far

<https://theconversation.com/covid-vaccines-why-second-boosters-are-being-offered-to-vulnerable-people-in-the-uk-but-not-young-and-healthy-people-yet-180215>

Britain widens access to Pfizer's COVID antiviral drug through trial

Britain will expand access to Pfizer's (PFE.N) oral antiviral COVID-19 treatment to thousands more people by adding it to a trial to assess how best to use the drug in its highly vaccinated population, the health ministry said on Tuesday. Paxlovid, a combination of Pfizer's new pill with an older antiviral ritonavir, was made available to thousands of people with compromised immune systems in Britain in February. Now Paxlovid is being added to the Panoramic national study in England, which is making antivirals available to a wide number of patients while collecting data on how the drugs should best be used in a vaccinated adult population.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/britain-widens-access-pfizers-covid-antiviral-drug-through-trial-2022-04-11/>

Shanghai eases COVID curbs for some even as factory halts widen

Some Shanghai residents were able to leave their homes for the first time in more than two weeks on Tuesday as the city took tentative steps towards easing a COVID-19 lockdown amid mounting worries over the economic impact of the strict curbs. With a quarter of the population under what brokerage Nomura described as "full or partial lockdowns," China's leadership is taking increasing steps to ease the economic toll of its "zero-COVID" strategy, but remains reluctant to risk larger waves of infection.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/shanghai-lets-some-residents-leave-home-cautiously-eases-covid-curbs-2022-04-12/>

Philadelphia to restore indoor mask mandate as cases rise

Philadelphia became the first major U.S. city to reinstate its indoor mask mandate on Monday after reporting a sharp increase in coronavirus infections, with the city's top health official saying she wanted to forestall a potential new wave driven by an omicron subvariant. Confirmed COVID-19 cases have risen more than 50% in 10 days, the threshold at which the city's guidelines call for people to wear masks indoors, said Dr. Cheryl Bettigole, the health commissioner. Health officials believe the recent spike is being driven by the highly transmissible BA.2 subvariant of omicron, which has spread rapidly throughout Europe and Asia, and has become dominant in the U.S. in

recent weeks.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-philadelphia-d7f5dacf0ae4ac004e5b15dd58362360>

Filipinos urged to get booster shots to save 80 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines

Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion has encouraged citizens to get their needed booster shots against COVID-19 so as not to waste vaccines already available for use. Concepcion earlier revealed that 27M doses of COVID vaccines are set to expire by July. These vaccines which are a combination of procured vaccines and donations, are part of a total of around 80 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines in storage. The 80 million doses of various brands of COVID-19 vaccines with an estimated worth of P40 billion are currently stored in the Department of Health's 3rd party logistics warehouses, regional warehouses and Zuellig's warehouse. "We call on fellow Filipinos to think about their safety and the safety of their families as well and get their booster shots immediately. As citizens, we also have a responsibility to help our government in its efforts to control the pandemic and ensure our safety while keeping the economy open," Concepcion said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/04/12/2174099/filipinos-urged-get-booster-shots-save-80-million-doses-covid-19-vaccines>

Partisan Exits

US pulls non-emergency staff from Shanghai amid COVID surge

Many residents in the city of 26 million have been confined to their homes for up to three weeks as China maintains its "zero-COVID" strategy of handling outbreaks with strict isolation and mass testing. But people living under the restrictions have described an increasingly desperate situation, with families unable to leave their homes or obtain food and daily necessities, while people who test positive for the coronavirus have been forced into mass quarantine centers where conditions at times have been called crowded and unsanitary. Authorities on Tuesday said another 23,342 people in Shanghai tested positive for the virus over the previous day, just 994 of whom displayed symptoms. Total infections have topped more than 200,000 in the latest wave, although no additional deaths have been reported.

<https://apnews.com/55d6a352e9d97fdd2a1cbd83d87f6685>

Queen Elizabeth says COVID left "one very tired and exhausted"

Britain's Queen Elizabeth said COVID-19 had left "one very tired and exhausted" as she talked to health workers and a former patient about her own experience of "this horrible pandemic". Britain's 95-year-old monarch tested positive for COVID in February and was described as having had mild, cold-like symptoms. She later returned to light duties. The queen, who is patron of the Royal London Hospital, spoke on a video call to National Health Service workers at the hospital who had helped to build and run a 155-bed unit to cope with a surge in patients needing help with their breathing.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/queen-elizabeth-says-covid-left-one-very-tired-exhausted-2022-04-11/>

Thai politician indicted for royal insult over vaccine speech

A prominent Thai politician faces up to 20 years in prison following his indictment on Monday for insulting the king and violating a cyber law, after he criticised the government for over-reliance on a royal-owned firm to supply COVID-19 vaccines. Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, the 43-year-old leader of the disbanded Future Forward Party, is accused of lese majeste and breaking cyber laws in a January, 2021 Facebook Live stream, during which he said the government had mishandled its vaccine campaign and unfairly favoured Siam Bioscience, a firm owned by King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thai-politician-indicted-royal-insult-over-vaccine-speech-2022-04-11/>

MU researchers receive grant to increase confidence about COVID-19 vaccine among

nurses

As an assistant teaching professor in the MU Sinclair School of Nursing, Stefanie Birk knows there are nursing students unsure of how to talk with people hesitant about getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Being a public health nurse herself, Birk has been in similar situations and is passionate about equipping the next generation of nurses with the knowledge and confidence they need to have conversations that ultimately promote public health. To help increase knowledge and confidence about the COVID-19 vaccine among nurses and the communities they serve, Birk and an interdisciplinary team of educators and researchers at the University of Missouri have earned a grant from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) with funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "We want to prepare our nursing students as they get ready to graduate and go on to become nurses serving our communities," said Birk, who teaches public health classes to hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students in the MU Sinclair School of Nursing. "By incorporating these lessons into their current curriculum, they will be better prepared going forward to have effective conversations with people who may be feeling hesitant about the COVID-19 vaccine."

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220411/MU-researchers-receive-grant-to-increase-confidence-about-COVID-19-vaccine-among-nurses.aspx>

British PM and finance minister to be fined over lockdown parties

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his finance minister Rishi Sunak will be fined for breaking Britain's strict coronavirus lockdown rules, his office said on Tuesday, provoking anger and calls for them both to resign. Police have been investigating 12 gatherings at Johnson's Downing Street office and the Cabinet Office after a damning internal inquiry found his staff had enjoyed alcohol-fuelled parties that were not permitted. Johnson said he had attended some of the events, held when social mixing was all but banned by laws his government brought in to curb the spread of COVID-19, but he has always denied knowingly committing any wrongdoing.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-issues-more-than-50-fines-downing-st-lockdown-parties-2022-04-12/>

Senate votes to extend 4 of Lamont's remaining COVID orders

Connecticut lawmakers have decided to extend four of Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont's remaining pandemic-related executive orders, despite concerns raised by Republicans that it's time to end the practice and get back to normal governing. The Senate voted 19-13 on Tuesday to prolong orders until June 30 that deal with physical distancing in certain congregate settings; making the patient vaccination database available to medical providers; using temporary nurses aides to help alleviate staffing shortages; and providing more time to send out rental assistance payments to people facing eviction who've already applied to the state's UniteCT program. The emergency bill now awaits approval by the House of Representatives.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-congress-ned-lamont-connecticut-7cc33cdc41044674f3f94b4488d7de35>

Continued Lockdown

U.S. orders some personnel to leave Shanghai consulate amid COVID surge

The U.S. State Department on Monday ordered non-emergency U.S. government workers to leave the consulate in Shanghai due to a surge in COVID-19 cases and China's measures to control the virus. On Friday, the State Department announced that non-emergency personnel could voluntarily leave the consulate. It is not clear why the departure of those workers has become mandatory.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/us-orders-some-personnel-leave-shanghai-consulate-2022-04-12/>

Shanghai patients crowdsource medical help during COVID lockdown

Shanghai residents have turned online for grassroots help on medical treatment as the city's tough COVID-19 curbs limit access to healthcare and fuel frustration and anxiety. While the city of 25 million has used lockdowns and extensive testing to fight the disease, those suffering from other

medical conditions are posting requests for help in mutual-help platforms and social media chat groups. One woman said she sought help online as her worry grew over the risk of infection to her paralysed mother from a urinary catheter used for about a month.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-patients-crowdsource-medical-help-during-covid-lockdown-2022-04-12/>

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Scientific Viewpoint

COVID-19 household transmission is high, with children being a significant source of spread, study finds

A study released today indicates that SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) spreads extensively in households, with children being a significant source of that spread. Approximately 50% of household members were infected from the first-infected individual during the study period. Although kids were less likely to spread the virus compared to adults, children and adults were equally likely to become infected from the first-infected individual.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2022/04/220412140946.htm>

Covid-19 testing in the UK was not a “shambles” in 2020

In a recent interview with The BMJ, Paul Nurse said that covid-19 PCR testing in the UK in 2020 was a shambles.¹ I respond as someone who volunteered to help set up the Milton Keynes Lighthouse testing laboratory. I agree with Nurse that in 2020 the government should have used academic laboratories to ramp up covid PCR testing capacity

<https://www.bmj.com/content/377/bmj.o916>

Researchers outline need for new approach to COVID-19 vaccine testing

The commentary by bioethicist Nir Eyal and epidemiologists Tobias Gerhard and Brian Strom (the latter is chancellor of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences) – published in *Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety* – examines how this parallel approach to vaccine trials can lead to faster and more accurate vaccine assessment and more effective pandemic response. The researchers say that further vaccine testing could help settle remaining questions about how effective the shots are at blocking infection against old and new virus strains. It could also reveal the most effective dosing and timing between shots, the level of protection compared to natural immunity and how well vaccines work in groups that were underrepresented in initial trials. While some researchers proposed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic that challenge trials take place, others argued that too little was known about the virus and that conducting the trials would be too dangerous. They were not used for the studies that led to approval of the major COVID-19 vaccines but are now being used in testing.

<https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/949484>

Thai FDA grants EUA to Novavax-Serum Institute's Covid-19 vaccine

The Thailand Food and Drug Administration (Thai FDA) has granted emergency use authorization (EUA) to Novavax and Serum Institute of India for a protein-based Covid-19 vaccine, NVX-CoV2373. Created from the genetic sequence of the initial SARS-CoV-2 virus strain, the vaccine is formulated with Novavax's saponin-based Matrix-M adjuvant. The vaccine is authorised for active immunisation for preventing Covid-19 in adults aged 18 years and above. SII will produce and supply the vaccine under the brand name Covovax.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/thai-fda-eua-novavax/>

RedHill pill shows promise vs Omicron; mRNA vaccines appear effective in those with well-controlled HIV

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.

Experimental pill shows promise against Omicron An experimental drug being developed by RedHill Biopharma Ltd that improved outcomes in a randomized trial involving severely ill COVID-19 patients infected with earlier versions of the coronavirus is showing promise against the Omicron variant in test tube experiments, researchers said.

<https://www.euronews.com/next/2022/04/11/us-health-coronavirus-science>

Nanocell COVID-19 vaccine elicits potent neutralizing response

As of April 11, 2022, SARS-CoV-2 infection has caused over 6.2 million deaths. In response to the outbreak of SARS-CoV-2, many vaccines were rolled out at unprecedented speed. However, the continued emergence of highly transmissible immune escape variants has limited efforts to reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and end the current pandemic. Large-scale administration of the most effective vaccines against the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been challenging due to the ultra-cold storage conditions required for nucleic acid vaccines at -20 oC to -70 oC, as well as their short shelf life. Nanocells are about 400 nanometers (nm) in diameter, lack chromosomes, and are called EnGeneIC Dream Vector (EDVTM). EDV is a derivative of a mutant bacterium of the species Salmonella typhimurium that is developed through budding caused by the mutation. Earlier EDVs are currently being investigated in early clinical trials for their ability to deliver anti-cancer therapy to solid cancers. These trials have elicited promising results including the arrest of cancer growth, increased survival, and low or no toxicity.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220411/Nanocell-COVID-19-vaccine-elicits-potent-neutralizing-response.aspx>

Heart inflammation after Covid vaccine ‘no more common than after other jabs’

Heart inflammation after a Covid jab is not only rare but no more common than after other types of vaccinations, researchers have found. As Covid vaccination programmes began around the world it emerged that some people – particularly young men – subsequently developed myocarditis, a type of inflammation of the heart muscle, or pericarditis, inflammation of the outer lining of the heart. While cases were rare, the findings caused concern, with risk of such heart inflammation among the reasons cited by experts in the UK for the delay in expanding the vaccination programme to children. Now research suggests that myopericarditis – an umbrella term that encompasses myocarditis and pericarditis – is not only uncommon after Covid jabs, but the risk of developing it is no greater than that posed by other types of inoculations, such as flu vaccinations.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/apr/11/heart-inflammation-after-covid-vaccine-no-more-common-than-after-other-jabs>

New Drug Slashed Deaths Among Patients With Severe Covid, Maker Claims

About half of the 52 trial participants given a placebo or dummy pill along with regular care died within 60 days, an indicator of how very sick they were. But the death rate was 20 percent among the 98 participants who received sabizabulin, who were just as ill. The drug was given once a day for up to 21 days. “Sabizabulin is the first drug to demonstrate a clinically and statistically meaningful reduction in deaths in hospitalized patients,” Dr. Mitchell Steiner, chief executive of Veru, said. “This represents a big step forward.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/11/health/covid-sabizabulin-veru.html>

What do we know about “stealth omicron” so far?

What do we know about “stealth omicron” so far? It’s an extra-contagious version of the omicron variant, but it doesn’t seem to cause more severe disease. Since it was first identified in November, BA.2 has been spreading around the globe, driving new surges in parts of Asia and Europe. It’s now the dominant coronavirus version in the U.S. and more than five dozen other countries. It was given the “stealth” nickname because it looks like the earlier delta variant on certain PCR tests, says Kristen Coleman at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. The original omicron, by contrast, is easy to differentiate from delta because of a genetic quirk. In rare cases, early research

indicates BA.2 can infect people even if they've already had an omicron infection. COVID-19 vaccines appear just as effective against both kinds of omicron, offering strong protection against severe illness and death.

<https://apnews.com/article/stealth-omicron-what-we-know-ba500eee4616f55e5f3174ee81b0a5c5>

Pfizer's COVID pill Paxlovid gets boost in Britain thanks to spot in national trial

Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine and antiviral show little sign of slowing down in the pandemic's third year. Now, the company's oral therapy is getting a boost across the Atlantic. Thousands more people in the U.K. will gain access to Pfizer's Paxlovid thanks to its inclusion in the national Panoramic study, which is looking at how best to use the pill among Britain's highly vaccinated population, the country's Department of Health and Social Care said Tuesday. Paxlovid is the second antiviral to enter the Panoramic fray behind Merck & Co. and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics' molnupiravir, Britain's health ministry pointed out. The drug has been shown to slash the risk of hospitalization or death by 88% in clinical studies, and it's already available in the U.K. for patients with

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizers-covid-pill-paxlovid-gets-big-boost-britain-thanks-spot-national-trial>

Moderna recalls vaccine batch after foreign substance found in CDMO-made vial—again

The specter of particulates has forced another recall—this time on Moderna's massively successful COVID-19 vaccine Spikevax—and the latest pull isn't contract manufacturer Rovi's first brush with contamination, either. Moderna on Friday said it was recalling one Spikevax lot in Europe. The batch contains 764,900 doses made by CDMO Rovi that were deployed across Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden between Jan. 13 and Jan. 14. Moderna yanked the shots because of a "foreign body" found in one vial of the batch made at Rovi's site in Spain, the partners said in a release. The suspect vial was punctured but not administered, the companies added. Moderna and Rovi learned about the contamination issue from a vaccination center in Málaga, Spain. The tainted vial was "returned for forensic assessment and investigation," the companies noted.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/moderna-recalls-covid-19-vaccine-batch-over-foreign-body-found-cdm0-made-vial-again>

Even mild COVID-19 raises the risk of blood clots

A new nationwide study conducted in Sweden reports that individuals with COVID-19 were at greater risk of developing a blood clot at least up to 3 months after the infection. Although individuals hospitalized with severe COVID-19 were at the highest risk of developing blood clots, even those with mild COVID-19 were at increased risk of blood clots. The study highlights the importance of treatments to reduce blood clots, especially in high risk COVID-19 patients, and vaccination against COVID-19.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/even-mild-covid-19-raises-the-risk-of-blood-clots>

Coronavirus Resurgence

New Covid XJ variant which could evade vaccines spreading as more cases found

A number of cases of Omicron XJ - the newest variant - were detected in Finland at the end of March. Now a case has been identified in Italy, and validated by the Istituto Superiore di Sanit. At the same time a case has been detected in Thailand. The country's Medical Sciences Department has found the XJ genetic code in a delivery driver diagnosed with Covid in Bangkok. The man had been vaccinated. The department's director Supakit Kirilak said: "It is highly likely to be the XJ recombinant. He met many people due to the nature of his job. That made him vulnerable to infection." Supakit said the variant detected is definitely not the XE strain - which was first detected in the United Kingdom in January. As of 22 March 2022, there were 763 XE cases in the UK.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/uk-news/new-covid-variant-could-evade-23664755>

U.S. Supreme Court to stop public access in April as COVID cases rise

The United States Supreme Court said on Monday it will stop allowing the public to attend courtroom sessions in person during the month of April as coronavirus cases rise in the District of Columbia. Despite infections remaining relatively flat nationwide, a number of high-profile political figures in Washington D.C. have tested positive for COVID-19 recently, including members of President Joe Biden's Cabinet and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-supreme-court-stop-public-access-april-covid-cases-rise-2022-04-11/>

Canada's Ontario in sixth COVID wave, hospitalizations likely to rise -official

Ontario is in the sixth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic driven by the highly transmissible BA.2 sub-variant of the Omicron coronavirus and hospitalizations are likely to rise over the coming weeks, the most populous Canadian province's top doctor said on Monday. "In the last few weeks we have seen an increase in the percent positivity and upward trend in wastewater surveillance and a rise in hospitalizations. These trends are likely to continue for the next several weeks," Ontario's chief medical officer Kieran Moore said at a briefing.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/canadas-ontario-sixth-covid-wave-hospitalizations-likely-rise-official-2022-04-11/>

French COVID-19 hospitalisations at a peak since early March

French health authorities said on Monday the number of patients hospitalised for COVID-19 over the past 24 hours jumped by 579 to 24,205, the highest level since March 1, as new cases are picking up again. On a week-on-week basis, daily COVID-19 infections have been rising again in the last three days after declining during the six previous days, prompting Health Minister Olivier Veran to say last week the current pandemic wave was past its peak. Most of the country's COVID-19 restrictions were lifted in early March.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-covid-19-hospitalisations-peak-since-early-march-2022-04-11/>

New Zealand business confidence worsens as COVID continues to impact

New Zealand business confidence and demand worsened in the first quarter of this year due to the ongoing damage the COVID-19 outbreak is having on the economy, a private think tank said on Tuesday. A net 40% of firms surveyed expected general business conditions to deteriorate compared with 28% pessimism in the previous quarter, the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research's (NZIER) quarterly survey of business opinion (QSBO) showed. On a seasonally adjusted basis, 33% expected business conditions to worsen, versus 35% pessimism recorded in the previous period. The survey's measure of capacity utilisation rose to 97.1%, from the previous quarter's 92.7%.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-business-confidence-worsens-covid-continues-impact-2022-04-11/>

Taiwan sees 1000 daily local COVID cases by end of month

Taiwan expects daily domestic COVID-19 infections to top 1,000 a day by the end of the month, Health Minister Chen Shih-chung said on Tuesday, calling on people not to panic about a wave that is causing few serious cases. Taiwan has been a model for how to control the pandemic. It moved early and effectively with such measures as largely closing its borders and implementing highly efficient contact tracing. But since the beginning of this year the island of 23 million people has recorded some 4,000 domestic infections, driven by the more infectious Omicron variant, though more than 99% of those have involved only minor symptoms or none at all.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-sees-1000-daily-local-covid-cases-by-end-month-2022-04-12/>