

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

11th May 2022

Lockdown Exit

Shanghai's Covid Lockdown Leaves Thousands Sleeping in Its Streets

Shanghai's lockdown has kept tens of millions of residents trapped indoors for a month and a half. Thousands of others in China's wealthiest city have found themselves in the opposite predicament: living in the street. Victims of the same strict Covid-19 rules that are keeping most residents homebound, many of the newly homeless are migrant laborers from rural areas and smaller cities who often live hand-to-mouth while sharing an apartment with other workers. For many, the companies they work for have closed down in the lockdown, including boarding up worker dormitories. Some have chosen to join the tens of thousands who zip around Shanghai on bikes or scooters for food-delivery platforms like Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.'s Ele.me and Meituan's namesake service. But with the income comes the stigma of a higher Covid risk. While the Shanghai government has granted special lockdown exemption for food-delivery workers, residential compounds have their own rules barring them from returning to their apartments for fear they will bring the virus back with them.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/shanghais-lockdown-leaves-thousands-sleeping-in-its-streets-11652193941>

WHO offers rare criticism for China's steadfast and strict COVID-19 measures

The head of the World Health Organization said on Tuesday China's zero-tolerance COVID-19 policy is not sustainable given what is known of the disease, in rare public comments by the United Nations agency on a government's handling of the virus. "We don't think that it is sustainable considering the behaviour of the virus," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a media briefing. Speaking after Tedros, WHO emergencies director Mike Ryan said the impact of a "zero-COVID" policy on human rights also needs to be taken into consideration alongside the effect on a country's economy. He also noted that China has registered 15,000 deaths since the virus first emerged in the city of Wuhan in late 2019 — a relatively low number compared with 999,475 in the United States and more than 500,000 in India.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/china-covid-19-who-1.6447833>

Employers requiring job applicants to have a Covid-19 vaccine is declining, study finds

The share of job ads that require candidates to have a Covid-19 vaccine seems to be on the decline. About 6.7% of U.S. job listings cited vaccination as a necessity for applicants as of April 29, according to a new analysis by AnnElizabeth Konkel, an economist at Indeed, a job site. The share has slowly fallen since March 12, when it touched a pandemic-era peak of 7.1%.

<https://www.cNBC.com/2022/05/10/employers-requiring-a-vaccine-mandate-for-job-applicants-is-declining.html>

U.S. will limit next-generation Covid vaccines to high-risk people this fall if Congress doesn't approve more funding

The U.S. will have to limit the next generation of Covid vaccines this fall to individuals at the highest risk of getting seriously sick from the virus if Congress fails to approve funding to purchase the new shots, according to a senior Biden administration official. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, warned the U.S. faces a substantial surge of Covid infections this fall as immunity from the current vaccines wanes and the omicron variant mutates into more transmissible subvariants. The U.S. needs more money for next-generation vaccines, therapeutics and tests to prevent infections from turning into hospitalizations and deaths, the official said.

<https://www.cNBC.com/2022/05/09/us-will-limit-covid-vaccines-to-high-risk-people-this-fall-if-congress-doesnt-approve-more-funding.html>

Why a Covid Vaccine Mandate for N.Y.C. Schoolchildren Is Unlikely Soon

Teachers at New York City public schools are required to be vaccinated against Covid-19. Children involved in after-school activities that have a higher risk of spreading the virus — including many sports, as well as chorus and band — must be vaccinated, too. But while New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul have both said they support making Covid vaccination for all public school children mandatory, that does not necessarily mean it is happening soon. Momentum on the issue, both in New York and across the country, has stalled, lawmakers and experts say. In part, this is because the F.D.A. has not yet granted full approval to a Covid-19 vaccine for children under 16. Another problem is the disappointing efficacy of the current Pfizer vaccine against preventing infection in children under 12. (The F.D.A. has granted emergency authorization for children 5 to 16.)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/10/nyregion/covid-vaccine-mandate-nyc-schools.html>

For widows in Africa, COVID-19 stole husbands, homes, future

Across Africa, widowhood has long befallen great numbers of women — particularly in the continent's least developed countries where medical facilities are scarce. Many widows are young, having married men decades older. And in some countries, men frequently have more than one wife, leaving several widows behind when they die. Now, the coronavirus pandemic has created an even larger population of widows on the continent, with African men far more likely to die of the virus than women, and it has exacerbated the issues they face. Women say the pandemic has taken more than their husbands: In their widowhood, it's cost them their extended families, their homes and their futures.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/widows-africa-covid-19-stole-husbands-homes-future-84611981>

Norway discards COVID-19 vaccines as supplies exceed demand

Norwegian health authorities said Tuesday that the country has a surplus of COVID-19 vaccines and has already discarded more than 137,000 doses because there is declining demand in low-income countries. The Norwegian Institute of Public Health said it plans a further disposal of doses if global demand does not change. In Norway there is high vaccine coverage while globally a demand for donations has fallen.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/norway-discards-covid-19-vaccines-supplies-exceed-demand-84612755>

Pandemic gets tougher to track as COVID testing plunges

Testing for COVID-19 has plummeted across the globe, making it much tougher for scientists to track the course of the pandemic and spot new, worrisome viral mutants as they emerge and spread. Experts say testing has dropped by 70 to 90% worldwide from the first to the second quarter of this year — the opposite of what they say should be happening with new omicron variants on the rise in places such as the United States and South Africa. “We’re not testing anywhere near where we might need to,” said Dr. Krishna Udayakumar, who directs the Duke Global Health Innovation Center at Duke University. “We need the ability to ramp up testing as we’re seeing the emergence of new waves or surges to track what’s happening” and respond.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-pandemics-united-states-14bf5b0901260b063e4fa444633f4d31>

China Risks 1.6 Million Deaths in Virus 'Tsunami' If Covid Zero Is Abandoned

China risks a “tsunami” of coronavirus infections resulting in 1.6 million deaths if the government abandons its long-held Covid Zero policy and allows the highly-infectious omicron variant to spread unchecked, according to researchers at Shanghai’s Fudan University. The peer-reviewed study, published in the journal Nature, found that the level of immunity induced by China’s March vaccination campaign would be “insufficient” to prevent an omicron wave that would swamp

intensive care capacity, given low vaccine rates among the elderly and the nation's reliance on less effective, domestic shots.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-10/china-risks-virus-tsunami-if-covid-zero-abandoned-study-says>

Exit Strategies

China risks Omicron 'tsunami' and 1.6mn deaths if it abandons zero-Covid strategy, study shows

The head of the World Health Organization has warned that China's zero-Covid strategy is unsustainable, as new modelling showed the country risked unleashing a "tsunami" of coronavirus infections and causing 1.6mn deaths if it abandons the policy. "As we all know, the virus is evolving, changing its behaviours, becoming more transmissible. With that changing behaviour, changing your measures will be very important. When we talk about the zero-Covid strategy, we don't think it's sustainable," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general, said on Tuesday. He said the WHO had discussed the issue with Chinese experts, adding that "considering the behaviour of the virus I think a shift [in China's strategy] will be very important".

<https://www.ft.com/content/9b81b9f0-e13d-4b0a-8bdf-91c97c7d61e7>

Canada must focus on global vaccine access to curb COVID-19, expert warns MPs

Canada needs to turn its COVID-19 aid attention to expanding vaccine production everywhere or the virus will continue to run wild, mutate and bring new waves of disease, says a prominent expert. Dr. Madhukar Pai, a Canada Research Chair in epidemiology and global health at McGill University, told the House of Commons foreign affairs committee he doesn't think rich countries like Canada have learned a thing from the first two years of the pandemic. "The selfishness, greed and myopia of the richest countries in the world that we have seen the naked display of in the last two years, I'm 100 per cent convinced in the next crisis, we will behave the exact same way," he said Monday.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8821587/covid-canada-covax-vaccine-access-committee/>

High-risk COVID-19 patients can now get two antiviral prescription drugs — but some are still missing out

For Australians at high risk of developing severe COVID-19, getting access to potentially lifesaving treatment recently became easier — but experts say some are still missing out. On May 1, COVID-19 antiviral drug Paxlovid — the most effective oral treatment to date — was listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), which means it can now be prescribed by a GP or nurse and dispensed at a community pharmacy. It's the second antiviral drug to be listed on the PBS for people at high risk of severe COVID-19, following the addition of molnupiravir (also known as "Lagevrio") back in March.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/health/2022-05-10/covid-19-antiviral-treatments-paxlovid-molnupiravir-now-on-pbs/101045870>

Moderna says U.S. on the hook in COVID-19 vaccine patent case

Facing claims that its COVID-19 vaccine violates the patent rights of two biopharma companies, Moderna told a Delaware federal court on Friday that the companies should have sued the U.S. government instead. Moderna said it is shielded from the lawsuit brought by Arbutus Biopharma and Genevant, thanks to its agreement to supply the vaccine to the federal government. It cited a federal law that was previously used to keep patent claims from interfering with the supply of war materials during World War I.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/moderna-says-us-hook-covid-19-vaccine-patent-case-2022-05-09/>

WHO chief says China's zero-COVID policy not 'sustainable'

The head of the World Health Organization said on Tuesday China's zero-tolerance COVID-19 policy is not sustainable given what is known of the disease, in rare public comments by the U.N. agency

on a government's handling of the virus. "We don't think that it is sustainable considering the behaviour of the virus," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a media briefing. Speaking after Tedros, WHO emergencies director Mike Ryan said the impact of a "zero-COVID" policy on human rights also needs to be taken into consideration alongside the effect on a country's economy from any COVID policy.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/who-chief-says-chinas-zero-covid-policy-not-sustainable-2022-05-10/>

Analysis: Test, test, test? Scientists question costly mass COVID checks

For many people worldwide, having cotton swabs thrust up their nose or down their throat to test for COVID-19 has become a routine and familiar annoyance. But two years into the pandemic, health officials in some countries are questioning the merits of repeated, mass testing when it comes to containing infections, particularly considering the billions it costs. Chief among them is Denmark, which championed one of the world's most prolific COVID testing regimes early on. Lawmakers are now demanding a close study of whether that policy was effective.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/test-test-test-scientists-question-costly-mass-covid-checks-2022-05-10/>

Dropping zero-COVID policy in China without safeguards risks 1.5m lives - study

China risks just over 1.5 million COVID deaths if it drops its tough zero-COVID policy without any safeguards such as ramping up vaccination and access to treatments, according to new modelling by scientists in China and the United States. The warning follows several recently published reports from senior health advisers in China who said the zero-COVID approach remains essential to defeating the pandemic and buying time for mitigating measures.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/china-medical-experts-say-zero-covid-strategy-buys-time-vaccinate-more-people-2022-05-10/>

Partisan Exits

South Africa Cuts Back Covid Vaccine Drive Amid Citizen Apathy

South Africa is scaling back its Covid-19 vaccination drive and may have to destroy doses because of a lack of demand from citizens even as the country heads into a fifth wave of infections. Take up has slowed to the point where keeping some sites running is unaffordable, said Nicholas Crisp, deputy director-general at the department of health and the person in charge of the program. Covid-19 vaccinations will need to be incorporated into South Africa's standard medical programs, which means these specific shots will be less accessible, he said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-10/south-africa-cuts-back-covid-vaccine-drive-amid-citizen-apathy>

Cancun, Tulum Struggle as Covid Sparks Mexico Travel Boom

It's 2 p.m. in the Mexican resort town of Tulum, and the beach club at the Ikal Hotel is heating up for its "ecstatic dance" session. Inside a thatch-roofed pavilion, a sweaty crowd bops to a "folktronica" track spun by a DJ whose next stop is Berlin. Down a set of wide stone steps, fit thirtysomethings smack volleyballs on a beach that smells of seaweed and sunscreen. A "treehouse" room will set you back \$800 a night, and a bottle of Crémant de Bourgogne sparkling wine runs \$110.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-10/cancun-tulum-struggle-as-covid-sparks-mexico-travel-boom>

Bill Gates Says He's Tested Positive for Covid-19

Bill Gates tweeted Tuesday afternoon that he has tested positive for Covid-19 and is experiencing mild symptoms. The Microsoft co-founder said he would adhere to the advice of medical experts by self-isolating until he is healthy again.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-10/bill-gates-says-he-s-tested-positive-for-covid-19>

Continued Lockdown

Toyota to slash production plan, suspend some domestic operation due to COVID lockdown in China

Toyota said on Tuesday it would suspend operations on 14 lines at eight domestic factories for up to six days in May due to the COVID lockdown in China. The duration will be between May 16 and May 21, the company said, expanding the number of lines and factories affected by partial suspension to a total of 20 and 12, respectively. The partial suspension would affect output of about 30,000 vehicles.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/toyota-slash-production-plan-suspend-some-domestic-operation-due-covid-lockdown-2022-05-10/>

Luxury brands navigate Shanghai's lockdown to keep VIPs pampered

Since the COVID-19 containment began on April 1 in Shanghai, closing stores and paralysing online shopping, brands have overcome attendant delivery difficulties to gift provisions to "very important clients" (VICs). Many companies have delivered provisions to employees. For the more wealthy, banks and high-end hotels have joined luxury brands in sending out goodies - a privilege not unnoticed on social media.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/luxury-brands-navigate-shanghai-lockdown-keep-vips-pampered-2022-05-10/>

Tesla stutters under tighter Shanghai lockdown; Beijing keeps hunting COVID

Tesla operated its Shanghai plant well below capacity on Tuesday, showing the problems factories face trying to ramp up output under a tightening COVID-19 lockdown, while China's capital kept up its fight with a small but stubborn outbreak. Many of the hundreds of companies reopening factories in Shanghai in recent weeks have faced challenges getting production lines back up to speed while keeping workers on-site in a "closed loop" system.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/tesla-stutters-under-shanghai-lockdown-beijing-keeps-hunting-covid-2022-05-10/>

Shanghai re-tightens on COVID, frustrating trapped residents

The city of Shanghai is doubling down on pandemic restrictions after a brief period of loosening up, frustrating residents who were hoping a more than monthlong lockdown was finally easing as the number of new cases falls in China's financial center. On Tuesday, service was suspended on the last two subway lines that were still operating, marking the first time the city's entire system has been shut down, according to The Paper, an online media outlet.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-business-health-china-beijing-fafe4d177ea2fdea43cdf9b7112513c>

Scientific Viewpoint

Covid vaccines are 'safe for pregnant women and cut stillbirth risk', study says

Covid-19 vaccines are safe for pregnant women to take and can even reduce the risk of stillbirths, according to a new study. Researchers at St George's University of London and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists collated data from studies and trials involving over 115,000 vaccinated pregnant women.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/covid-vaccines-pregnant-stillbirth-b2075668.html?fr=operanews>

Israeli study shows importance of COVID boosters, lacking in much of the world

With much of the world still lacking COVID boosters, a large new Israeli study has underscored the urgency of rolling out third vaccine doses. The peer-reviewed research shows that both the quantity and quality of antibodies skyrocket after a third dose of Pfizer's vaccine. While the study has limited relevance in Israel and other Western countries where third doses were given long ago, it has broad global significance. Worldwide, only 24 boosters have been given per 100 people — with a disproportionate number in rich countries. Across Africa, only 1.6 boosters have been given per 100

people; in India where boosters only became available last month the figure is 2; and in Russia it is 9.7, even though in all these places there are lots of people who had their initial vaccination shots long ago.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-study-shows-importance-of-covid-boosters-lacking-in-much-of-the-world/>

Moderna mounts defense in COVID-19 vaccine patent feud with Arbutus, Genevant

In its COVID-19 vaccine patent kerfuffle with Arbutus Biopharma and Roivant's Genevant Sciences, mRNA hot shot Moderna aims to shield itself with its government contract, court documents filed Friday show. Plaintiffs Arbutus and Genevant sued Moderna back in February, seeking damages tied to six patents they claim Moderna infringed with the production and sale of its COVID-19 vaccine Spikevax. In its new response, Moderna said it plans to show that Spikevax doesn't tread on any valid patents, including those held by the plaintiffs Arbutus and Genevant. But the company says "that dispute is for later." The immediate problem is that the plaintiffs should have sued the U.S. government instead, Moderna said in a filing at the U.S. District Court for Delaware. To back up its argument, Moderna cited a federal law once used to "prevent patent infringement suits from interfering with the supply of war materials during World War 1."

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/moderna-mounts-defense-covid-19-vaccine-patent-feud-arbutus-genevant>

Exploring simultaneous and sequential COVID-19 vaccine candidate

In a recent study posted to the bioRxiv* pre-print server, researchers developed novel lipid nanoparticle (LNP)-based messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccine formulations against three pathogenic coronaviruses (CoVs), including SARS, Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome-CoV (MERS-CoV), and severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220510/Exploring-simultaneous-and-sequential-COVID-19-vaccine-candidate.aspx>

Emergent Hid Evidence of Covid Vaccine Problems at Plant, Report Says

Emergent BioSolutions, a longtime government contractor hired to produce hundreds of millions of coronavirus vaccine doses, hid evidence of quality control problems from Food and Drug Administration inspectors in February 2021 — six weeks before it alerted federal officials that 15 million doses had been contaminated. The disclosure came in a report released Tuesday by House Democrats, who said that all told, nearly 400 million doses of coronavirus vaccine manufactured by Emergent had to be destroyed "due to poor quality control." Previous estimates of lost vaccine were far lower; no contaminated doses were ever released to the public. The report, issued jointly by the House Committee on Oversight and Reform and the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, is the product of an investigation that began last year, after The New York Times documented months of problems at Emergent's troubled Bayview plant in Baltimore.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/10/us/politics/emergent-fda-vaccine-covid-contaminated.html>

Emergent BioSolutions discarded ingredients for 400 million COVID-19 vaccines, probe finds

Between March 2020 and February 2022, vaccine-maker Emergent BioSolutions was forced to discard or destroy up to 400 million doses' worth of the key component of both Johnson & Johnson's and AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine due to quality-control issues, according to a congressional report published Tuesday -- a figure that reflects more than five times what was previously disclosed by the beleaguered firm. Problems included the contamination of vaccine ingredients, as well as equipment failures and employee errors, the report said. Congressional investigators probing the Maryland-based biotech company found that Emergent executives had privately raised urgent quality-control concerns even before the company began manufacturing the vaccines' key ingredient -- despite publicly expressing confidence in their ability to deliver on their multimillion-dollar government contract.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/emergent-biosolutions-discarded-ingredients-400-million-covid-19/story?id=84604285>

Spatial and temporal fluctuations in COVID-19 fatality rates in Brazilian hospitals

The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) Gamma variant of concern has spread rapidly across Brazil since late 2020, causing substantial infection and death waves. Here we used individual-level patient records after hospitalization with suspected or confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) between 20 January 2020 and 26 July 2021 to document temporary, sweeping shocks in hospital fatality rates that followed the spread of Gamma across 14 state capitals, during which typically more than half of hospitalized patients aged 70 years and older died. We show that such extensive shocks in COVID-19 in-hospital fatality rates also existed before the detection of Gamma. Using a Bayesian fatality rate model, we found that the geographic and temporal fluctuations in Brazil's COVID-19 in-hospital fatality rates were primarily associated with geographic inequities and shortages in healthcare capacity. We estimate that approximately half of the COVID-19 deaths in hospitals in the 14 cities could have been avoided without pre-pandemic geographic inequities and without pandemic healthcare pressure. Our results suggest that investments in healthcare resources, healthcare optimization and pandemic preparedness are critical to minimize population-wide mortality and morbidity caused by highly transmissible and deadly pathogens such as SARS-CoV-2, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-022-01807-1>

Evasion of COVID-19 vaccine-medicated mucosal immunity by SARS-CoV-2 Omicron

NELF was carefully collected using hydroxylated polyvinyl acetate (PVA) sponges. These sponges were inserted within the inferior turbinate and the nasal septum and left in situ for approximately 15 minutes till they swelled, then softly withdrawn and kept in a 50 ml Falcon tube with 2 ml of saline solution. Simple pressure was used to remove the fluid (nasal secretions+saline) from the sponge, which was then aliquoted and stored at -70°C for further examination. The VPLEX® SARS-CoV-2 Panel was used to assess IgG and IgA targeting the S of the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron, Delta variants, and ancestor strain. Further, the V-PLEX® Isotyping Panel 1 Human/NHP Kit was used to determine total IgG and IgA levels. Nasal secretions were diluted 10-time before being tested for S-specific and overall IgG and IgA. The V-PLEX® Sector Imager 2400 plate reader was used to collect data, which was then processed using Discovery Workbench 3.0 software. The ability of NELF antibodies to hinder the adherence of a soluble ACE2 to S of the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron, Delta variants, and the ancestral strain was tested by the multiplex V-PLEX® SARS-CoV-2 Panel 13 ACE2 Kit. Before assessing for binding attenuation, NELF was diluted 10-time. As mentioned above, the data was collected and analyzed using the V-PLEX® Sector Imager 2400 plate reader and the Discovery Workbench 3.0 software, respectively.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220510/Evasion-of-COVID-19-vaccine-medicated-mucosal-immunity-by-SARS-CoV-2-Omicron.aspx>

Covid-19: Fourth dose of mRNA vaccines is safe and boosts immunity, study finds

Fourth doses of covid-19 mRNA vaccines are safe and provide a substantial boost to antibody concentrations and cellular immunity when given more than six months after a third dose of Pfizer's vaccine, a study has found. The latest findings from the UK Cov-Boost study, published in Lancet Infectious Diseases,¹ compared antibody and T cell responses after a fourth dose of an mRNA covid-19 vaccine with immune responses after a third dose. Giving a fourth dose of Pfizer's and a half dose of Moderna's vaccine was effective at increasing antibody levels and cellular immunity up to and above the baseline and peak levels seen after third dose boosters, the results show. Although pain at the vaccination site and fatigue were the commonest side effects, there were no vaccine related serious adverse events, and the fourth doses were safe and well tolerated, the authors said. Some study participants maintained high antibody levels and cellular responses even before the fourth dose and had limited boosting from a fourth dose. Researchers said this trend was also noted

in participants with previous infection, which indicated that a fourth dose may not boost immunity if baseline levels are high.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/377/bmj.o1170>

Novavax shares slide 20% on COVID vaccine demand uncertainty

Novavax Inc's shares plunged nearly 20% in premarket trading on Tuesday due to uncertainty over global demand for the company's COVID-19 vaccine following a slow start to deliveries. The company said in September it had targeted for the delivery of at least 2 billion doses of its COVID-19 vaccine in 2022. Novavax said on Monday it delivered about 42 million doses globally in the first quarter. Serum Institute of India, the world's biggest vaccine maker, also produces the company's COVID-19 vaccine under the brand name Covovax.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-shares-slide-20-covid-vaccine-demand-uncertainty-2022-05-10/>

Texas doctor calls U.S. COVID deaths nearing 1 million 'mindblowing'

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, pulmonologist Joseph Varon offered an opinion that made headlines around the world and went viral on social media. He was fighting two wars, he said: one against COVID and one against stupidity. As the United States nears the grim milestone of 1 million coronavirus-linked deaths, Varon, chief of critical care and COVID-19 at United Memorial Medical Center in Houston, Texas said only one of those battles has been won. "I think that I have won the fight against the coronavirus. I think I've lost the fight against human stupidity," Varon told Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/texas-doctor-calls-us-covid-deaths-nearing-1-million-mindblowing-2022-05-10/>

BioNTech completes Phase II trial of COVID-19 vaccine in China

Vaccine developer BioNTech completed a Phase II clinical trial of its COVID-19 vaccine in China in January but has yet to release its results, a registry of such trials showed on Tuesday. The vaccine, based on messenger RNA (mRNA) technology, is one of the most widely used worldwide against COVID, but has yet to receive approval in China, which has vaccinated 89% of its 1.4 billion population with several domestically developed non-mRNA shots. China's leading medical experts have urged authorities to retain tough zero-COVID measures to buy time, step up vaccination rates and develop new treatments in the battle against the country's biggest outbreak.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/biontech-extends-covid-19-vaccine-trial-china-end-oct-2022-05-10/>

Rare cases of COVID returning pose questions for Pfizer pill

As more doctors prescribe Pfizer's powerful COVID-19 pill, new questions are emerging about its performance, including why a small number of patients appear to relapse after taking the drug. Paxlovid has become the go-to option against COVID-19 because of its at-home convenience and impressive results in heading off severe disease. The U.S. government has spent more than \$10 billion to purchase enough pills to treat 20 million people. But experts say there is still much to be learned about the drug, which was authorized in December for adults at high risk of severe COVID-19 based on a study in which 1,000 adults received the medication.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-2e843a971be751e8b8b25575c8bfc60a>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Pakistan reports first case of Covid-19 Omicron sub-variant BA.2.12.1

Pakistan on Monday reported the first case of COVID-19 Omicron sub-variant BA.2.12.1. This new sub-variant is causing an increasing number of cases in different countries, said the National Institute of Health (NIH) in a statement, reported ARY News. "NIH has detected the first case of Omicron sub-variant BA.2.12.1. This new sub-variant is causing increasing number of cases in

different countries," tweeted the health body. It advised people to take the best preventive measure to avoid contracting the virus, which is vaccination against it, reported ARY News.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/pakistan-reports-first-case-of-covid-19-omicron-sub-variant-ba-2-12-1-122051000052_1.html

Ontario reports 1,555 COVID-19 hospitalizations, 19 more deaths

Ontario reported 1,555 people in hospital with COVID-19 on Tuesday, as well as 19 more deaths linked to the virus. Today's reported hospitalizations mark a slight jump from Monday, when 1,213 patients were in hospital with COVID-19 — though it's important to note that not all hospitals report those figures on weekends, which would affect Monday's number. Of those hospitalized, 188 are in intensive care, with 78 requiring a ventilator to breathe. Both of those figures mark a drop from Monday, when 201 patients were in ICU, of which 87 were on ventilators.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-covid19-may-10-1.6447574>

Portugal records most new COVID-19 cases in EU

Portugal recorded the highest number of daily new COVID-19 cases per million inhabitants in the last seven days compared to other EU countries, according to the statistical website Our World in Data. With a daily average of 1,150 new cases per million inhabitants, Portugal is ahead of Germany (826), Finland (766), Luxembourg (743) and Italy (696). The daily average in the EU is 447 new daily cases, while the world average is 64.

https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/portugal-records-most-new-covid-19-cases-in-eu/

Shanghai reports 6 new COVID-related deaths for May 9

The Chinese financial and commercial centre of Shanghai reported six new COVID 19-related deaths on May 9, down from 11 a day earlier, the city's health authority said on Tuesday. Shanghai reported 2,780 new local asymptomatic coronavirus cases on May 9, down from 3,625 a day earlier. Confirmed symptomatic cases also fell to 234, from 322 the previous day. The city is battling China's biggest coronavirus outbreak, with most of the city's 25 million residents under some form of lockdown.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-reports-6-new-covid-related-deaths-may-9-2022-05-10/>

New Lockdown

COVID-19: Beijing closes down businesses as millions told to work from home - but government in China avoids calling it a lockdown

In Beijing, schools, gyms, hairdressers, parks, restaurants and bars are shut, millions have been told to work from home, but do not call it a lockdown. The Beijing government zealously avoids the term. Instead, the phrase currently in favour is jing mo, "stay silent". And the city, especially Chaoyang, Beijing's biggest district, is indeed very quiet, with much fewer cars on the streets. And because everything is shut, life is fairly boring. Getting a PCR test - you need a negative one within the last 48 hours to enter supermarkets, or your district may have been told do to mass testing - is one of the more interesting things to do.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-beijing-closes-down-businesses-as-millions-told-to-work-from-home-but-government-in-china-avoids-calling-it-a-lockdown-12609349>