

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

22nd Jun 2022

Lockdown Exit

Wrist-worn trackers can detect Covid before symptoms, study finds

Health trackers worn on the wrist could be used to spot Covid-19 days before any symptoms appear, according to researchers. Growing numbers of people worldwide use the devices to monitor changes in skin temperature, heart and breathing rates. Now a new study shows that this data could be combined with artificial intelligence (AI) to diagnose Covid-19 even before the first tell-tale signs of the disease appear. "Wearable sensor technology can enable Covid-19 detection during the presymptomatic period," the researchers concluded. The findings were published in the journal BMJ Open. The discovery could lead to health trackers being adapted with AI to detect Covid-19 early, simply by spotting basic physiological changes.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/21/wrist-worn-trackers-can-detect-covid-before-symptoms-study-finds>

COVID-19: Brits to have first access to vaccines and treatments when new science super-centre opens

US pharmaceutical firm Moderna is to establish a global clinical trials base in the UK, which it says will endorse the country as a science superpower - and future-proof it against emerging health threats.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-brits-to-have-first-access-to-vaccines-and-treatments-when-new-science-super-centre-opens-12638186>

Moderna to Build mRNA Manufacturing and Research Center in UK

Moderna Inc. plans to build a research and manufacturing center in the UK in a partnership with the government aimed at providing the country with messenger RNA vaccines against future health threats. The agreement will ensure National Health Service patients gain access to mRNA vaccines targeting a range of diseases, including potential shots that can protect against multiple Covid variants, the government said in a statement. The UK, which expects the first mRNA vaccine to be produced in 2025, declined to disclose the size of the investment or the location of the center. "The center will be able to scale up production rapidly in the event of a health emergency, significantly boosting the UK's ability to respond to future pandemics," according to the statement.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-21/moderna-to-build-mrna-manufacturing-and-research-center-in-uk>

Singapore Sees Surge in Covid Cases Linked to New Subvariants

Singapore saw a 23% week-on-week increase in Covid-19 community infections, with the surge in cases mainly driven by newer omicron subvariants. The new variants, known as BA.4 and BA.5, account for about 30% of new Covid-19 cases in the past week with the rise in related cases likely to continue, the country's Ministry of Health said in a statement Tuesday. Both strains have higher transmissibility though evidence currently shows that the severity of infections linked to these subvariants is similar to that of earlier strains of omicron. The country has not seen a significant increase in the number of severe Covid-19 cases in hospitals and cases in the intensive care units remain low, the ministry said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-22/singapore-sees-surge-in-covid-cases-linked-to-new-subvariants>

IP is no barrier to COVID vaccine access, says industry -

While proponents argue waiving IP on COVID-19 vaccines would better enable low- and middle-

income countries to inoculate their populations, the pharma industry has called the proposals “unnecessary and harmful to innovation”. Proposals to waive COVID-19 product patents have been described as “political posturing” and an “answer to a problem that does not exist”. The Quad compromise, a World Health Organization plan which would, if enacted, release members from granting or enforcing COVID-19 vaccine patents, was discussed at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) last week. But the pharmaceutical industry has said the move could “undermine innovation and industry’s ability to partner, invest at risk, and respond quickly to future pandemics”.

<https://pharmaphorum.com/market-access-2/ip-is-no-barrier-to-covid-vaccine-access-says-industry/>

New Covid vaccine which protects against Omicron variant could be in the UK by autumn

Older British people and medical workers may be given a new version of the Covid-19 vaccine this year which is tailor-made to protect against the Omicron variant. Ministers hope that the next generation of jabs made both by Pfizer and Moderna will be ready in time for autumn, when a new round of vaccines will be administered to certain groups. Over-65s, vulnerable people below that age, and frontline health and care workers are due to be invited for another vaccination to top up their immunity levels.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/covid-vaccine-new-protect-omicron-variant-uk-autumn-1696299>

Covid surges across Europe as experts warn not let guard down

Multiple European countries are experiencing a significant surge in new Covid-19 infections, as experts warn that with almost all restrictions lifted and booster take-up often low, cases could soar throughout the summer leading to more deaths. According to the Our World in Data scientific aggregator, the rolling seven-day average of confirmed new cases per million inhabitants is on the rise in countries including Portugal, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, the Netherlands and Denmark. Portugal has experienced the most dramatic wave, with infections per million remaining at a seven-day average of 2,043 on Monday – the second highest new case rate in the world, although down somewhat from an early June high of 2,878.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/21/covid-surges-europe-ba4-ba5-cases>

Biggest Risk Factor For Severe Covid-19 Other Than Age? Autoantibodies

Although only between 1% and 4% of individuals carry autoantibodies that neutralize type I IFNs, they consistently make up around 20% of Covid-19 fatalities across age categories. Other than age, presence of type I interferon autoantibodies is the strongest predictor of severe Covid-19 — more so than sex, common comorbidities, and most genetic variants. Future research should focus on how and why people develop autoantibodies against type I IFNs, and whether or not this is preventable

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/williamhaseltine/2022/06/21/biggest-risk-factor-for-severe-covid-19-other-than-age-auto-antibodies/>

PhRMA says COVID-19 vaccine patent waiver is a 'political stunt,' while advocate argues it doesn't go far enough

Now that the World Trade Organization has relaxed intellectual property restrictions on COVID-19 vaccines, the question is: Will any developing countries take advantage to produce their own shots? With wealthy nations discarding expired vaccines and poor countries turning down donations because of a lack of demand, it’s hard to imagine manufacturers in countries such as India and South Africa being motivated to produce jabs. Nonetheless, South Africa hailed the move, which allows vaccines and their ingredients to be produced without authorization from the patent holder over the next five years. The South African government also admitted however to the daunting task of gearing up for the manufacture of shots.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/wtos-patent-waiver-covid-vaccines-political-stunt-phrma-says>

UK scientists urge higher uptake of Covid boosters among elderly

Around a fifth of people aged 75 and over in England have yet to have a fourth Covid jab, data

suggests, leading to calls for a renewed push for vaccination of the vulnerable amid rising infections and hospitalisations. According to figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in the week ending 11 June an estimated one in 50 people in England had Covid – about 1.13 million people – a rise from 1 in 70 the week before. Upticks have also been seen in the rest of the UK, while hospitalisations are also rising. The resurgence is thought to be down to a rise in Omicron variants including BA.4 and BA.5, although scientists say other factors may also be at play, including a return to pre-pandemic behaviour, and waning immunity.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/21/uk-scientists-urge-higher-uptake-of-covid-boosters-among-elderly>

Exit Strategies

U.S. factories pop up to make medical gloves, spurred by pandemic

Rising from a muddy field on the outskirts of the small town of Fayette, Alabama is a bricks-and-mortar symbol of the global COVID pandemic: A new glove factory. When completed in 2024 the complex, owned by Japan's SHOWA Glove Co will be able to produce about 3 billion medical-grade nitrile gloves a year from its dozen massive new, five-stories-tall, automated assembly lines. That may seem like a lot but is only a small slice of the over 100 billion consumed in the United States annually.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/us-factories-pop-up-make-medical-gloves-spurred-by-pandemic-2022-06-21/>

'Don't delay any more': 80000 seniors urged to take booster shots with possible new Covid-19 wave

Seniors who have taken their vaccine booster shots are three times less likely to die or become severely ill from Covid-19, compared with those in the same cohort who had only two shots, said Health Minister Ong Ye Kung on Monday (June 20). Seniors with all three shots have a three in 1,000 chance of these negative outcomes, while those with two shots have a 10 in 1,000 chance of this happening. Those who remain unvaccinated are at the highest risk, with a 40 in 1,000 chance of death or critical illness requiring intensive care. "It makes a difference whether you have taken zero, one, two or three shots," Mr Ong said in a video clip uploaded on TikTok, where he urged the elderly to get their shots ahead of the next Covid-19 wave.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/seniors-with-covid-19-booster-shots-3-times-less-likely-to-die-or-become-critically-ill-ong-ye-kung>

'Should all Koreans receive 4th Covid-19 vaccine shot?'

The quarantine authorities are considering expanding the fourth Covid-19 vaccine shots to all people based on domestic quarantine situations and research results at home and abroad, officials said Tuesday. "If the immunity level falls quickly, a virus resurge can also come quickly. However, we could put off the resurge depending on the immunity level," said Lim Sook-young, a senior official at the Central Disease Control Headquarters (CDCH). "I think the strategy for vaccination is very important." In preparation for strains that may become prevalent in the second half of the year, the government will respond and prepare by focusing on how to implement vaccination, inject therapeutic agents at the right time, and develop strategies to strengthen surveillance for new variants, Lim added. The authorities confirmed a positive antibody rate of 94.9 percent through a survey but expected the immune effect to decline in the fall, making additional vaccination inevitable.

<http://www.koreabiomed.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=13952>

U.S. to begin vaccinating young children against covid

Eighteen months after a New York nurse received the first U.S. coronavirus vaccination, immunizations became available Tuesday for about 19 million children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years, the last group of Americans to be afforded that protection. Pediatricians, drugstores, hospitals and community vaccination centers began to administer first doses of two

vaccines to children: the Pfizer-BioNTech product to children ages 6 months through 4 years; and the Moderna vaccine to children 6 months through 5 years old.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/06/21/coronavirus-vaccine-under-5/?itid=ap_lennybernstein

Covid-19 vaccinations begin for US children under 5

Dr. Sarah Schaffer DeRoo described in one word how she felt after getting her 7-month-old son vaccinated against Covid-19: thrilled. Her active baby boy sat in her lap at a vaccine clinic hosted by Children's National Hospital in Washington, DC, while receiving his first dose of Covid-19 vaccine. The shot was administered in his thigh. He cried for a few seconds but then his attention turned toward a golden retriever that was on site as a comfort dog provided by the hospital. "I'm feeling really thrilled that we have this opportunity," DeRoo, a pediatrician at Children's National Hospital in Washington, DC, told CNN's Suzanne Malveaux on Tuesday about her son's vaccination.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/21/health/covid-vaccines-under-5-begin/index.html>

'It always wins': North Korea may declare COVID-19 victory

It's only been a month since North Korea acknowledged having an COVID-19 outbreak, after steadfastly denying any cases for more than two years. But already it may be preparing to declare victory. According to state media, North Korea has avoided the mass deaths many expected in a nation with one of the world's worst health care systems, little or no access to vaccines, and what outsiders see as a long record of ignoring the suffering of its people. Daily updates from official media make it appear inevitable that the nation will completely defeat a virus that has killed more than 6 million people around the world. According to the official tally, cases are plummeting, and, while 18% of the nation of 26 million people reportedly have had symptoms that outsiders strongly suspect were from COVID=19, less than 100 have died.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/north-korea-ap-kim-jong-un-south-korea-covid-b2105554.html>

U.S. COVID vaccine rollout for young children will pick up pace

The United States has begun distributing COVID vaccines for children as young as six months around the country, and availability of the shots will improve in the coming days, according to White House COVID-19 response coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha. U.S. regulators authorized Moderna Inc's (MRNA.O) two-dose vaccine for children aged six months to five years and the Pfizer (PFE.N)-BioNTech (22UAY.DE) three-shot regimen for children aged six months to four years late last week.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-covid-vaccine-rollout-young-children-will-pick-up-pace-2022-06-21/>

Partisan Exits

SA parents with children under care of Department for Child Protection lose bids to prevent them getting COVID-19 vaccine

A man has lost an appeal to the Supreme Court to prevent his daughter being vaccinated by the Department for Child Protection. He also lost a separate application for an injunction against the vaccine being administered earlier this year. A mother has also lost a bid to prevent her child in state care being vaccinated.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-21/dcp-parents-lose-cases-against-covid19-vaccine/101170010>

Twitter Accounts Hyped Company Seeking Covid Vaccine Trials

A network of Twitter accounts pushed messages to boost the share price of a biotech company as it sought approval to run a clinical trial of its Covid-19 vaccine, according to research provided to Bloomberg News. The tweets promoted stock for Ocugen Inc., which is based in Malvern, Pennsylvania, at rates well above market value, according to research by Alethea Group, a startup that tracks disinformation. The company's share price nearly doubled in a little more than a week. The findings suggest a coordinated social media effort to sway interest in an otherwise little known

medical technology company, according to Lisa Kaplan, Alethea Group's founder and chief executive officer.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-21/twitter-accounts-hyped-company-seeking-covid-vaccine-trials>

COVID-19: Trainee police officer drew red lines on lateral flow test in bid to stay home from work

A trainee police officer tried to fake having COVID-19 by drawing red lines on a lateral flow test, a tribunal has heard. In a bid to stay home from work, Ahmed Anwari told his training officer last December that he could not come in because of a positive lateral flow test result. But his ruse was uncovered when he was asked to send a photograph of the result as proof and it became "clear that the test had been manually altered with drawn red lines", his disciplinary was told. The Lancashire Constabulary officer was then invited to take a coronavirus test on a Microsoft Teams meeting in which he again falsely claimed the result was positive.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-trainee-police-officer-drew-red-lines-on-lateral-flow-test-in-bid-to-stay-home-from-work-12637462>

COVID mistakes can't be repeated this winter, says German hotel industry

German hotels are still limping towards recovery after the pandemic, and lawmakers need to prepare now to be ready for the coming winter, said the head of the DEHOGA hospitality body. Despite pent-up demand, the industry is facing a possible third year of losses in 2022, with 57% of businesses reporting lower sales last month compared with pre-crisis May 2019, said DEHOGA president Guido Zoellick at a news conference on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/covid-mistakes-cant-be-repeated-this-winter-says-german-hotel-industry-2022-06-21/>

Scientific Viewpoint

COVID and Kidney Pain: How COVID-19 Can Affect Kidneys

COVID-19 can cause a variety of different symptoms. However, when you think of COVID-19 symptoms, kidney pain probably isn't one of them. While it's possible for COVID-19 to cause kidney damage, this condition isn't typically associated with kidney pain. Keep reading to discover more about what we know so far about COVID-19 and the kidneys.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/covid-and-kidney-pain>

U.S. COVID vaccines start to roll out for young children

The United States has begun distributing COVID vaccines for children as young as six months around the country, and availability of the shots will improve in the coming days, according to White House COVID-19 response coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha. U.S. regulators authorized Moderna Inc's two-dose vaccine for children aged six months to five years and the Pfizer-BioNTech three-shot regimen for children aged six months to four years late last week.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-covid-vaccine-rollout-young-children-will-pick-up-pace-2022-06-21/>

After maternal COVID vaccination, infants have persistent anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies at 3 months

A recent article published in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases assessed the kinetics of anti-severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) antibodies derived from mothers among infants in association with the timing of prenatal SARS-CoV-2 vaccination.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220621/After-maternal-COVID-vaccination-infants-have-persistent-anti-SARS-CoV-2-antibodies-at-3-months.aspx>

Afrigen, Univercells Team Up to Develop African Covid Vaccine

South African biotech company Afrigen Biologics will work with a Belgian partner to develop the first

African-owned Covid-19 shot as part of a broader effort to reduce the continent's reliance on other regions for vaccines. Afrigen and the Univercells Group aim to build on expertise developed through the World Health Organization's messenger RNA vaccine hub, the companies said in a statement Tuesday. Afrigen, based in Cape Town, said it's working to facilitate the production of mRNA vaccines at more than 15 manufacturing sites in low- and middle-income nations across the world. Africa, which imports about 99% of all the shots it needs, was left far behind wealthier nations in securing shots during the pandemic with manufacturing concentrated in just a handful of countries. The partners said they'll seek to develop vaccines that are cheaper to produce and easier to store and distribute in rural and remote locations where few people have been vaccinated.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-21/biotech-companies-team-up-to-develop-african-covid-vaccine>

Ainos COVID-19 Antigen Self-Test Receives Approval for Sale in Taiwan

Ainos, Inc. a diversified medtech company focused on the development of novel point-of-care testing, low-dose interferon therapeutics, and synthetic RNA-driven preventative medicine, today announced that the Company has begun marketing the Ainos SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Self-Test ("COVID-19 Antigen Self-Test Kit" or "the Test") under an Emergency Use Authorization ("EUA") issued by the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration ("TFDA") on June 13, 2022 to Taiwan Carbon Nano Technology Corporation ("TCNT"), the manufacturer and product co-developer of the Test in conjunction with Ainos. Ainos is the exclusive master sales and marketing agent for the COVID-19 Antigen Self-Test Kit.

<https://apnews.com/press-release/accesswire/covid-technology-politics-health-8f0fa5a2c4133082ee47b4c8b77cd6b9>

RMI's COVID-19 vaccine partnership with Acacium proves a success

The joint aim of the companies was to provide vaccines to vulnerable communities Remote Medical International (RMI) - which specialises in protecting the health of workers in diverse areas across the world - partnered with healthcare solutions company Acacium Group to provide vaccinations in areas of notable need during 2021-22. Their joint aim was to deliver mobile vaccination and COVID-19 test processing units throughout the Midlands and South East of the UK during the pandemic. The companies delivered mobile-testing with a results turnaround time of less than three hours and, throughout the course of their deployment, processed in the excess of 200,000 tests

https://www.pharmatimes.com/news/rmis_covid-19_vaccine_partnership_with_acacium_proves_a_success_1450216

Paxlovid of no benefit to low risk patients with COVID-19

Paxlovid is of no benefit to patients at a low risk of either being hospitalised or death after infection with COVID-19. According to the results of a press release from the manufacturer, Pfizer, paxlovid does not benefit patients who are either unvaccinated or vaccinated and who are deemed not at a high risk of severe complications such as hospitalisation or death if infected with COVID-19. Paxlovid is a protease inhibitor antiviral therapy against COVID-19 and was developed to be taken orally, at the first sign of infection or at first awareness of an exposure. The early use of the drug could therefore help patients avoid severe illness and which might lead to hospitalisation or death, or avoid disease development following contact with an infected individual.

<https://hospitalhealthcare.com/covid-19/paxlovid-of-no-benefit-to-non-high-risk-patients/>

Some Omicron sub-variants escaping antibodies from Sinopharm shot, Chinese study says

A small Chinese study detailed in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal showed neutralising antibodies against some Omicron sub-variants were largely undetectable after two doses of a Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine, with a booster shot only partly restoring them. The study comes as China, which has approved only locally developed COVID shots including the Sinopharm vaccine, strives to improve vaccination rates, maintaining a "dynamic zero COVID" policy aimed at eradicate all outbreaks while many countries have adopted an approach of learning to live with the virus

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/some-omicron-sub-variants-escaping-antibodies-sinop-harm-shot-chinese-study-2022-06-21/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Indonesia Tightens Screening at Large Events as Covid Cases Rise

Indonesia is tightening guidelines around organizing large-scale events to minimize the spread of Covid-19 virus as new cases increased to a two-month high. Participants should be fully vaccinated in order to attend events involving 1,000 people or more, while unvaccinated children are discouraged from joining, Covid-19 Task Force Spokesman Wiku Adisasmito said in a briefing Tuesday. The new directive takes effect immediately, and a regulation detailing all the measures will be issued shortly. "The rise in infections is unavoidable as people's mobility increases, regardless of the variants," Adisasmito said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-21/indonesia-tightens-screening-at-large-events-as-covid-cases-rise>

FACTBOX-Worldwide coronavirus cases cross 537.65 million, death toll at 6,731,188

Infections have been reported in more than 210 countries and territories since the first cases were identified in Mainland China in December 2019. The following table lists the top 50 countries by the number of reported cases. A complete list is available with the above links.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-casualties/factbox-worldwide-coronavirus-cases-cross-537-65-million-death-toll-at-6731188-idUSKBN2O20QQ>

Covid-19 patients in hospital rise by 24%

The number of patients in English hospitals with Covid-19 has increased 24 per cent in a week, figures reveal.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/covid-19-patients-in-hospital-rise-by-24-dvfr0v7t6>

Covid-19: 5630 new community cases, 17 further deaths reported on Tuesday

The Ministry of Health is reporting 5630 new community cases of Covid-19 on Tuesday, and 17 further deaths in people who had the virus. Of the 17 deaths reported today, one was a child under the age of ten, the Ministry of Health said in a statement. There are 362 people in hospital with Covid-19, four of whom are in an intensive care or a high dependency care unit, the Ministry said.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/300618260/covid19-5630-new-community-cases-17-further-deaths-reported-on-tuesday>

Covid hospitalisations in England up 24 per cent from last week

Coronavirus hospitalisations in England have surged by almost 25 per cent in the last week, as cases spread like wildfire once more across the globe. New figures released by the NHS this week highlight 5,726 beds occupied by Covid patients as of 20 June, up from 4,602 on the previous Monday. The spike in cases represents a 24 per cent increase in England, as the virus once more rears its head around the world. There was also a major spike in cases following the Platinum Jubilee half term break, and as the weather heats up, and Brits enjoy more socialising.

<https://www.cityam.com/covid-hospitalisations-in-england-up-24-per-cent-from-last-week/>

UK Covid cases will exceed 200,000 a day by weekend as infections surge beyond predicted levels, expert says

Daily Covid infections will exceed 200,000 by the weekend – for the first time since late April – and carry on rising for another fortnight, a leading forecaster predicts. Daily symptomatic cases in the UK have jumped by 70 per cent this month to 193,767, according to the latest figures from the ZOE Covid study app. And they will “very soon” cross the 200,000 mark, according to Tim Spector, the King's College London professor who runs the app.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/science/uk-covid-rates-weekend-cases-rise-omicron-zoe-app-1697797>

New Lockdown

Macau hotel locked down after COVID case, 700 people to be quarantined-media

A hotel and casino resort in the world's biggest gambling hub of Macau was locked down by authorities with 700 people inside on Tuesday due to a coronavirus infection outbreak on the property, local broadcaster TDM reported. The lockdown comes as the Chinese special administrative region carries out a two-day mass testing of its more than 600,000 population after dozens of locally transmitted coronavirus cases were discovered over the weekend.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/macau-hotel-locked-down-after-covid-case-700-people-be-quarantined-media-2022-06-21/>