

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 14th Jul 2022

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **UK Covid Death Toll Passes 200,000 With Omicron Subvariants Sparking New Cases**

Britain's Covid death toll topped 200,000 and could rise further as a new wave of infections driven by highly-contagious omicron subvariants sweeps across Europe. Just over 3% of all deaths last week were linked to Covid-19, pushing the total number of deaths to 200,247 up to July 1, according to the Office for National Statistics. The UK has been hit hard by the pandemic, with one of the highest fatality rates globally and concern rising again as omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 drive a new wave of cases.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-13/britain-s-covid-death-toll-passes-200-000-as-new-cases-soar>

#### **UK Government Seeks to Block Disclosures to the Covid Inquiry**

The UK government is trying to block disclosures to the inquiry investigating its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to people with knowledge of the discussions. Officials have asked the government's top lawyer, Sir James Eadie QC, to assess how much information the administration has to provide to the inquiry about its policy discussions during the pandemic, the people said. Eadie, who is responsible for advising the government on issues of the highest national importance, has advised the Cabinet to limit the scope of information provided to the inquiry and warned ministers they are likely to face vast claims for damages from families of Covid victims.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-13/uk-government-seeks-to-block-disclosures-to-the-covid-inquiry>

#### **U.S. FDA authorizes Novavax COVID vaccine for adults**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized the use of Novavax Inc's COVID-19 vaccine on Wednesday, clearing the way for a shot whose more traditional technology has raised hopes of wider acceptance among vaccine skeptics. Shares of Novavax rose 1.3% to \$70.89 after its two-dose vaccine became the fourth COVID shot to be authorized for use in adults in the United States. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) still needs to sign off on the use of the vaccine before it can be made available to people.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-fda-authorizes-novavax-covid-vaccine-adults-2022-07-13/>

#### **Fauci says that Americans should not allow BA.5 COVID-19 variant to 'disrupt our lives'**

Dr Anthony Fauci says that the BA.5 variant should not disrupt the lives of Americans if they get vaccinated, boosted, and use a mask. He also recommends that Americans once again mask-up in indoor crowded places, but does not see mandates coming soon. The BA.5 variant now makes up 65% of active cases in the U.S., making it the dominant strain only weeks after first appearing on CDC surveillance reports. The new strain is likely responsible for recent upticks in Covid cases in deaths - with daily infections jumping 15% and deaths by 50% over the past week

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-11009933/Fauci-says-Americans-not-allow-BA-5-COVID-19-variant-disrupt-lives.html>

#### **Netherlands detects 'Centaurus' Covid subvariant**

The BA.2.75 subvariant, nicknamed 'Centaurus', first emerged in India in May. It has since spread to around 10 countries, including the US, UK and Germany. Now, it 'has also now been identified in the Netherlands,' the Dutch National Institute of Public Health said in a statement on Wednesday. The substrain appears to be outcompeting all other variants in India,. Experts say there is no evidence it causes more serious disease than Omicron

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11011209/Netherlands-detects-Centaurus-Covid-subvariant.html>

### **NHS awarded George Cross for efforts shown during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The NHS has been awarded the George Cross by Her Majesty The Queen in recognition of the dedicated service of healthcare workers that includes their 'courage, compassion and dedication' during the COVID-19 pandemic. The George Cross, which is given in recognition of 'acts of the greatest heroism or of the most courage in circumstances of extreme danger', has only been bestowed to a collective group of people twice before, most recently in 1999. May Parsons, the nurse who administered the first COVID-19 vaccination in the world, joined NHS chief executive Amanda Pritchard to attend the presentation on 12 July - exactly one week after the NHS's birthday. The pair were joined by Pritchard's counterparts, Caroline Lamb from NHS Scotland and Judith Paget from NHS Wales, along with Peter May, permanent secretary at the Department of Health and chief executive of Health and Social Care Northern Ireland.

[https://www.pmlive.com/pharma\\_news/nhs\\_awarded\\_george\\_cross\\_for\\_efforts\\_shown\\_during\\_the\\_covid-19\\_pandemic\\_1452197](https://www.pmlive.com/pharma_news/nhs_awarded_george_cross_for_efforts_shown_during_the_covid-19_pandemic_1452197)

### **Government braces to fund 'substantial' number of Covid-19 vaccine liabilities**

The government is bracing to fund a "substantial" number of liabilities relating to negative impacts from Covid-19 jabs, having spent more than £34bn on the vaccine rollout so far. The Department of Health and Social Care told vaccine manufacturers at the start of the programme that it would cover future claims against producers for any adverse effects of their vaccines which "may add to the cost of the programme in the long term", according to a Public Account Committee report today. As of the beginning of the month, 1,984 vaccine-related damages claims have been received by the NHS Business Services Authority, which describes itself as an arm's length body of the Department of Health and Social Care, managing over £35bn of NHS spend annually,

<https://www.cityam.com/government-braces-to-fund-substantial-number-of-covid-19-vaccine-liabilities/>

### **WHO says COVID-19 remains a global health emergency**

The World Health Organization said on Tuesday that COVID-19 remains a global emergency, nearly 2-1/2 years after it was first declared. The Emergency Committee, made up of independent experts, said in a statement that rising cases, ongoing viral evolution and pressure on health services in a number of countries meant that the situation was still an emergency. Cases reported to WHO had risen by 30% in the last fortnight, although increased population immunity, largely from vaccines, had seen a "decoupling" of cases from hospitalisations and deaths, the committee's statement said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/who-says-covid-19-remains-global-health-emergency-2022-07-12/>

### **Astra's Covid Vaccine Saved Over Six Million Lives in First Year**

Covid vaccines from AstraZeneca Plc and Pfizer Inc. had the biggest impact in preventing deaths in the first year of the global rollout, saving an estimated 12 million lives. That's the upshot of a new analysis from Airfinity Ltd., a London-based data firm. The AstraZeneca vaccine developed with the University of Oxford saved 6.3 million lives, Airfinity said Wednesday. The estimate for the Pfizer-BioNTech SE shot was 5.9 million. The companies swiftly scaled up production and delivered doses before other manufacturers, according to the report. The findings build on a study last month estimating that vaccines saved about 20 million lives in the first year of the campaign, more than half of them in wealthier countries.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-13/astra-s-covid-vaccine-saved-over-six-million-lives-in-first-year>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Free Covid booster doses for 18-59 age group from July 15 at govt centres**

People in the 18-59 age group can get free precaution doses of the Covid vaccine at government vaccination centres under a 75-day special drive likely to begin from July 15, the government said on

Wednesday. The drive, aimed at boosting the administration of Covid precaution doses, will be held as part of the government's Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, it said. Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur told reporters the Union Cabinet has approved the proposal to mark the 75th anniversary of India's Independence.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/free-covid-booster-doses-for-18-59-age-group-from-july-15-at-govt-centres-122071300671\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/free-covid-booster-doses-for-18-59-age-group-from-july-15-at-govt-centres-122071300671_1.html)

### **Get COVID-19 booster now if eligible, ECDC boss urges**

Countries should start boosting older people a second time with COVID-19 shots, the head of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said on Wednesday, stressing that waiting for new variant vaccines in the fall could be too late. "The risk for people is now," said Andrea Ammon, director of the ECDC, referencing the sharp rise in COVID-19 cases in the European Union driven by the Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 strains. "If I get offered this vaccine now, I will take it now," she told members of the European Parliament's special committee on COVID-19. She underlined that the existing vaccines continue to offer protection against severe disease and death against these variants.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/andrea-ammon-coronavirus-europe-covid-19-booster-now-if-eligible-ecdc-boss-urges/>

### **S. Korea expands booster shots as COVID-19 cases creep up**

Health officials in South Korea are expanding their booster shot programme to adults 50 and over as COVID-19 cases creep up again across the country.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/korea-expands-booster-shots-covid-19-cases-creep-86723293>

### **Covid-19: Free masks and RATs but traffic light setting expected to stay orange**

The Government is expected to make it easier to get free masks and rapid antigen tests (RATs), with concerns many cases of Covid-19 are going untested and unreported. Covid-19 Response Minister Dr Ayesha Verrall is set to announce an update to the Government's Covid-19 plan and guidelines on Thursday afternoon. Stuff understands Verrall will outline plans for the Government to provide free masks and Covid-19 tests. Verrall had already outlined plans to deliver 50 free masks to every school child in years 4-7.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/300636560/covid19-free-masks-and-rats-but-traffic-light-setting-expected-to-stay-orange>

### **New format of digital COVID-19 certificate to be available Thursday**

Taiwan will start offering on Thursday a new format of its digital COVID-19 vaccination certificate, which can be used in countries including the United States, Canada, Japan, and Australia, the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) said Wednesday. The new format follows the SMART Health Cards framework launched by the Vaccination Credential Initiative (VCI), which Taiwan joined on May 20, CECC official Pang Yi-ming said at a press briefing. According to the VCI website, SMART Health Cards are issued by the governments of 24 U.S. states and territories, Canada, Japan, and Sydney, Australia, among others.

<https://focustaiwan.tw/society/202207130014>

### **S. Korea expands booster shots as COVID-19 cases creep up**

Health officials in South Korea are expanding booster shots to adults 50 and over as COVID-19 cases creep up again across the country. The 40,226 new cases reported Wednesday marked the country's highest daily jump in more than two months, although hospitalizations and deaths remain stable. Baek Gyeongran, South Korea's top infectious disease expert, attributed the rising case counts to people's waning immunities following vaccinations and prior infections and a major removal of social distancing measures since April as the nation wiggled out of an omicron surge. Health workers are also witnessing a "rapid spread" of BA.5, which is seen as the most transmissible variant of omicron yet, Baek said.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-covid-seoul-b2121930.html>

### **Australia athletes barred from other Commonwealth Games venues over COVID risk**

Australian athletes will be banned from supporting their team mates at other Commonwealth Games events at Birmingham due to the risk of COVID-19 transmission, team chef de mission Petria Thomas said. They will also have to wear face masks when not in their rooms or exercising at the July 28 - Aug. 8 Games as part of team health protocols. "Our primary focus is that we can get our athletes to the starting line and they are performance ready," Thomas told News Corp media on Wednesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/australia-athletes-barred-other-commonwealth-games-venues-over-covid-risk-2022-07-13/>

### **Experts rue simple steps not taken before latest COVID surge**

With new omicron variants again driving COVID-19 hospital admissions and deaths higher in recent weeks, states and cities are rethinking their responses and the White House is stepping up efforts to alert the public. Some experts said the warnings are too little, too late. The highly transmissible BA.5 variant now accounts for 65% of cases with its cousin BA.4 contributing another 16%. The variants have shown a remarkable ability to get around the protection offered by infection and vaccination. "It's well past the time when the warning could have been put out there," said Dr. Eric Topol, head of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, who has called BA.5 "the worst variant yet."

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-government-and-politics-56da29e416cd40d1c29f99e929c14312>

### **Amid COVID worries, fist bumps for Biden — with exceptions**

The White House said President Joe Biden would try to limit physical contact during his Middle East trip because of concern about rising COVID-19 cases — but the president swiftly reverted to his old-school, back-slapping ways after landing in Israel on Wednesday. He doled out a few fist bumps after stepping off the plane but then threw an arm around Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid and shook hands with former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The issue of contact is arising amid intense speculation about Biden's upcoming meeting with leaders in Saudi Arabia and whether he will shake hands with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who U.S. intelligence officials said probably sanctioned the killing of a critic. The ostensible COVID-19 rule could give Biden cover to avoid a potentially problematic image with the crown prince.

<https://apnews.com/article/biden-covid-health-israel-middle-east-bf3bb2dd71f4b83f261336b8f68cd604>

### **White House officials push boosters as BA.5 surge intensifies**

At a briefing today, Ashish Jha, MD, the White House committee's coordinator, said officials have been closely tracking the rapidly evolving BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants, which are the most transmissible forms of Omicron and can evade protection from earlier infection and vaccines. He and his team, however, emphasized that the vaccination can still protect against severe outcomes. Jha said if people haven't gotten a vaccine dose in 2022, it's time to get one now. "It could save your life," he said. He acknowledged that some people may be holding off on getting boosted, anticipating a rise in COVID activity in the fall, while others might be waiting for an Omicron-specific booster. Jha said getting boosted now won't preclude people from getting another dose in the fall or winter when the Omicron-specific version is expected to be available. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH, said proportions of BA.4 and BA.5 are increasing, especially, with the two related subvariants making up about 81% of circulating viruses, up significantly from about 70% last week

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/07/white-house-officials-push-boosters-ba5-surge-intensifies>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Three million people in England yet to get a Covid jab**

Three million people remain unvaccinated against Covid as MPs call for renewed push on vaccine roll

out. The Public Accounts Committee warned on Wednesday many of the unvaccinated individuals are “young city-dwellers” with just five cities accounting for a quarter of those not jabbed. MPs warned people remain at risk of death and hospitalisation, calling for the NHS and public health authorities to “redouble” efforts on vaccinations.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/millions-unvaccinated-covid-jab-b2122105.html>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **FDA Authorizes Novavax’s Covid-19 Vaccine**

U.S. health regulators have authorized the use of Novavax Inc.’s Covid-19 vaccine, providing a new option that works differently than the two leading vaccines, but at a time when overall demand for vaccines and boosters is low. The Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday that adults 18 years and older may receive Novavax’s vaccine. The Novavax vaccine, given as two doses three weeks apart, could become available soon if the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention signs off in the coming days. The authorization gives adults “another option that meets the FDA’s rigorous standards for safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality needed to support emergency-use authorization,” FDA Commissioner Robert M. Califf said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/fda-authorizes-novavaxs-covid-19-vaccine-11657743595>

### **Expert review shows AstraZeneca’s COVID-19 vaccine is ‘equally effective’ as mRNA vaccines**

AstraZeneca’s (AZ) COVID-19 vaccine, Vaxzevria, and the available mRNA COVID-19 vaccines provide ‘equally effective’ protection against hospitalisation and death, an expert review of data from 79 real-world studies has revealed. Infectious disease experts from Asia reviewed data from the VIEW-hub database on vaccine use and impact, developed by John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the International Vaccine Access Center. The findings from the study were reported by Expert Review of Vaccines. The findings shows that Vaxzevria and the BNT162b2 and mRNA-1273 mRNA COVID-19 vaccines offer an ‘equivalent degree’ of protection against hospitalisation (91-93%) and death (91-93%) following two doses, regardless of age.

[https://www.pmlive.com/pharma\\_news/expert\\_review\\_shows\\_astrazenecas\\_covid-19\\_vaccine\\_is\\_equally\\_effective\\_as\\_mrna\\_vaccines\\_1452198](https://www.pmlive.com/pharma_news/expert_review_shows_astrazenecas_covid-19_vaccine_is_equally_effective_as_mrna_vaccines_1452198)

### **Covid vaccine 66 per cent less effective at preventing infection than it was just two months ago, expert says**

Covid cases have hit record levels in the UK, yet the vaccine is less effective at preventing infection than at any time since it was introduced, according to a leading virus modeller. The degree of protection a jab gives against getting a Covid infection has tumbled from about 30 per cent two months ago to about 10 per cent today, according to Professor Karl Friston, of University College London. This is largely because the new dominant Omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, are much better at evading immunity built up by vaccinations than their predecessor, BA.2, he says.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/science/covid-vaccine-less-effective-preventing-infection-1739071>

### **How long after catching Covid can you become reinfected and when should you get your booster?**

People may become reinfected with Covid-19 as early as 28 days after recovering from the virus, according to the latest advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee. Previously, reinfection was defined as a case occurring more than 12 weeks after an initial infection. The committee said the Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 “are associated with increased immune escape and we are likely to see rates of reinfection rise among those who have previously been infected with an earlier Covid-19 variant, and those who are up to date with their vaccinations”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/13/how-long-after-catching-covid-can-you-become-reinfected-and-when-should-you-get-your-booster>

## **Covid-19: Researchers face wait for patient level data from Pfizer and Moderna vaccine trials**

Independent researchers looking to obtain patient level data from the Pfizer and Moderna covid-19 vaccine trials may have to wait longer. In status reports filed recently with the US federal trials registry (clinicaltrials.gov) between February and May, both companies extended the dates by which the trials will be completed, Pfizer by nine months, from 15 May 2023 to 8 February 2024. Moderna's expected completion date is delayed from 27 October to 29 December 2022. Pfizer indicated in its trial protocol that individual participant data would be made available two years after study completion.<sup>1</sup> Now that the date has been pushed back, Pfizer will entertain and review requests "when the study is complete and all planned analyses have been performed," said the company's senior director of global media relations, Jerica Pitts. Luis Carlos Saiz, a researcher at the Innovation and Organisation Unit of the Navarre Regional Health Service, Spain, said that access to raw patient data was important for researchers because "it is key to build trust in health policies and to protect citizens from potential vested interests."

<https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o1731>

## **Pfizer, Moderna COVID-19 vaccines infringe new Alnylam patent, lawsuits say**

Alnylam Pharmaceuticals Inc escalated its patent fight with Pfizer Inc and Moderna Inc over their COVID-19 vaccines on Tuesday, accusing the companies in Delaware federal court of infringing a newly obtained patent. The lawsuits said the vaccines' messenger-RNA delivery systems violate an Alnylam patent on lipid nanoparticle (LNP) technology for delivering genetic material into human cells. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office issued the patent the same day Alnylam filed the complaints.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/pfizer-moderna-covid-19-vaccines-infringe-new-alnylam-patent-lawsuits-say-2022-07-12/>

## **Adapted, two-strain vaccines to lift COVID protection - EU official**

Adapted versions of established mRNA COVID-19 vaccines that address two variants in one shot will soon offer people better protection than vaccines that are now available, a European health official said on Wednesday. Moderna and the BioNTech-Pfizer alliance are working on vaccines based on a combination of the original Wuhan virus and an Omicron subvariant. Referred to as bivalent shots, these are planned for use in the autumn vaccination campaign.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/adapted-two-strain-vaccines-lift-covid-protection-eu-official-2022-07-13/>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **WHO warns coronavirus 'running freely' as BA.4, BA.5 subvariants drive infections**

"The virus is running freely," the World Health Organization warns as the latest omicron offshoots drive up coronavirus infections around the world. Many countries have lifted restrictions and reduced coronavirus tracking as they grapple with pandemic fatigue. But "new waves of the virus demonstrate again that covid-19 is nowhere near over," according to WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. He appealed to governments Tuesday to pour efforts back into testing and improving vaccine deployment and said rising cases were straining medical systems already stretched by the pandemic.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/07/13/covid-pandemic-wave-who-ba5-variants/>

### **'Centaurus': virologists express concern at new Covid subvariant**

Virologists have voiced concerns about the emergence of another fast-spreading Omicron variant, which is rapidly gaining ground in India and has already arrived in the UK. The warning came as MPs called for redoubled efforts to persuade the nearly 3 million adults in England who have not yet received a single dose of Covid vaccine, to take up the offer of vaccination. The BA.2.75 variant -

nicknamed “Centaurus” – was first detected in India in early May. Cases in the UK have since risen steeply – and apparently faster than those of the extremely transmissible BA.5 variant, which is also present in India, and is rapidly displacing the previously dominant BA.2 variant in many countries.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/12/centaurus-virologists-express-concern-at-new-covid-subvariant-omicron>

### **Premier Mark McGowan labels WA's rising number of COVID-19 cases in hospital 'concerning'**

During Western Australia's most significant wave of COVID infections almost two months ago, there was a peak of more than 90,000 active cases recorded in the state. Around that time, on May 18, there were 327 people with COVID in hospital – the state's highest figure yet – and medical groups warned of a "system collapse" if that trajectory continued.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-13/mark-mcgowan-concerned-by-rising-number-covid-cases-in-hospital/101234672>

### **Japan's new COVID-19 cases top 90000, 1st time in 5 months**

Japan's new COVID-19 cases topped 90,000 for the first time since Feb. 17 on Wednesday, official data showed, as public health experts said the highly transmissible BA.5 subvariant of Omicron is fueling a seventh wave of infections. The 94,493 cases come close to the peak number of cases of some 104,000 that the country saw in February. The Tokyo metropolitan government reported 16,878 coronavirus cases, surpassing the 10,000 mark for a second straight day and more than doubling from the level a week earlier. Osaka Prefecture also logged 10,452 cases, topping 10,000 for the first time since Feb. 26. Health minister Shigeyuki Goto said in a meeting of a panel of experts that the government forecasts new infections will continue to increase in many areas of the country.

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/07/4f54af2fe118-urgent-japans-new-covid-19-cases-top-90000-1st-time-since-feb-17.html>

### **Infectious disease expert says N.S. in midst of seventh COVID-19 wave**

An infectious disease expert says Nova Scotia is now in the midst of its seventh wave of COVID-19. Tara Moriarty, an infectious diseases researcher at the University of Toronto, says eased restrictions and Omicron's increased spread has caused an increase in hospitalizations. The province's current situation marks a turnaround from the beginning of the pandemic when Nova Scotia, as a part of the Atlantic Bubble, was considered an example of how to best deal with the public health crisis. Moriarty talked to reporter Danielle Edwards about how events are changing in the province during this emerging wave of the disease.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-seventh-wave-covid-response-1.6518456>

### **Deaths involving COVID in UK pass 200,000, ONS says**

The UK has surpassed 200,000 deaths involving coronavirus, according to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics. Up to the start of July, a total of 200,247 COVID deaths were registered, the ONS said on Wednesday. The 200,000 milestone was reached on 25 June, but not revealed until today due to a delay in registration. In the week ending 1 July, 11,828 deaths were registered nationwide, with 412 (3.48%) involving coronavirus. COVID deaths were up 65 on the previous week.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uk-deaths-pass-200-000-ons-says-12651128>

### **Calls for return of Covid controls after UK death toll passes 200,000**

Doctors and people bereaved by Covid have described the 200,000th death from the virus in the UK as a “tragic milestone” and called for the return of infection control measures, including mask wearing and better sick pay amid concern about rising cases and new variants. Prof Philip Banfield, council chair of the British Medical Association, said: “This terrible loss of life must serve as an important reminder that Covid-19 has not gone away and remains a serious threat to public health.”

Care home residents' representatives said reaching the landmark death toll was "heartbreaking".

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/13/calls-for-more-covid-control-measures-after-uk-death-toll-passes-200000>

### **World Health Organization warns COVID-19 is 'running freely' and global deaths are unacceptably high**

The head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) has urged governments across the world to deploy measures like masking and improved ventilation amid unacceptably high numbers of deaths. While many governments of wealthier countries have all but abandoned coronavirus restrictions following successful vaccine rollouts, the organisation's director-general emphasised that the pandemic is "nowhere near over". Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said sub-variants of Omicron continue to drive new waves of cases, hospitalisations and deaths around the world.

<https://news.sky.com/story/world-health-organization-warns-covid-19-is-running-freely-and-global-deaths-are-unacceptably-high-12650851>

### **South Korea's PM warns of COVID surge as cases hit two-month high**

Daily COVID-19 infections in South Korea have jumped above 40,000 for the first time in two months, with the government warning of a potential five-fold surge in the coming months. "Daily infections could soar to as many as 200,000 between mid-August and late September," Prime Minister Han Duck-soo told a government COVID response meeting, citing the view of the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) and experts.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-korea-pm-warns-big-covid-surge-cases-hit-two-month-high-2022-07-13/>

### **U.S. CDC director: BA.5 estimated to represent 65% of circulating COVID-19 variants**

The fast-spreading BA.5 sub-lineage of Omicron is estimated to make up 65% of the coronavirus variants in the United States as of last week, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Rochelle Walensky said on Tuesday. The BA.5 and BA.4 variants together accounted for more than 80% of circulating variants last week, with BA.4 making up 16 %, Walensky told reporters at a White House briefing, adding that the seven-day average of COVID-19 hospital admissions has doubled since early May.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-cdc-director-ba5-estimated-represent-65-circulating-covid-19-variants-2022-07-12/>

### **Shanghai sweats over small, but stubborn COVID outbreak already hampering economy**

Anxiety levels rose along with temperatures in Shanghai on Wednesday, as medical workers sweated beneath their hazmat suits while administering compulsory mass testing for COVID-19 in a city that recently emerged from a painful two-month lockdown. China's commercial hub is battling an outbreak that has seen dozens of new infections recorded daily for the past week, and though the numbers are relatively low it has unnerved many among the city's 25 million people, after their ordeal in April and May.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-sweats-over-small-nagging-covid-outbreak-already-damaging-economy-2022-07-13/>

### **WHO Chief Warns of Rising Infections, Deaths From New Covid Wave**

The World Health Organization urged governments and health care systems to take steps to curb Covid-19 transmission as a fresh wave of infections moves across Europe and the US. Sub-variants of the omicron strain are lifting case numbers and leading to further fatalities, Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a briefing in Geneva on Tuesday. Tedros, as the head of the WHO is known, recommended the revival of protocols like mask-wearing to stop the spread. "New waves of the virus demonstrate that Covid-19 is nowhere near over," Tedros said, adding that he is "concerned about a rising trend of deaths."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-12/who-chief-warns-of-rising-infections-deaths-from-new-covid-wave?srnd=premium-uk>

### **Covid-19 Strikes Wyoming's Most Populous Prison as US Cases Rise**

One in four inmates at Wyoming's most populous prison has tested positive for Covid-19 as cases rise again across the US. The Wyoming Medium Correctional Facility in Torrington houses about 645 inmates and tests last week resulted in 162 positive readings, the Casper Star-Tribune reports. Twenty staff members also tested positive and the prison is on lock-down, the newspaper said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-12/covid-19-strikes-wyoming-s-most-populous-prison-as-us-cases-rise>