

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

27th Jul 2022

Lockdown Exit

Rise in long Covid sufferers unable to work costs UK £1.5bn a year

Long Covid is costing the UK £1.5bn in lost earnings per year as the number of people off work with the condition rises to almost 2 million, according to new research. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) think tank estimated that 110,000 people are absent from work at any time due to long Covid, with those who were on lower incomes before the pandemic more likely to be sufferers. One in 10 long Covid sufferers who were in employment stop work while they have the condition, the IFS said. The findings will heap further pressure on the government to tackle a problem which is expected to grow further as infections rise again.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/long-covid-off-work-earnings-ifs-b2131706.html>

Isolation facilities for covid-19: towards a person centred approach

Chuan De Foo and colleagues argue that isolation facilities have the potential to interrupt the transmission of infectious agents, particularly in the earlier stages of infectious disease outbreaks, but they must deliver person centred care. Two years into the covid-19 pandemic, footage from isolation centres in Shanghai showing unrest have raised questions about the safety, utility, and appropriate use of such facilities

<https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj-2021-069558>

Schools Choose Cheaper Ventilation Options as BA.5 Subvariant Spreads

As the highly contagious Omicron BA.5 subvariant surges across the nation, weeks before schools reopen for fall, most U.S. districts are choosing fast, cheap ventilation solutions despite billions in federal aid, data show. A federal study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found nearly two-thirds of schools aren't planning to replace or upgrade their heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems. Instead, about 70% of schools in the CDC survey reported low-cost steps to increase student safety, including relocating activities outdoors, inspecting and validating existing HVAC systems, and opening doors and windows. About a third of schools were installing high-efficiency particulate air-filtration systems in high-risk areas, according to the study released in June. Some schools have cited supply-chain issues, tight deadlines or bureaucratic challenges as reasons for not upgrading.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/schools-choose-cheaper-ventilation-options-as-ba-5-subvariant-spreads-11658741400>

Calling In Sick or Going on Vacation, Workers Aren't Showing Up This Summer

A rise in Covid-19 absences in recent weeks amid the spread of the BA.5 subvariant, combined with planned time off, has left restaurants, hotel chains, manufacturers and other workplaces struggling to keep operations running this summer. At some companies, bosses say, staffing is harder now than at any previous stage in the pandemic. For the period from June 29 to July 11, 3.9 million Americans said they didn't work because they were sick with Covid-19 or were caring for someone with it, according to Census Bureau data. In the comparable period last year, 1.8 million people missed work for those reasons. Many workers also are taking vacations that they put off over the previous two years. According to the Labor Department, 4.8 million workers took vacation or personal days during the week of the Census Bureau's June household survey this year, compared with 3.7 million workers who were taking time off in the comparable period last year.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/calling-in-sick-or-going-on-vacation-workers-arent-showing-up-this-summer-1165874140>

Joe Biden's Covid symptoms 'almost completely resolved', doctor says

Joe Biden's Covid-19 symptoms have "almost completely resolved," according to a new note from the US president's doctor. Although he still has some nasal congestion and hoarseness, his vital signs remain "absolutely normal," wrote Dr Kevin O'Connor. The 79-year-old has been taking Paxlovid, an antiviral drug that helps reduce the chance of severe illness from Covid-19, and he plans to continue isolating in the White House residence.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/newslondon/joe-biden-e2-80-99s-covid-symptoms-e2-80-98almost-completely-resolved-e2-80-99-doctor-says/ar-AAZWSd1>

COVID symptoms almost resolved, Biden says he is feeling great

U.S. President Joe Biden on Monday said he was "feeling great," as he recovers from COVID-19, and that he expected to end his isolation and return to normal working conditions by the end of the week. Biden held a virtual event with semiconductor manufacturers and several top administration officials to promote legislation aimed at boosting chip production in the United States. His voice was raspy but he seemed otherwise in good health.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/bidens-covid-symptoms-have-almost-completely-resolved-his-physician-says-2022-07-25/>

Covid origin studies say evidence points to Wuhan market

Scientists say there is "compelling evidence" that Wuhan's Huanan seafood and wildlife market was at the centre of the Covid-19 outbreak. Two peer-reviewed studies published on Tuesday re-examine information from the initial outbreak in the Chinese city. One of the studies shows that the earliest known cases were clustered around that market. The other uses genetic information to track the timing of the outbreak. It suggests there were two variants introduced into humans in November or early December 2019. Together, the researchers say this evidence paints a picture that Sars-Cov-2 was present in live mammals that were sold at Huanan market in late 2019. They say it was transmitted into people who were working or shopping there in two separate "spillover events", where a human contracted the virus from an animal.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-62307383>

Despite their anger over high drug prices, Americans are giving pharma credit for helping contain Covid-19

Nearly three quarters of Americans give the pharmaceutical industry credit for helping contain Covid-19 — and for a sector that's been roundly criticized for nearly a decade, that's a reason to celebrate. A new survey, conducted by the Harris Poll for STAT, asked more than 4,000 people what industries they credit for helping contain the coronavirus, and 71% of those surveyed said that the pharmaceutical industry deserves credit — more than the number who gave credit to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, or the White House. The only entities that received a statistically significant amount more credit were hospitals, makers of protective equipment, scientists, doctors, and nurses.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/07/26/americans-give-pharma-credit-on-covid/>

Exit Strategies

China continues to adapt border control to COVID-19 situation: authority

China's National Immigration Administration (NIA) will continue to adjust and improve entry-and-exit control measures in line with the changing COVID-19 situation to fully meet people's necessary need for cross-border travel, a spokesperson said Tuesday. The immigration administration work will also continue to facilitate enterprises' production and operation to promote the country's opening-up, as well as international exchanges and cooperation, said Zhang Ning, the spokesperson for NIA.

<https://english.news.cn/20220726/b843179992934c62a619b65bcff9fa5d/c.html>

China's Zero-Covid Policy Drags on Vaccination Drive

China's sluggish progress in vaccinating the elderly and vulnerable against Covid-19 is impeding any departure from the cycles of mass testing and lockdowns that are hobbling the world's second-largest economy. While the government stepped up efforts to raise inoculation rates in recent months, tens of millions of Chinese over 60 remain entirely unvaccinated against Covid-19, and many more have yet to take booster shots needed to protect against the Omicron subvariants now fueling outbreaks. Officials have tried to overcome skepticism and inertia against vaccination, particularly among the elderly, by revealing that top Chinese leaders have taken domestically developed shots and lashing out at what they called irresponsible rumors alleging serious side effects from vaccines.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-zero-covid-policy-drags-on-vaccination-drive-11658745899>

EU states should act now for COVID-19 waves in winter-official

EU member states should start preparing now for a new wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in autumn and winter, the bloc's health chief said on Monday, saying there had been a "worrying increase" in outbreaks. European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides also warned there was no room for complacency, saying the pandemic was not over. "Unfortunately the pandemic has shown a worrying increase in several countries," she told Cyprus state radio.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-states-should-act-now-covid-19-waves-winter-official-2022-07-25/>

China Covid Cases Rise as Shenzhen Flare Up Ensnarers BYD, Huawei

China's Covid-19 infections rebounded, with an increase in cases in the south threatening the operations of industry giants including BYD Co. and Huawei Technologies Co. Nationwide, cases were 868 for Monday, CCTV reported, up from 680 a day earlier. Attention is shifting to the southern manufacturing hub of Shenzhen, where 19 local cases were detected and authorities have ordered some of China's biggest firms to operate within a "closed loop" system for seven days, raising concerns about disruptions to global supply chains. The city government asked its 100 biggest companies, including iPhone maker Foxconn and oil producer Cnooc Ltd. to restrict operations only to employees living within a closed loop or bubble, with little to no contact with people beyond their plants or offices.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-26/china-covid-cases-rise-as-shenzhen-flare-up-ensnarers-top-firms>

Omicron BA.5 makes up 82% of COVID variants in U.S., CDC says

The BA.5 subvariant of Omicron was estimated to make up 81.9% of the circulating coronavirus variants in the United States for the week ended July 23, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Tuesday. This was higher than the 75.9% prevalence estimated in the preceding week. BA.5 has been driving a surge of new infections globally and has shown to be particularly good at evading the immune protection afforded either by vaccination or prior infection.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/omicron-ba5-makes-up-82-covid-variants-us-cdc-2022-07-26/>

China Approves First Homegrown Antiviral Pill to Combat Covid

China approved its first homegrown Covid antiviral, as regulators cleared a medicine from Genuine Biotech that was previously used to treat HIV. The National Medical Products Administration gave the nod to Azvudine from the Henan-based drug company for adults with moderate Covid-19 disease under an emergency use authorization, according to a statement by the agency on Monday. The drug will compete with Pfizer Inc.'s Paxlovid, which was approved in China in February shortly before the country experienced its worst outbreak of the pandemic.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-25/china-approves-first-homegrown-antiviral-pill-to-combat-covid>

Partisan Exits

Encouraged by right-wing doctor groups, desperate patients turn to ivermectin for long Covid

Almost two years have passed since Dean Fritzscheimer fell ill with Covid in October 2020. As the rest of the world moves on, shrugging off new variants and traveling with a vengeance, he remains trapped in a life weighed down by the virus. Fritzscheimer is always tired, but can't sleep. The 52-year-old once walked 7 miles a day, but now can only get outside if he's pushed in a wheelchair. Along with millions of others, the Michigan resident has long Covid. He's sought treatment at a rehab hospital and traveled to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, one of dozens of U.S. hospitals that have created programs to treat the still-mysterious syndrome. Nothing has helped. Out of desperation, he turned to an unproven remedy. Fritzscheimer's wife, Karen, heard about ivermectin from a cousin.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/07/26/ivermectin-has-become-a-popular-treatment-for-long-covid-with-a-push-from-doctors-with-ties-to-right-wing-political-groups/>

Scientific Viewpoint

U.S. Leads Globally in Known Monkeypox Cases, CDC Says

The U.S. has reported about 3,600 confirmed or suspected monkeypox cases, federal data showed, while vaulting near the top of the list of countries with the most known infections since the onset of the global health emergency. The rise in cases comes as the U.S. expands testing capacity, broadening the ability to spot new infections, but also as the global outbreak continues to grow. Some public-health experts said rising transmission heightens the chances a broader population will face the risk of infections as the opportunity to slow and potentially stop the outbreak is fading. Data have shown the outbreak is heavily concentrated among men who have sex with men, as the virus exploits social networks among people in close contact. This is already a concern, but spreading more broadly means the potential added challenge of trying to educate and protect a broader population, health experts said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-leads-globally-in-most-known-monkeypox-cases-cdc-says-11658835623>

Monkeypox Proves Elusive Foe as WHO Sounds Alarm on Global Spread

The Covid-19 outbreak forced governments around the world to revamp their pandemic response programs, invest in drugs and vaccines and establish viral surveillance systems. Now monkeypox is putting those upgrades to the test -- and they're falling short. Getting out in front of the global flare-up of the monkeypox virus, which has spread to about 16,000 people in more than 70 countries in just a few months, is an achievable goal, according to infectious disease experts. Yet the lack of urgency and coordination in testing and treatment in many parts of the world has prompted the World Health Organization to sound the alarm.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-24/monkeypox-proves-elusive-foe-as-who-sounds-alarm-on-global-spread>

Novavax Announces Expanded Approval of Nuvaxovid™ COVID-19 Vaccine for Adolescents Aged 12 through 17 in Japan

Novavax, Inc, a biotechnology company dedicated to developing and commercializing next-generation vaccines for serious infectious diseases, today announced that Nuvaxovid™ COVID-19 vaccine received expanded manufacturing and marketing approval from the Japan Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) for primary immunization to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in adolescents aged 12 through 17. Novavax has partnered with Takeda to develop, manufacture, and distribute Nuvaxovid in Japan.

<https://apnews.com/press-release/pr-newswire/covid-technology-health-severe-acute-respiratory-syndrome-infectious-diseases-91c154124489f650fabe516d389f3fe1>

How COVID-19 lockdown measures — and their outcomes — varied in cities around the world

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese cities have repeatedly imposed lockdowns following their central government's stubborn pursuit of Zero-COVID. But lockdowns weren't limited to authoritarian regimes such as China. Many democracies also imposed some form of lockdowns to curb the virus transmission. How effective were they? Was it worth it? And who was the most adversely affected? These are meaningful questions to reflect on, especially as drastic COVID-19 measures have been lifted as the severity of the virus's impact has waned.

<https://theconversation.com/how-covid-19-lockdown-measures-and-their-outcomes-varied-in-cities-around-the-world-184682>

COVID-19 antivirals may cut risk of hospitalization, death

McMaster University researchers in Ontario led the systematic review and network meta-analysis of 40 randomized clinical trials that included 17,563 patients comparing the effectiveness of 16 different antiviral drugs or drug combinations, including molnupiravir, nirmatrelvir-ritonavir (Paxlovid), and remdesivir, with standard care or a placebo in adults with non-severe COVID-19 up to Apr 25, 2022. The researchers noted that most antiviral trials to date have included hospitalized patients with severe or critical disease rather than those with milder illnesses. "Furthermore, although efficacy data from trials of molnupiravir, nirmatrelvir-ritonavir and remdesivir are promising, no head-to-head trials have compared these drugs," they wrote. "This is particularly important as health care systems attempt to prioritize access to effective COVID-19 treatments in the early stages of the disease."

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/07/covid-19-antivirals-may-cut-risk-hospitalization-death>

Diabetes risk remains elevated three months after COVID-19 infection

The risk of diabetes after infection with Covid-19 remains high for at least three months before declining to background levels. The diabetes risk from infection after acute infection also raises the risk on adverse sequelae as shown by increased used of several therapeutic agents such as pain medication, antidepressants, anxiolytics and oral hypoglycaemic agents.

<https://hospitalhealthcare.com/covid-19/diabetes-risk-elevated-for-three-months-after-infection-with-covid-19/>

Novavax COVID-19 vaccine: When will it be available in the US?

Earlier this month, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine. Research shows Novavax to be 100% effective in preventing moderate to severe COVID-19. Novavax uses a traditional vaccine model used previously for influenza and shingles vaccines. The United States Department of Health and Human Services has secured 3.2 million doses of Novavax for distribution in the U.S., with ordering opening to medical professionals in the coming weeks.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/fda-and-cdc-recommend-novavax-covid-19-vaccine-what-to-know>

BioNTech, Pfizer ask U.S. court for clearance over patent dispute with CureVac

COVID-19 vaccine maker BioNTech said on Tuesday that it and partner Pfizer have filed a complaint with the U.S. District Court in Massachusetts, seeking a judgment that they did not infringe U.S. patents held by rival CureVac. Reporting by Ludwig Burger and Blake Brittain Editing by David Bario and Mark Potter

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/biontech-pfizer-ask-us-court-clearance-over-patent-dispute-with-curevac-2022-07-26/>

Monkeypox Vaccine Maker Bavarian Nordic Considers 24-Hour Emergency Production

Bavarian Nordic A/S, the only company with a vaccine approved for monkeypox, said it's preparing to run production through the night to meet surging demand after the virus outbreak was declared a global emergency. The flare-up of monkeypox, which has spread to about 16,000 people in more

than 70 countries in just a few months, was declared a public-health emergency of international concern by the head of the World Health Organization over the weekend. This is the highest level of alert that aims to marshal more resources globally to curb the outbreak and is the first such ruling since coronavirus started sweeping around the world.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-25/monkeypox-vaccine-maker-considers-24-hour-emergency-production>

Pandemic Drinking Led to Thousands of UK Hospital Admissions, Deaths

Increased drinking fuelled by the pandemic could lead to thousands of extra hospital admissions, deaths and cases of disease over the next 20 years, experts have warned. A new study commissioned by NHS England from the University of Sheffield found that while lighter drinkers cut their consumption during the pandemic, heavier drinkers drank more and may never return to where they were. Experts found that 25 to 34-year-olds who were drinking at risky levels before the pandemic were the most likely to increase their drinking when Covid-19 hit.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-25/thousands-of-hospital-admissions-and-deaths-caused-by-pandemic-drinking>

Mysterious Hepatitis Cases in Children May Have Complex Cause

An international effort to find the cause of mysterious hepatitis cases among children in dozens of countries yielded a new hypothesis on Monday, with research now suggesting that the cases were caused by a pair of viruses working in concert to trigger the liver inflammation in children with a certain genetic susceptibility. Between last October and July 8, 1,010 probable cases of unexplained hepatitis in children occurred in 35 countries, including the U.S., according to the World Health Organization. The cases can't be explained by the familiar causes of hepatitis, including hepatitis viruses, excessive alcohol consumption or an overdose of the over-the-counter pain medicine acetaminophen.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/mysterious-hepatitis-cases-in-children-may-have-complex-cause-11658761407>

Getting Around After the Pandemic Will Be a Shared Exercise

The report concludes that consumers' mobility demands are evolving in seemingly contradictory ways. On one hand, people want inexpensive options, but on the other, the pandemic accelerated a shift away from mass transit, which is the cheapest service available. Ultimately, consumers want agile, on-demand, and affordable transportation, which creates challenges that are difficult to reconcile. In that environment, new players will struggle to make money as they try to fulfill these demands.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-26/getting-around-after-the-pandemic-will-be-a-shared-exercise>

Feds look ahead to next-generation COVID vaccines

The White House tomorrow will host a summit on the future of COVID-19 vaccines, which will be streamed online. One of the main topics is speeding development of a more broadly protective COVID-19 vaccine. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) vaccine advisory group recently recommended a bivalent booster shot that includes the original SARS-CoV-2 strain and an Omicron variant, and at the meeting, several members aired concerns that officials will more frequently face the challenge of tweaking the vaccine to keep up with the quickly evolving virus. At the global level, researchers are working on a roadmap for developing a new coronavirus vaccine to broadly protect against the most dangerous ones.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/07/feds-look-ahead-next-generation-covid-vaccines>

Pfizer, BioNTech rebuff CureVac's 'groundless' patent infringement claims against COVID-19 shot Comirnaty

Pfizer and BioNTech aren't playing sitting duck in the COVID-19 vaccine patent litigation that German mRNA specialist CureVac has brought. After joining forces to develop the massively

successful COVID shot, Comirnaty, Pfizer and BioNTech are now facing what they call “threats of a groundless patent infringement suit by a company, CureVac, who has been unable to bring to market any product to help in the fight against COVID-19,” the partners said in a complaint filed Monday in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. Pfizer and BioNTech allege there is “an actual, immediate, substantial and justiciable controversy” at play over whether Comirnaty has infringed or will infringe the trio of patents covered in CureVac’s lawsuit. Now, the partners want the Massachusetts court to rule against the infringement charges and prevent CureVac from pursuing further infringement claims, according to the court filings.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-biontech-rebuff-curevacs-groundless-patent-infringement-claims-against-covid-19-shot>

‘There’s no one long Covid’: Experts struggle to make sense of the continuing mystery

Robert Gallo apologized for still coughing. The day before President Biden tested positive for Covid-19, the famed HIV researcher said he was still recovering from a Covid infection that had left him unable to walk, put him in the hospital, and made him delusional, he said Wednesday during a roundtable discussion about long Covid. Presented by the Global Virus Network, a coalition of leading virologists, the two-day virtual conference convened experts across disciplines and around the world to ask and answer questions about what causes long Covid, how to predict who gets it, how to treat it, and just possibly how to prevent it. No one has the answers, but Gallo, who co-founded the group and is also director of the Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, puts his money on the amount of virus present right from the start.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/07/22/theres-no-one-long-covid-experts-struggle-to-make-sense-of-the-continuing-mystery/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid-19: Hospital visitors refusing to wear masks, ward outbreaks 'unavoidable'

Hospital visitors who refuse to wear masks or walk around wards visiting different patients are creating difficulties for Northland hospitals trying to manage Covid-19 infections. Dargaville Hospital’s general ward reopened to visitors on Tuesday, a week after rising infection numbers put a halt to visits. Whangārei Hospital’s ward 1, an orthopaedic ward, has not had any visitors since July 14 because of a spike in Covid-19 infections. It will reopen to visitors on Wednesday, as long as there are no further Covid-19 cases.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/129381722/covid19-hospital-visitors-refusing-to-wear-masks-ward-outbreaks-unavoidable>

Covid-19: 9256 new case numbers, 822 hospitalisations

The Ministry of Health has reported 9256 new community cases of Covid-19 and 822 current hospitalisations, including 24 in intensive care or high dependency units. In the past seven days there have been an average of 17 deaths confirmed each day as being attributable to Covid-19. The seven-day rolling average of community case numbers on Tuesday is 8335. On Monday, the ministry reported 6910 new community cases and 836 current hospitalisations, including 27 people in intensive care or high dependency units.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/129380530/covid19-9256-new-case-numbers-822-hospitalisations>

Micronesia's first COVID-19 outbreak balloons, causing alarm

Micronesia's first outbreak of COVID-19 grew in one week to more than 1,000 cases by Tuesday, causing alarm in the Pacific island nation. Last week, Micronesia likely became the final nation in the world with a population of more than 100,000 to experience an outbreak of the disease, after avoiding it for 2 1/2 years thanks to its geographic isolation

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/micronesia-ap-pacific-wellington-new-zealand-b2131164.html>

Number of Covid-19 hospital patients in England shows signs of falling

The number of hospital patients in England testing positive for Covid-19 is showing early signs of falling, suggesting the latest wave of infections may have peaked. A total of 12,529 people with coronavirus were in hospital on July 25, down 11% on the previous week. It is the sixth day in a row the week-on-week change has shown a drop. Patient numbers had been climbing through much of June and the first half of July, driven by the current wave of Covid-19 infections. But the latest figures, from NHS England, show this rise appears to have come to a halt after peaking at 14,044 on July 18.

<https://www.northwalespioneer.co.uk/news/20578664.number-covid-19-hospital-patients-england-shows-signs-falling/>

Omicron BA.5 makes up 82% of COVID variants in U.S. - CDC

The BA.5 subvariant of Omicron was estimated to make up 81.9% of the circulating coronavirus variants in the United States for the week ended July 23, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Tuesday. This was higher than the 75.9% prevalence estimated in the preceding week. BA.5 has been driving a surge of new infections globally and has shown to be particularly good at evading the immune protection afforded either by vaccination or prior infection.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/omicron-ba5-makes-up-82-covid-variants-us-cdc-2022-07-26/>

Australia's COVID hospital admissions, deaths rise as variant surges

Hospital admissions for COVID-19 in Australia have reached a new high for a second straight day, data showed on Tuesday, while the daily death toll rose to its second-highest as an outbreak fuelled by a coronavirus sub-variant sweeps the country. Nearly 5,600 patients infected with COVID are in hospital while 100 new deaths were reported, just short of a record 102 deaths on Saturday. Nearly 330,000 infections have been reported over the last seven days but authorities say the real numbers could be double that.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/australias-covid-hospital-admissions-deaths-rise-variant-surges-2022-07-26/>

Record number of COVID-hit Australians in hospital as Omicron surges

The number of Australians admitted to hospitals with COVID-19 hit a record of about 5,450 on Monday, official data showed, as the spread of highly contagious new Omicron sub-variant strains strains the healthcare system nationwide. The figure has grown since late June, as the BA.4 and BA.5 strains became dominant since they can evade immune protection, whether from vaccination or prior infection, while some experts say the latter can be as infectious as measles.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/record-number-covid-hit-australians-hospital-omicron-surges-2022-07-25/>