

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

29th Jul 2022

Lockdown Exit

When will Covid really be over? Three things that will mark the end of the pandemic

Analysing past epidemics shows us that actual endings are long, drawn-out and contested. Societies must grapple not just with the medical realities of the disease, harms and treatments, but the political and economic fallout from emergency measures, and disputes over who has the authority to declare an end and what should be measured to guide this process. This is why there is so much uncertainty about the current state of Covid-19: different groups have vastly different experiences of the medical, political and social aspects of the epidemic, and different ideas of what an ending may look like.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jul/28/covid-over-end-pandemic-medical-data-political-social>

Russia daily covid cases hit highest since April

Russia reported 11,515 new daily coronavirus cases on Thursday, authorities said, the highest such figure since April 13. Forty-one people in Russia died of coronavirus over the last day, the country's anti-COVID-19 taskforce said in an update. Russia has recorded 18,565,551 cases of COVID since April 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic in the country.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/russia-daily-covid-cases-hit-highest-since-april-2022-07-28/>

After Biden COVID recovery, admin launches new booster push

President Joe Biden's administration is launching a renewed push for COVID-19 booster shots for those eligible, pointing to the enhanced protections they offer against severe illness as the highly transmissible BA.5 variant spreads across the country. The initiatives include direct outreach to high-risk groups, especially seniors, encouraging them to get "up to date" on their vaccinations, with phone calls, emails and new public service announcements. All Americans age 5 and over should get a booster five months after their initial primary series, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It also says those age 50 and over — or those who are immunocompromised — should get a second booster four months after their first. According to CDC, tens of millions of eligible Americans haven't received their first booster, and of those over 50 who got their first booster, only about 30% have received their second.

<https://apnews.com/article/biden-covid-health-centers-for-disease-control-and-prevention-government-politics-ba416523f3f3c0aee41dc716b38df005>

Malaysia's Women Graduates Close Gender Jobless Gap Amid Virus

Malaysia's female graduates have narrowed the unemployment rate gap with men for a third straight year, yet major differences remain for jobs requiring higher level degrees. The overall jobless rate for 2.476 million women graduates in the Southeast Asian nation declined to 4.3% in 2021, versus 4% for men. That's a huge improvement from 2018, when female employment was a full percentage point lower than males. Still, much of the shrinkage has been based on lower level diploma jobs, according to data released by the Department of Statistics.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-28/malaysia-s-women-graduates-close-gender-jobless-gap-amid-virus>

Will Singapore see surge in Covid-19 deaths that New Zealand is facing now?

New Zealand is one of a small number of countries that had done well in curbing Covid-19 infections

and deaths over the past two years, with rapid lockdowns and safety measures. But the number of people dying from the coronavirus has surged in recent months - with 168 deaths in the week ending July 25, up from 163 the previous week. Of the 2,093 deaths from Covid-19, more than 2,000 have occurred since March this year.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/will-singapore-see-the-surge-in-covid-19-deaths-new-zealand-is-experiencing-now>

2,390 new Covid cases, 30 more deaths

The country registered 2,390 more Covid-19 in-patients and 29 new fatalities during the previous 24 hours, the Public Health Ministry announced on Sunday morning, with the number of deaths and severe cases gradually rising over the past week. The new numbers compared with 2,578 new cases and 29 coronavirus-related fatalities reported on Saturday morning. All the new infections reported on Sunday were transmitted inside Thailand.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2352787/2-390-new-covid-cases-30-more-deaths>

Zoe Tay tests positive for Covid-19, attended two large gatherings recently

Actress Zoe Tay has tested positive for Covid-19, she revealed on Instagram Stories on Wednesday (July 27). Showing herself holding a rapid test with two lines and shaking her head, she also added a sticker with the words "Quarantine Mode On". According to the 54-year-old's Instagram posts, she had in recent days attended two large gatherings. On Sunday, she was at socialite-heiress Kim Lim's birthday extravaganza, a joint celebration for Lim, 31, and her son Kyden, five.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/life/entertainment/zoe-tay-tests-positive-for-covid-19-attended-two-large-gatherings-recently>

Exit Strategies

COVID-19 vaccine bookings open for young children under age of five in Ontario

Ontario parents can book COVID-19 vaccine appointments for their babies and preschoolers starting today. The province's booking portal opened for pediatric vaccine appointments for children aged six months to under five years at 8 a.m. Families can also make appointments through health units using their own booking systems as well as some primary care providers and pharmacies.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-covid-19-vaccine-bookings-open-for-young-children-under-age-of-five-in/>

Almost 9pc have received second Covid-19 vaccine booster

The average percentage of people who have received a second Covid-19 vaccine booster is almost 9pc, new figures reveal. The figures from across the country's Local Electoral Areas (LEAs) were released today by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The figures revealed that the average rate for a second booster shot was 8.7pc, with individual areas ranging from 2pc to 15pc.

<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/almost-9pc-have-received-second-covid-19-vaccine-booster-41872111.html>

4 mn Indonesian medical workers to get 4th dose of Covid-19 vaccine

Four million medical workers will receive a fourth dose of the Covid-19 vaccine amid increasing transmissions triggered by the virus' sub-variants in Indonesia, Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said. Sadikin told local media on Wednesday that administering of the third dose of the Covid-19 vaccine started in August 2021 and now it is the time for a new immunity shot, Xinhua news agency reported.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/4-mn-indonesian-medical-workers-to-get-4th-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine-122072800106_1.html

Hong Kong Covid Adviser Says Shots Safe, Effective for Toddlers

Hong Kong should make Covid-19 vaccines available for children under the age of three as soon as possible, as shots from BioNTech SE and Sinovac Biotech Ltd. safely and effectively protect them

against the virus, a vaccination adviser to the government said. Hong Kong's Covid-19 expert advisory panel will discuss toddler vaccination next week, said Lau Yu-lung, who is the chairman of the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases. While the issue needs to be thoroughly discussed by the panel, he said he plans to do his best to convey his opinion.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-28/hong-kong-covid-adviser-says-shots-safe-effective-for-toddlers>

Covid-19: Everyone over age of 50 in Northern Ireland to be offered booster jab and flu vaccine this autumn

Everyone over the age of 50 in Northern Ireland will be offered a flu vaccine and Covid-19 booster jab this autumn. Health Minister Robin Swann said the measure was precautionary given the likely increase in infection as we enter the winter months. On Wednesday, the minister revealed lateral flow testing for those with Covid-19 symptoms in Northern Ireland is to continue into August, citing the rising level of cases of the virus both in NI and the UK as a whole.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus/covid-19-everyone-over-age-of-50-in-northern-ireland-to-be-offered-booster-jab-and-flu-vaccine-this-autumn-41874272.html>

Vaccinating children aged under 5 years against covid-19

The United States has joined a handful of countries recommending that children aged 6 months to 5 years should receive covid-19 vaccines, but it is uncertain if other countries will follow. What is the evidence behind the US's recommendation, and how does the case for vaccinating children under 5 years differ from offering covid-19 vaccines to older children? Two vaccines have been authorised for under 5s in the US, based on data supplied by manufacturers Pfizer and Moderna.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o1863>

China needs COVID strategy rethink to limit economic harm, IMF official says

China needs to rethink its zero-COVID policy to avoid more harm to the economy, as well as come up with a long-term solution to the crisis in the real estate sector, a senior International Monetary Fund (IMF) official said in an interview. The world's second-largest economy has been tweaking its stringent COVID-19 curbs while leaving residents and businesses facing uncertainty over the risk of future lockdowns

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-needs-covid-strategy-rethink-limit-economic-harm-imf-official-says-2022-07-27/>

China Covid Zero Success in Chongqing Shows Why Xi Keeps Lockdowns

Chongqing has logged just 165 cases of Covid since February 2021, the fourth-lowest of any province -- the manufacturing hub twice the size of Switzerland counts as its own municipality, as do only Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin. The city hasn't seen a major lockdown since early 2020, even as Beijing and Shanghai stay on high alert and more than 28 million people are living under citywide restrictions as of Monday, according to Bloomberg's Lockdown Tracker. Thus, tourists continue to flock to Chongqing, to soak in its shimmering skyline, spicy hot pot and history as China's capital during World War Two. And the city isn't unique. Across China, many cities are business as usual, as the ruling Communist Party's border curbs, mass testing drives and lockdowns stop the virus from a cross-country spread -- the nation of almost 1.4 billion reported 521 local cases for Wednesday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-27/china-covid-zero-success-in-chongqing-shows-why-xi-keeps-lockdowns>

Partisan Exits

Outrage in Brazil as Jair Bolsonaro avoids five charges related to Covid response

Brazilian senators are calling for an investigation into one of the country's top prosecutors after she shelved several charges against the president, Jair Bolsonaro, over his mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic. A damning congressional inquiry had recommended that Bolsonaro be charged with nine

offences, including crimes against humanity and charlatanism, for promoting false treatments such as hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin. The far-right president constantly downplayed the severity of the pandemic, initially calling it “a little flu” and telling Brazilians to man up because “we are all going to die anyway”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/27/outrage-brazil-jair-bolsonaro-avoids-five-charges-related-to-covid-response>

Covid-19: “Impossible” to be confident that government awarded Randox contracts properly, say MPs

The UK government’s failure to follow basic rules in awarding £777m of contracts for covid-19 testing to the diagnostics company Randox Laboratories make it “impossible to have confidence” that the contracts were awarded properly, says the parliamentary watchdog on public spending. In a highly critical report, the Commons Public Account Committee accuses the Department of Health and Social Care of “woefully inadequate record keeping” and failing to meet basic requirements to publicly report ministers’ external meetings or deal with potential conflicts of interest when awarding testing contracts to the company.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o1893>

Scientific Viewpoint

Air Pollution Likely to Contribute to Diseases Including Dementia, UK Committee Finds

Air pollution is “likely” to increase the risk of developing dementia, a Government research group has said. The Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants has published its findings after reviewing almost 70 studies which analysed how exposure to emissions affect the brain over time. The 291-page report concludes that air pollution “likely” increases the risk of accelerated “cognitive decline” and of “developing dementia” in older people. Experts believe this is due to the impact of pollutants entering the circulatory system, affecting blood flow to the brain.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-27/air-pollution-likely-to-contribute-to-diseases-including-dementia-committee>

What the UK is Getting Right in the Fight to Contain Monkeypox

As global concerns mount about the threat of monkeypox, the UK offers a measure of hope that the crisis is controllable. Just days after the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a public health emergency, the UK released data suggesting that transmission is plateauing. That’s giving health experts a dash of optimism. “The figures that we are seeing, certainly with the eye of faith, do look as though they are slowing down,” Jimmy Whitworth, a professor of public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said in a phone interview. “It doesn’t mean we’re out of the woods, but it is an encouraging sign.”

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-27/what-the-uk-is-getting-right-in-the-fight-to-contain-monkeypox>

CityU researchers invents accurate rapid COVID-19 antibody level test

Vaccines have become the most important weapon in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, but antibody levels after vaccination decay quickly over time. Therefore, an accurate and affordable antibody rapid test is urgently needed to adjust the revaccination strategy. A research team led by City University of Hong Kong (CityU) recently invented an accurate rapid-testing device that can quantify and display the antibody level as a length of a visual bar, like a mercury thermometer, in as few as 20 minutes, enabling convenient mass screening or individual monitoring of immune protection against COVID-19.

<https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/960186>

Pfizer and BioNTech speak out against CureVac suit over patents for COVID-19 vaccines

Global clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company, CureVac, filed a lawsuit earlier this month against

BioNTech, making the claim that CureVac should be compensated for an apparent infringement of a range of patents. The suit took place in German court and BioNTech has declared that it is contesting CureVac's allegations, and called upon its partner, Pfizer, in a Massachusetts court filing to counter the claims. Both BioNTech and Pfizer assert that following CureVac's failed attempts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine, CureVac tried to profit from the partnership, threatening patent infringement and legal action as a means of correcting CureVac's 'meritless allegations'.

https://www.pmlive.com/pharma_news/pfizer_and_biontech_speak_out_against_curevac_suit_over_patents_for_covid-19_vaccines_1452777

In Rural America, Covid Hits Black and Hispanic People Hardest

At the peak of the Omicron wave, Covid killed Black Americans in rural areas at a rate roughly 34 percent higher than it did white people. The coronavirus pandemic walloped rural America last year, precipitating a surge of deaths among white residents as the virus inflamed longstanding health deficits there. But across the small towns and farmlands, new research has found, Covid killed Black and Hispanic people at considerably higher rates than it did their white neighbors. Even at the end of the pandemic's second year, in February 2022, overstretched health systems, poverty, chronic illnesses and lower vaccination rates were forcing nonwhite people to bear the burden of the virus. Black and Hispanic people in rural areas suffered an exceptionally high toll, dying at far higher rates than in cities during that second year of the pandemic.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/28/health/covid-deaths-black-hispanic-rural.html>

Fauci calls BA.5 a 'moving target' that may subside by the time Omicron boosters are ready. Scientists are pushing for a universal COVID vaccine instead

Vaccines made specifically to tackle the BA.5 subvariant of COVID should be ready by this fall, Dr. Anthony Fauci, U.S. President Joe Biden's chief medical advisor, told The Hill this week. But the vaccines could suffer from one major flaw—BA.5-specific vaccines may become less effective once the Omicron subvariant is replaced by another strain, a real possibility given that dominant strains have been replaced with more competitive forms of the virus roughly every six months during the course of the pandemic. "You're dealing with a moving target," he said on The Hill's Rising television show. "There's always the possibility that you're going to have the evolution of another variant... And hopefully, if that occurs, it will vary off from the BA.5 only slightly—in the sense of being a sub-sublineage of it, and not something entirely different."

<https://fortune.com/2022/07/28/ba-5-booster-fauci-pfizer-universal-pan-covid-coronavirus-vaccine/>

Millions still without sense of smell or taste after Covid-19

Still struggling with your sense of smell after a bout with Covid-19? You're far from alone. About 5% of patients with confirmed cases of Covid-19 — some 27 million people worldwide — are estimated to have suffered a long-lasting loss of smell or taste, a new analysis suggests. In the analysis published Wednesday in The BMJ (the peer-reviewed medical journal of the British Medical Association), researchers evaluated 18 previous studies of smell and taste loss across several continents and in varying demographic groups. About three quarters of those affected by loss of taste or smell regained those senses within 30 days. Rates of recovery improved over time, but about 5% of people reported "persistent dysfunction" six months after their infection with Covid-19.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/07/28/millions-still-without-sense-of-smell-or-taste-after-covid-19.html>

EMA task force begins review of Veru's sabizabulin for Covid-19

The Emergency Task Force (ETF) of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has commenced the review of Veru's sabizabulin to treat hospitalised Covid-19 patients at increased acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) risk. The review will facilitate the use of the therapy for emergency usage in countries in the EU. Under this process, the ETF will analyse all available data, including findings from a trial in moderate-to-severe Covid-19 patients admitted to the hospital with increased ARDS

and mortality risk. According to the study findings, treatment with sabizabulin lowered the number of deaths in these subjects versus placebo.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/ema-review-veru-sabizabulin/>

COVID-19 Moderna vaccine induces significant antibody reactions among children

In a recent article published in the Science Translational Medicine journal, researchers illustrated that severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccination triggers potent antibody reactions in children.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220728/COVID-19-Moderna-vaccine-induces-significant-antibody-reactions-among-children.aspx>

COVID-19: Millions could suffer from long-term smell or taste problems after coronavirus infection, study says

Around one in 20 people who have tested positive for COVID-19 worldwide have long-term smell or taste problems for at least 6 months, a new study has found. The survey was put together by a team of international experts, including some from the UK and analysed data from 18 studies comprising 3,699 patients. Published in the BMJ, it used modelling to estimate how many people go on to suffer from altered taste or smell for at least six months after a COVID-19 infection. It found that an estimated 5.6% of patients suffer smell dysfunction for at least six months, while 4.4% have a change in taste

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-millions-could-suffer-from-long-term-smell-or-taste-problems-after-coronavirus-infection-study-says-12660016>

UK scientists take 'promising' step towards single Covid and cold vaccine

Scientists have made a "promising" advance towards developing a universal coronavirus vaccine to tackle Covid-19 and the common cold. Researchers at the Francis Crick Institute in London have discovered that a specific area of the spike protein of Sars-CoV-2 – the virus that causes Covid-19 – is a good target for a pan-coronavirus jab that could offer protection against all the Covid-19 variants and common colds. Developing a vaccine that protects against a number of different coronaviruses is a huge challenge, they said, because this family of viruses have many key differences, frequently mutate and generally induce incomplete protection against reinfection. That is why people can repeatedly catch common colds, and why it is possible to be infected multiple times with different variants of Sars-CoV-2.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/27/uk-scientists-take-promising-step-towards-single-covid-and-cold-vaccine>

Pfizer profit beats estimates on higher demand for COVID products

Pfizer Inc did not raise its 2022 forecast for sales of its COVID-19 vaccine and antiviral treatment on Thursday, and its shares fell nearly 5% before recovering. The U.S. drugmaker maintained its full-year forecast of around \$54 billion for its COVID products, even as second-quarter sales of its Paxlovid antiviral pills were much higher-than-expected, raising concerns among some analysts over Pfizer's long-term growth prospects.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-reaffirms-annual-sales-forecast-covid-19-products-2022-07-28/>

COVID-19: People living in poverty more likely to get long COVID, study suggests

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), people with coronavirus symptoms lasting more than four weeks are more likely to have been living in social housing or claiming benefits before they got ill. Previous studies have shown that long COVID patients are more likely to be women, middle-aged and have an underlying health condition.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-people-living-in-poverty-more-likely-to-get-long-covid-study-suggests-12660041>

Persistent brain fog, hair loss highlighted in long-COVID studies

The first study, by University of Oslo researchers in Norway, was published yesterday in Open Forum Infectious Diseases. The team used four computer-based cognitive tests from the Cambridge Neuropsychological Test Automated Battery to assess 75 adult COVID-19 patients' cognitive function 13 months after release from a single hospital. Included patients were, on average, 55.7 years old and were admitted to the hospital up to June 2020. The four tests were delayed matching to sample (DMS) (testing short-term memory, visuospatial processing, learning, and attention), the One-touch Stockings of Cambridge (OTS) test (executive function), rapid visual-information processing (RVP) (sustained attention), and spatial working memory and strategy (SWM).

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/07/persistent-brain-fog-hair-loss-highlighted-long-covid-studies>

Can we really get better Covid vaccines? There are big hurdles, but some hope

On Tuesday, White House officials gathered scientists, pharmaceutical executives, and experts in public health at a summit to try to lay out a path toward creating better vaccines. What was the upshot? For starters, there was tremendous optimism about the prospects for developing next-generation vaccines. And there were, in fact, glimmers of a tractable path to better products — if Congress will provide billions of dollars to speed things up.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/07/27/can-we-really-get-better-covid-vaccines-there-are-big-hurdles-but-some-hope/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Hong Kong May Not Be Ready for Another COVID-19 Surge

COVID-19 finally came to the Kei Tak (Tai Hang) Home For the Aged on Feb. 13, after sparing it for two years and four previous waves of the disease. The next day, 17 residents tested positive. The day after that, it was 30. Soon, 98% of the residents had been infected—and after two months, 27 of the nursing home's 200 residents had died. "Our elderly home turned into a battlefield as hospitals were overloaded and the healthcare system collapsed," said Wong, who has worked at Kei Tak for more than 10 years.

<https://time.com/6200484/hong-kong-covid-deaths/>

Tokyo's daily COVID cases to exceed 40000 in record high -FNN, citing govt sources

The daily number of COVID-19 cases in Tokyo is set to exceed 40,000 on Thursday, a record high, broadcaster FNN reported citing government sources. Japan has seen a spike in cases recently, with total domestic cases topping 200,000 on Wednesday, according to NHK.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/tokyos-daily-covid-cases-exceed-40000-record-high-fnn-citing-govt-sources-2022-07-28/>

Russia daily COVID cases hit highest since April

Russia reported 11,515 new daily coronavirus cases on Thursday, authorities said, the highest such figure since April 13. Forty-one people in Russia died of coronavirus over the last day, the country's anti-COVID-19 taskforce said in an update. Russia has recorded 18,565,551 cases of COVID since April 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic in the country. Russia said earlier this month it was ending all restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19, including the requirement to wear masks, citing a steady decline in deaths from the virus.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/russia-daily-covid-cases-hit-highest-since-april-2022-07-28/>

COVID Hospitalization Rate in NYC Soars 70% in Month, ICU Patient Tally Nearly Doubles

BA.5 more easily transmits and escapes immunity, leading many to call it the "worst version" of omicron yet. Breakthrough hospitalizations are rising, too, but it might not just be the variant causing the spike

<https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/coronavirus/nys-covid-dashboard-nyc-hospitalization-rate-soars-70-in-ba5-variant>

[-wave/3796713/](#)

New Lockdown

Covid: China places one million under lockdown in city of Wuhan

Nearly one million people in a suburb of Wuhan — China's central city where the coronavirus was first recorded — have been placed under lockdown following four new infections. Wuhan's district of Jiangxia, with over 900,000 residents, said its main urban areas must enter a three-day restriction from Wednesday, during which it has banned many large group events and dining at restaurants; closed various public entertainment venues, agricultural product marketplaces and small clinics; and suspended bus and subway services.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/world/asia-pacific/2022/07/28/covid-china-places-one-million-under-lockdown-in-city-of-wuhan/>