

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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Lockdown Exit

US Pandemic Revamp Raises Worry of 'More Cooks in the Kitchen'

Covid-19 revealed how federal offices and agencies, as well as state and local public health offices, lack coordination or central control. Elevating ASPR is meant to better align some of those functions. But former health officials from the office and other agencies say that the changes don't provide clarity on which parts of the federal government will be responsible for certain emergency-response activities. They also caution that the office needs additional resources. Nicole Lurie, the assistant secretary for preparedness and response under President Barack Obama, describes ASPR's role as "the place where all of emergency response sort of comes together," reporting directly to the secretary of Health and Human Service

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-29/us-pandemic-revamp-raises-worry-of-more-cooks-in-the-kitchen>

D.C. Schools covid vaccine mandate rare among national school systems

D.C. students who are 12 and older must be vaccinated against the coronavirus to attend school this upcoming academic year. The youth vaccine mandate in D.C. is among the strictest in the nation, according to health experts, and is being enacted in a city with wide disparities in vaccination rates between its White and Black children. Overall, about 85 percent of students between the ages of 12 and 15 have been vaccinated against the virus, but the rate drops to 60 percent among Black children in this age range.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/07/31/dc-schools-covid-vaccine-mandate/>

How Covid-19 has changed the world's view on education

Coronavirus was a transformative global event. The Covid-19 pandemic affected the whole world and with it came many significant changes. It disrupted and influenced the education sector drastically and affected all students and educators, not just in regard to academics but also in their broader health and wellbeing. Overall, education has become increasingly more flexible and accessible for those across the world. We know now that every curriculum can be taught online – whilst still allowing students to learn alongside their peers meaning that they don't feel isolated. After the historic period of disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most schools across the globe are back to operating again. But the education industry is still massively in recovery and assessing the damage and lessons learned during the global pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic affected more than 1.5 billion students worldwide, with the most vulnerable learners having the greatest impact.

<https://ie-today.co.uk/people-policy-politics/comment-by-nadim-nsouli/>

Macau to reopen following COVID-19 lockdown as casinos report record-low profits

The reopening comes as the casinos report their lowest July revenue on record. Macau has reported about 1,800 infections since mid-June. Strict COVID-19 restrictions will remain in place

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-01/macau-casino-profits-drop-to-record-as-lockdown-ends/101290126>

Macau to reopen city as no COVID infections detected for 9 days

Macau will reopen public services and entertainment facilities, and allow dining-in at restaurants from Tuesday, authorities said, as the world's biggest gambling hub seeks a return to normalcy after finding no COVID-19 cases for nine straight days. Beauty salons, fitness centres, and bars too will be allowed to resume operations, the government said in a statement on Monday. The announcement

came as authorities also reported on Monday that July monthly casino revenues dropped 95% year on year to 0.4 billion patacas (\$49.5 million), the lowest on record.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/macau-reopen-city-no-covid-infections-detected-9-days-2022-08-01/>

New Zealand's borders fully open after long pandemic closure

New Zealand will welcome all international travellers from July 31. Jacinda Arden says the final stages included welcoming back those on student visas and letting cruise ships and foreign yachts dock in the country. The country imposed some of the world's strictest border controls when COVID-19 first hit

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-01/new-zealand-border-fully-open/101287626>

Confessions of a Covid-19 dodger

Lately, most conversation starters revolve around a single question: "Have you had Covid yet?" Then come the tales of when/how/where, the extent of symptoms, and the solemn raise of hands for the chosen few who have not.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/life/confessions-of-a-covid-19-dodger>

Londoners Leaving the City in Drove as Covid Trend Persists

The push to leave London sparked by the coronavirus pandemic shows no sign of slowing down even after millions of workers returned to their city center offices. Almost 8% of the British homes purchased outside of the capital were bought by Londoners in the first half of the year, the same proportion as a year earlier when the post-Covid rush kicked off. That's up from 6.9% in the first half of 2019, the year before the the pandemic struck, according to data compiled by broker Hamptons. Buyers have flocked to the countryside in search of more green space after being cooped up in their homes during a series of lockdowns in 2020, taking advantage of more flexible working patterns and pent up savings.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-31/londoners-leaving-the-city-in-drove-as-covid-trend-persists>

Exit Strategies

Israel was a world leader in combatting COVID-19 with vaccines, now they're getting ready for monkeypox

The World Health Organization has declared monkeypox a global emergency. Israel was credited with having the world's fastest COVID-19 vaccine rollout in early 2021. It's now ordering large stockpiles of monkeypox vaccine to prevent the disease's spread.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-31/after-covid-19-israel-gets-ready-for-monkeypox/101267786>

Severe Covid cases, fatalities will gradually drop: govt

The numbers of daily Covid-19 cases - including severe cases - and fatalities are stable, and the numbers of severe cases and fatalities are likely to gradually fall in a few weeks, according to the Thai Department of Disease Control. Presenting an overview of Covid-19 in the country, Dr Opas Karnkawinpong, director-general of the department, said at the Public Health Ministry on Monday that the number of new Covid-19 cases remained high - at 201,554 over the past week.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2358869/severe-covid-cases-fatalities-will-gradually-drop-govt>

Japan debates change to COVID-19 measures amid hospital strain

Japan is considering altering its COVID-19 reporting protocols, including a potential change in the collection of infection numbers, in a bid to lessen the burden on hospitals as they strain under a resurgence of the coronavirus across the country, government sources have said. Medical facilities and public health centers currently cooperate to report the total COVID-19 cases to the government, but the change may limit the reporting of cases to designated establishments, the sources said Saturday. With the prevalent omicron variant having less risk of causing severe illness compared with previous strains, some government officials have questioned the need to report every case.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/07/31/national/science-health/covid-protocols-reporting/>

Israel begins vaccinating children under 5 years against Covid-19

A nationwide vaccination campaign against Covid-19 for children aged between six months to five years was launched in Israel. The vaccination will provide children "with an important protection layer against serious illness and post-Covid symptoms," said a statement issued by the Israeli Health Ministry on Sunday evening. The vaccine is especially recommended for children at risk of severe Covid-19 illness due to underlying health conditions that impair the immune system, the Ministry added.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/israel-begins-vaccinating-children-under-5-years-against-covid-19-122080100066_1.html

Hong Kong's COVID-19 advisory panel recommends vaccine for kids above six months-old - media

The Hong Kong government's COVID-19 advisory panel recommended on Monday to lower the minimum age for vaccines to six months from three years, public broadcaster RTHK reported.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/hong-kongs-covid-19-advisory-panel-recommends-vaccine-kids-above-six-months-old-2022-08-01/>

Covid: Families facing 'postcode lottery' of care home 'lockdown' restrictions

Families are still facing a "postcode lottery" of Covid restrictions in care homes, with some being forced to wear masks and see their loved ones through perspex screens, despite the official rules having been relaxed. Visits should be unrestricted unless there is a Covid outbreak in a home, when residents are allowed "to have one visitor at a time", according to guidance from the Care Quality Commission (CQC). However, some homes are still imposing extra restrictions, leaving families at the mercy of individual providers.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/covid-lockdown-care-homes-uk-isolation-rules-b2131518.html>

Biden Administration Plans to Offer Updated Booster Shots in September

The Biden administration now expects to begin a Covid-19 booster campaign with retooled vaccines in September because Pfizer and Moderna have promised that they can deliver doses by then, according to people familiar with the deliberations. With updated formulations apparently close at hand, federal officials have decided against expanding eligibility for second boosters of the existing vaccines this summer. The new versions are expected to perform better against the now-dominant Omicron subvariant BA.5, although the data available so far is still preliminary.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/28/us/politics/covid-booster-shots.html>

Three types of long COVID identified with different symptoms

There appear to be three different types of long COVID, each with their own symptoms, researchers have discovered. One group experiences neurological symptoms including fatigue, brain fog and headache, which most often affect those who contracted the virus when the Alpha and Delta variants were most prevalent, according to experts at King's College London. A second group suffers from respiratory issues, including chest pain and severe shortness of breath, which could point to lung damage. These symptoms were common among those infected during the first wave of the pandemic.

<https://news.sky.com/story/three-types-of-long-covid-each-with-different-symptoms-researchers-say-12663531>

Partisan Exits

Will anti-vaccine activism in the USA reverse global goals?

In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-vaccine activism in the USA accelerated, amplified and formed an alliance with political groups and even extremists. An organized, well-funded and empowered anti-science movement now threatens to spill over and threaten all childhood

immunizations in the USA and globally. Many countries now face declining immunization rates as a result of anti-vaccine activism. In the case of the USA, an anti-vaccine movement that began with false assertions linking vaccines to autism accelerated roughly a decade ago in Texas (where I live and work) around a libertarian framework known as health freedom². At present, many conservative elected leaders in the US House of Representatives actively promote this health freedom anti-vaccine agenda, as do several US senators, sitting governors and federal judges. Far-right extremist groups such as the Proud Boys march at anti-vaccine rallies.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41577-022-00770-9>

How Some Parents Changed Their Politics in the Pandemic

They waved signs that read “Defeat the mandates” and “No vaccines.” They chanted “Protect our kids” and “Our kids, our choice.” Almost everyone in the crowd of more than three dozen was a parent. And as they protested on a recent Friday in the Bay Area suburb of Orinda, Calif., they had the same refrain: They were there for their children. Most had never been to a political rally before. But after seeing their children isolated and despondent early in the coronavirus pandemic, they despaired, they said. On Facebook, they found other worried parents who sympathized with them. They shared notes and online articles — many of them misleading — about the reopening of schools and the efficacy of vaccines and masks. Soon, those issues crowded out other concerns.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/technology/anti-vax-parents-political-party.html>

Scientific Viewpoint

Polio found in New York wastewater as state urges vaccinations

The polio virus was present in wastewater in a New York City suburb a month before health officials there announced a confirmed case of the disease last month, state health officials said on Monday, urging residents to be sure they have been vaccinated. The discovery of the disease from wastewater samples collected in June means the virus was present in the community before the Rockland County adult's diagnosis was made public July 21.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/polio-found-new-york-wastewater-state-assesses-virus-spread-2022-08-01/>

Moderna signs contract to supply Covid-19 booster vaccines to US

Moderna has entered a new supply contract with the US Government to deliver 66 million doses of its Covid-19 vaccine booster candidate, mRNA-1273.222. The contract comprises a \$1.74bn award to produce and supply these vaccine doses and options to further procure up to 234 million additional doses of the company's booster candidates. A bivalent booster candidate, the mRNA-1273.222 vaccine comprises Spikevax along with the Omicron BA.4/5 strain messenger RNA (mRNA). Spikevax is the company's Covid-19 vaccine intended for active immunisation for disease prevention in people aged 18 years and above.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/moderna-contract-vaccines-us/>

Moderna secures £1.74bn deal to supply US government with updated COVID-19 vaccine

Moderna has announced it has secured a deal with the US government to supply 66 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine booster updated for the Omicron subvariant for use in an autumn and winter campaign. The company will receive up to £1.74bn for the manufacture and delivery of the doses of mRNA-1273.222, a bivalent booster candidate containing Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine Spikevax plus the Omicron BA.4/5 string mRNA. The US government will also have the option to purchase up to an additional 234 million doses. Commenting on the deal, Stéphane Bancel, chief executive officer of Moderna, said: "We are pleased to extend our successful collaboration with the US government. Moderna's mRNA platform is enabling us to rapidly create mRNA-1273.222, a bivalent vaccine that specifically targets Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5, the most prevalent variants of concern in the US today

https://www.pmlive.com/pharma_news/moderna_secures_1.74bn_deal_to_supply_us_government_with_updated_covi

[d-19_vaccine_1452883](#)

SK Bioscience eyes Europe as market for COVID-19 vaccine

SK Bioscience has submitted the application for conditional approval of the COVID-19 vaccine SKY Covione with the European Medicines Agency in efforts to expand its presence in the global market, the South Korean vaccine developer said Monday. Beginning with the European region, SK Bioscience said it will look to showcase the South Korean COVID-19 vaccine on the global stage as the size of the coronavirus vaccine market grows rapidly. South Korea's Ministry of Food and Drug Ministry gave the green light to SKYCovione at the end of June as the country became the third nation in the world with a homegrown COVID-19 treatment and a domestically-developed vaccine, behind the UK and US.

<https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220801000601>

Pfizer and BioNTech start trial of 'next-gen' COVID vaccine

The two companies (Pfizer and BioNTech) have begun a Phase II study on an 'enhanced' version of their mRNA vaccine against COVID-19, a so-called 'nextgen' Covid vaccine

<https://www.biopharma-reporter.com/Article/2022/08/01/pfizer-and-biontech-start-trial-of-next-gen-covid-vaccine>

COVID-19 Pandemic Dramatically Increased Childcare Stress Among Health Care Workers

A September 2021 poll revealed that 1 in 5 health care workers (HCWs) quit their job since March 2020. Pre-existing disparities and issues in the health care workforce and within the current childcare system were exacerbated because of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the poll. Researchers found that childcare stress (CCS) was associated with anxiety, depression, burnout (occupational stress), intent to reduce (ITR), and intent to leave (ITL) for HCWs, which were experienced at disproportionate levels across different subgroups. The source of the study, called Coping with COVID, is a 14-item survey looking at several demographic items, such as race, ethnicity, gender, years in practice, outpatient vs inpatient practice environment, and work role between April-December 2020.

<https://www.pharmacytimes.com/view/covid-19-pandemic-dramatically-increased-childcare-stress-among-health-care-workers>

'Living with COVID': Where the pandemic could go next

As the third winter of the coronavirus pandemic looms in the northern hemisphere, scientists are warning weary governments and populations alike to brace for more waves of COVID-19. In the United States alone, there could be up to a million infections a day this winter, Chris Murray, head of the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), an independent modeling group at the University of Washington that has been tracking the pandemic, told Reuters. That would be around double the current daily tally.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/living-with-covid-where-pandemic-could-go-next-2022-08-01/>

Studies investigate impact of COVID-19 pandemic on memory and thinking changes

Researchers present findings at world's largest dementia research conference Persistent loss of smell after COVID-19 linked to memory and thinking changes associated with diseases like Alzheimer's. Links between life changes during pandemic, and memory, investigated. Intensive care admissions (not necessarily COVID-19) associated with dementia risk

<https://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/studies-investigate-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-memory-and-thinking-changes/>

Covid warning over symptom of new strain that affects sufferers at night

An immunologist has warned the new strain of Covid-19 could be causing different symptoms - including one that emerges during the night. Omicron BA.5 is a highly-contagious subvariant

prompting concern as it contributes to a fresh wave of infections across the globe, including the UK. Scientists have been finding differences with previous strains, including the ability to reinfect people within weeks of having Covid. A leading immunologist has now suggested it could be causing a new symptom among patients. "One extra symptom from BA.5 I saw this morning is night sweats," Professor Luke O'Neill from Trinity College Dublin told an Irish radio station in mid-July.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/covid-insomnia-night-omicron-ba5-b2135356.html>

Habitual mask-wearing is likely helping Japan, Singapore and South Korea bring daily Omicron deaths down, epidemiologists say

As the mask mandate debate rages on in Australia, epidemiologists and medical specialists suggest looking to countries where citizens are perfectly happy to wear them to see how powerful the simple infection-control measure can be. Nearly two and a half years into the COVID-19 pandemic, countries where mask-wearing is a cultural norm are seeing some signs of success as the persistent Omicron sub-variants spread throughout their communities. University of Otago public health professor and epidemiologist Michael Baker said underlying the widespread acceptance of masks in some countries was a sense of personal responsibility to protect others from COVID-19. "I'm looking at the countries that appear, on paper, to be keeping their mortality very low ... despite having lots of circulating virus, and it's basically the Asian countries, particularly Japan, South Korea, Singapore," he said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-01/japan-singapore-south-korea-omicron-wave-and-mask-wearing-impact/101266844>

An administrative bungle caused Queensland's COVID cases to be under reported

While Saturday's COVID case count appears to show a massive spike of more than 18,000, Queensland Health says this is due to an administrative error and many are historic.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-31/an-administrative-bungle-caused-queenslands-covid/13996938>

COVID's deadly 'payback period'

We're heading for another peak in infections, and the daily death toll has never been so high, while worldwide we appear to be faring worse than just about anywhere else. But why? And how many more waves will Australia need to endure? Today, epidemiologist Professor Tony Blakely on why Australia's early success at keeping the virus at bay now seems to be working against us. Featured: Professor Tony Blakely, epidemiologist, School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/abc-news-daily/covids-deadly-payback-period/13996916>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid-19: Ontario hospitals close wards as nursing shortage bites

At least 14 hospitals in Canada's most populous province are operating without key services this weekend as exhausted and depleted nursing staff struggle to cope with a surge in patients with covid-19. The closures include the intensive care unit at Bowmanville's hospital and emergency departments at Wingham and Listowel. Hospitals in Alexandria, Brampton, Clinton, and Perth have also shut their emergency departments at times in recent weeks. "This decision was not made lightly," a spokeswoman for the Bowmanville hospital told CTV News, explaining that intensive care patients would be transferred to Ajax Pickering and Oshawa hospitals. "We recognise the impact of this temporary relocation on patients and their families." Toronto's University Health Network revealed this week that the emergency department of Toronto Western Hospital was so understaffed last weekend that nursing students were called in.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o1917>

Covid-19: Staff absences in July surged amid ongoing pressure on hospitals

NHS staff absences in England reached the highest peak in July since mid-April, amid continuing high numbers of SARS-CoV-2 infections and unrelenting demand for hospital beds. In a joint editorial published last week the editors of The BMJ and Health Service Journal, Kamran Abbasi and Alastair McLellan, sounded the alarm at the current situation and lamented the government's inaction in tackling the "covid-driven collapse in services." They argued, "The constant pressure created by repeated covid waves is already the main reason that the NHS is nowhere near reaching the activity levels needed to begin to recover performance. "The nation's attempt to 'live with covid' is the straw that is breaking the NHS's back. The government must stop gaslighting the public and be honest about the threat the pandemic still poses to them and the NHS." Given the current trends, the editors also questioned the government's assertion that the link between infections and hospital admissions had been broken.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o1909>

China reports 393 new COVID cases for July 31 vs 541 day earlier

China reported 393 new coronavirus cases for July 31, of which 84 were symptomatic and 309 were asymptomatic, the National Health Commission said on Monday. That compared with 541 new cases a day earlier, 116 symptomatic and 425 asymptomatic infections, which China counts separately. There were no new deaths, leaving the nation's fatalities at 5,226. As of July 31, mainland China had confirmed 229,594 cases with symptoms.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-reports-393-new-covid-cases-july-31-vs-541-day-earlier-2022-08-01/>

Biden feeling well, isolating after rebound case of COVID

U.S. President Joe Biden is feeling well and continuing his isolation measures after again testing positive for COVID-19, his physician said in a memo released by the White House on Sunday. Biden tested positive for COVID again on Saturday in what the White House doctor described as a "rebound" case seen in a small percentage of patients who take the antiviral drug Paxlovid. "Given his rebound positivity which we reported yesterday, we continued daily monitoring. This morning, unsurprisingly, his SARS-CoV-2 antigen testing remained positive," the physician, Dr. Kevin O'Connor, said in the memo on Sunday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-feeling-well-continuing-isolation-after-testing-positive-covid-2022-07-31/>

'Living with COVID': Where the pandemic could go next

As the third winter of the coronavirus pandemic looms in the northern hemisphere, scientists are warning weary governments and populations alike to brace for more waves of COVID-19. In the United States alone, there could be up to a million infections a day this winter, Chris Murray, head of the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), an independent modeling group at the University of Washington that has been tracking the pandemic, told Reuters. That would be around double the current daily tally.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/living-with-covid-where-pandemic-could-go-next-2022-08-01/>

China factory activity sees shock contraction on Covid-19 outbreaks

China's factory activity unexpectedly contracted in July, reversing earlier economic momentum as sporadic Covid-19 outbreaks weigh on the recovery. The official manufacturing purchasing managers index fell to 49 from 50.2 in June, the National Bureau of Statistics said Sunday. Economists had expected a reading of 50.3, according to the median estimate in a Bloomberg survey of economists. A reading above 50 indicates expansion from the previous month, while anything below indicates contraction. The non-manufacturing gauge, which measures activity in the construction and services sectors, decreased to 53.8 from 54.7 the previous month. That was below the consensus forecast of 53.9.

<https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/china-factory-activity-sees-shock-contraction-on-covid-19-outbreaks-202207>

COVID in WA: Pressure eased on hospitals as virus admissions fall but AMA warns 'worst still to come'

WA has reported a dip in COVID hospitalisations and continued its downward trend in active cases providing hope the worst of the winter Omicron wave may have passed. Speaking from Karratha, Premier Mark McGowan announced the number of West Australians in hospital with COVID fell to 418 on Thursday, down from 442 the previous day. There was also a slight fall in ICU patients from 17 to 16. Mr McGowan said both figures were "good news" while 4961 new infections were reported – down from 5422 on Wednesday. Five more West Australians died with COVID in the latest reporting period although the Premier did not detail their ages.

<https://www.perthnow.com.au/news/coronavirus/covid-in-wa-virus-pressure-eased-on-hospitals-as-virus-admissions-fall-but-ama-warns-worst-still-to-come-c-7671039>

Australia's Covid-19 wave at record levels, prompting push to work from home again

Australia's surging Covid-19 outbreak has prompted debate about whether workplaces should again be encouraging staff to work from home. As hospitalisations reached record levels last Tuesday (July 26), the health authorities and experts have urged employers to allow staff to work from home if feasible. The nation's chief medical officer Paul Kelly warned on July 19 that Australia was "at the start of this wave, not the end", and that staff should talk to their employers to see if they can work from home. "If it's possible for you to work from home during the next couple of weeks, that will make a big difference," he told Channel Seven. Some of Australia's biggest firms have heeded this advice.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/australianz/australias-covid-19-wave-at-record-levels-prompting-push-to-work-from-home-again>