COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis
9th Oct 2020

News Highlights

Majority of Covid-19 cases in UK show no symptoms, study says

A study by epidemiologists at University College London has found that 86% of the people from a UK sample population who tested positive for Covid-19 were asymptomatic. Results of the study seem to indicate that the current policy of testing only those people who exhibit symptoms such as fever, cough, or loss of taste, or smell, may be flawed since such an approach may miss the vast majority of the cases.

48-hour lockdown imposed in Jordan as coronavirus cases surge

Authorities in Jordan are placing the country under a weekend lockdown for the first time in months to combat a surge in Covid-19 cases, with close on 10,000 positive cases being reported in just over a week. Health officials are worried about the exponential rise in cases - with new infections almost doubling from the numbers in March, when the pandemic first appeared in the country.

Second wave of infections in Chile linked to possible mutation of coronavirus

Scientists in Chile are probing a possible mutation of the coronavirus in southern Patagonia, which has seen an explosion of cases in recent weeks. Researchers have detected 'structural changes' in the virus and are examining the possibility of the mutation having an effect on the high rates of contagion in the second wave which has been rife in the region lately.

EU to buy 200 million doses of Dutch-based coronavirus vaccine

Leiden-based pharmaceutical company, Janssen, has inked a contract with the European Commission to supply 200 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine, of which close to 8 million doses will be reserved for the Dutch market. Janssen is already conducting trials in Belgium and the U.S. and if successful, the vaccine is likely to be available in the second quarter of 2021.

Lockdown Exit

New Zealand's Covid-19 response the best in the world, say global business leaders
New Zealand’s response to the coronavirus pandemic has been the best in the world and is the country that gives business leaders the most confidence for future investment, according to a Bloomberg Media survey. New Zealand ranked strongly for political stability, the economic recovery, virus control and social resilience in Bloomberg’s market crisis management index. The index scores New Zealand at 238, above second-placed Japan at 204 and Taiwan in third on 198. Australia was sixth with 151, while the UK and US – despite their high case numbers and fatalities from Covid-19 – were ninth and 10th. In a boost for Jacinda Ardern’s chances of winning a second term in the election on 17 October, New Zealand scored the highest ranking in each of the categories.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/08/new-zealands-covid-19-response-the-best-in-the-world-say-global-business-leaders

New Zealand’s ‘go hard, go early’ strategy seems to have worked.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who is facing re-election, called the country's reopening a validation of its "go hard, go early" response.
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/07/world/australia/new-zealand-coronavirus.html?searchResultPosition=1

New Zealand whole again as Auckland lockdown ends
New Zealand is again a country united in its response to coronavirus, with Auckland joining the rest of the nation on the lowest alert level. Auckland was freed from restrictions on gatherings and social distancing requirements in restaurants and bars at midnight on Wednesday. That day three new cases were announced, bringing the total of active cases to 37. Key to lowering the alert level was the absence of active cases in the community, meaning all current cases are in quarantine facilities or managed isolation at home. Twenty-five people have died of Covid-19 in New Zealand, including three since Auckland was put back into level 3 lockdown after a family of four tested positive for the virus on 11 August.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/08/new-zealand-whole-again-as-auckland-lockdown-ends

Auckland businesses hope level 1 will bring back shoppers
With restrictions on social gatherings, physical distancing and face coverings now relaxed, firms hope the much-anticipated normality will bring a rush of customers. Māngere in south Auckland was one of the neighbourhoods most affected by the second Covid-19 outbreak. The owner of local clothing store Pacific Fashions, Vinod Kumar, said it was the worst trade he's seen in 29 years. "Since we opened up the lockdown, things were moving very slowly because most of the communities, big communities, the churches, they've not been operating, and that really hurts our business."
https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/427826/auckland-businesses-hope-level-1-will-bring-back-shoppers

Why These Coronavirus Vaccine Stocks Crashed in September
None of them are considered top-tier contenders to be the first to market with a coronavirus vaccine; top contenders like AstraZeneca and Moderna have already begun phase 3 trials of their vaccines. But each of the vaccines in the chart has some advantages and drawbacks that investors should be aware of. Single-dose vaccines like Altimmune's and VBI's could be more desirable than standard two-dose vaccines. Additionally, Altimmune's intranasal vaccine could be easier and cheaper to administer than a standard injection. On the other hand, neither company's vaccines have even begun phase 1 trials yet. CureVac, a Dutch company, has received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the German government, but its only other vaccine in clinical trials is a rabies vaccine in early-stage trials, which means if its COVID vaccine isn't viable, there aren't any drugs in development to fall back on. VBI, on the other hand, has a hepatitis B vaccine that's completed phase 3 trials, while Altimmune has several intranasal drugs and therapies in various trial stages.
https://www.fool.com/investing/2020/10/08/timesensitivewhy-these-coronavirus-vaccine-stocks/

Exit Strategies

COVID-19 is predicted to make child poverty worse. Should NZ's next government make temporary safety nets permanent?
Despite the 2017 Labour-led government taking power with a mandate to fight Aotearoa New Zealand's abysmally high child poverty rate, only incremental progress has been made. The percentage of children living in poor households dropped only slightly, from 16.5% in June 2018 to 14.9% by June 2019. That equates to approximately one in seven children (168,500) living in poverty, according to one official measure used in New Zealand and internationally: households with incomes less than 50% of the median disposable household income before housing costs (BHC).
https://theconversation.com/covid-19-is-predicted-to-make-child-poverty-worse-should-nzs-next-government-make-temporary-safety-nets-permanent-147177

Cash no longer king in Italy as COVID helps government push for plastic

Italy's love affair with cash is fading. The coronavirus is turning Italians off notes and coins and the government is launching a raft of incentives to accelerate the trend, believing plastic payment can curb rampant tax evasion. The Treasury estimates some 109 billion euros of tax is evaded annually, equal to about 21% of the revenue actually collected. The government believes the problem can be tackled by boosting digital payments which, unlike cash, leave a trace. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte is offering refunds on some money spent electronically, tax breaks for outlets with card machines and a new 50-million euro ($58.93 million) state lottery for card users only. The coronavirus, which forced the government to lock down the economy between March and May, is helping his efforts.

https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-italy-economy-cash/cash-no-longer-king-in-italy-as-covid-helps-government-push-for-plastic-idUKKBN26T14A

Coronavirus: Government's test and trace system has 'concerning' worst-ever week

The government's contact-tracing programme failed to reach more than 30 per cent of close contacts of people who tested positive for the coronavirus in England, the latest figures show, in what is the worst week on record since the beginning of Test and Trace. Some 68.6 per cent of close contacts were reached through the system, once dubbed "world-beating" by prime minister Boris Johnson, in the week ending 30 September, according to data published by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). This is the lowest weekly percentage since Test and Trace began, and is down from 72.5 per cent in the previous week. Meanwhile, only two-thirds of positive Covid-19 cases were transferred to the system over the same time period.

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-test-trace-nhs-covid-update-b882426.html

Black Country NHS workers could get coronavirus vaccine by December

Diane Wake, chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Trust, revealed the arrival of a vaccine could be just weeks away. She said the long-hoped-for vaccine could be made available for NHS workers before the end of the year, in what would be a major breakthrough in the fight against coronavirus. Ms Wake told a trust board meeting: "I'm hoping for a Covid-19 vaccine to be available to healthcare providers some time in December. "It has not been confirmed yet but I'm hoping to be able to offer a Covid-19 vaccine to our staff." The chief executive said vaccines would likely be provided via mobile units.

https://www.expressandstar.com/news/health/coronavirus-covid19/2020/10/08/nhs-workers-could-get-coronavirus-vaccine-by-december/

Covid vaccine: When it will be ready and who will get it

It's on everyone's Christmas list - a Covid-19 vaccine this side of New Year. While the government is working to that timeline even the head of its own Vaccines Taskforce thinks that it's very far from certain. And while UK-based companies are increasingly confident they can make the millions of doses we need here in the UK, given stages of development for the different vaccines, it's also likely we'll be relying on contracts for vaccines made overseas. "We've seen a lot of data with encouraging signs for immune response that we hope will translate into protection against infection," according to Kate Bingham, Chair of the UK Vaccines Task force.

https://www.itv.com/news/2020-10-08/covid-19-vaccine-when-it-will-be-ready-where-it-will-be-made-and-who-will-get-it

Justin Trudeau Says Coronavirus Vaccine Will Be Free For All Canadians

With a coronavirus vaccine hopefully being created in the not-so-distant future, Justin Trudeau has confirmed all Canadian's will be able to access it for free. The Canadian PM discussed the matter yesterday, October 7, in Canada's House of Commons after his opposition Jagmeet Singh asked him about it. Describing people as 'worried' and 'deeply concerned' about the ongoing health crisis and

their access to a potential vaccine, Singh asked, ‘Once a vaccine is ready, will the Prime Minister commit clearly that that vaccine will be freely available to all Canadians?’
https://www.unilad.co.uk/news/justin-trudeau-says-coronavirus-vaccine-will-be-free-for-all-canadians/

Partisan Exits

Orthodox New Yorkers condemn Cuomo over new Covid shutdowns

New rules putting parts of New York City back into lockdown amid a rise in fresh coronavirus cases have been met with protests as Andrew Cuomo was accused of using “dangerous and divisive” language against Orthodox Jews. On Wednesday night groups of Orthodox people in Brooklyn and some of their community leaders gathered in the streets, some not wearing masks and some bearing pro-Donald Trump signs. An Orthodox journalist covering the events later said he was attacked by an angry mob.
https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/oct/08/new-york-orthodox-jews-andrew-cuomo-covid-coronavirus

‘Freedom’ over science: Madrid court kicks out coronavirus lockdown rules to protect people’s ‘rights’

Madrid's top regional court has overturned a partial lockdown order to confine millions of “madrilenos” as a political row raged over imposing restrictions to try to slow the soaring infection rate in Europe's Covid-19 hotspot. The regional supreme court rejected restrictions imposed at the weekend on the capital and nine nearby towns after the number of coronavirus cases in the Spanish capital reached 741 cases per 100,000 people in the past 14 days compared with 257 per 100,000 in the rest of Spain – in itself the highest rate in the European Union.
https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/madrid-coronavirus-cases-infections-lockdown-court-freedom-europe-spain-b887530.html

Madrid High Court strikes down Heath Ministry’s coronavirus restrictions

The Madrid High Court ruled on Thursday that it would not ratify the coronavirus restrictions that were forced on the region by the central government, despite the opposition of the regional administration to implement them. The court reached its decision on the basis that the measures infringe on citizens’ fundamental rights. By midday on Thursday, the Madrid regional government had yet to comment on the ruling or announce what it would do next.
https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-10-08/madrid-high-court-strikes-down-heath-ministrys-coronavirus-restrictions.html

Great Barrington Declaration calls for end to lockdowns, shift to herd immunity

A plea for an immediate return to open restaurants, mass gatherings and working from the office has received the support of nearly 125,000 petition signatories and opposition from critics who denounce it as dangerous and likely deadly. The Great Barrington Declaration was written and signed by three epidemiologists in Great Barrington, Mass. on Sunday. Three dozen other scientists, doctors and academics are listed as co-signatories, with the most prominent being Michael Levitt, who won the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 2013. The declaration lays out the case for global adoption of a "herd immunity"-style approach to the COVID-19 pandemic. It argues that the lockdown-heavy approach is "producing devastating effects" on public health, including "lower childhood vaccination rates, worsening cardiovascular disease outcomes, fewer cancer screenings and deteriorating mental health."
https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/latest-call-for-herd-immunity-draws-scorn-from-public-health-experts-1.5137679

Anti-mask ‘Karen’ spits at cops when asked to wear face covering

An anti-mask wearing “Karen”’ out walking her dog in Melbourne has spat at police after they asked her to wear a face covering. Police said the woman was walking her dog along the side of a road in

the Bayside area on Wednesday when officers spotted her without a mask on. A police spokeswoman said as police approached her she became abusive and spat at the officers' feet. "Police directed her to go home and get her mask but she refused to comply and was issued with a fine," the spokeswoman said.
https://www.news.com.au/national/victoria/news/antimask-karen-spits-at-cops-when-asked-to-wear-face-covering/news-story/5485cbbbe3fd0127926e46d819ec9d22

COVID-19: British government rejects global calls by scientists to end lockdown measures

The British government has rejected the calls of thousands of scientists and health experts urging authorities to put an end to lockdown measures. The controversial Great Barrington Declaration, which has been signed by roughly 7000 scientists and medics worldwide, is calling for a new strategy in response to the ongoing pandemic. The movement, which began in the United States, argues that young, healthy and low-risk people should be permitted to go about their lives as normal, while "focused protection" is offered to the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions - the groups most at risk from COVID-19.
https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/world/2020/10/covid-19-british-government-rejects-global-calls-by-scientists-to-end-lockdown-measures.html

HHS Secretary Azar says U.S. could have enough coronavirus vaccine doses for every American by March

The Trump administration's coronavirus vaccine program Operation Warp Speed expects to have up to 100 million doses by the end of the year, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said. Azar said the U.S. is currently manufacturing doses for all six potential vaccines backed by the U.S. government across more than 23 manufacturing facilities. U.S. health officials have been accelerating the development of vaccine candidates even though doing so could be for naught if the vaccine ends up not being effective or safe.
https://www.cnbc.com/2020/10/08/coronavirus-vaccine-hhs-secretary-azar-says-us-could-have-enough-doses-for-every-american-by-march.html

Australia shuts itself off to visitors until the end of 2021 - or there's a coronavirus vaccine

Holidays and visits to Australia could be unlikely until the end of 2021. Since March 17, only citizens and permanent residents have been allowed to enter Australia with a few exceptions, with arrivals expected to pay for a two week hotel quarantine. Travel between and within some states and territories within Australia is also currently restricted. There is more information here. Australian Federal Budget has announced this week, that international travel will 'remain low' until the end of the year, or whenever a vaccine is widely available. Social distancing measures will also be kept in place until all Australian residents can be vaccinated. Prime Minister Scott Morrison previously said his government will secure almost 85 million doses of a coronavirus vaccine if two current trials they have invested in, prove successful.
https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/world-news/australia-shuts-itself-visitors-until-19062614

As Trump hails Regeneron treatment, his administration tries to block the science it used

President Donald Trump has been celebrating the dose of experimental monoclonal antibodies he was given last Friday, saying he thinks it helped him vanquish his coronavirus infection in record time. "It was incredible the impact it had," he said in a video he tweeted Thursday. What he didn't say is that the treatment was developed using technology his administration has worked for four years to ban.
https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/08/health/trump-antibody-cells-abortion-policy/index.html

Continued Lockdown

‘It’s like a prison’: students speak of lockdown struggles

In England, universities have been moving to crack down on breaches of coronavirus regulations on campus, but many students who got in touch with the Guardian via a callout said they were struggling with their mental health as a result of university measures. Since Sam Potter’s first day as a medical student at the University of Birmingham, security guards have patrolled his halls of residence, with an override key allowing them to enter students’ flats if they are suspicious that coronavirus rules are being broken. “We received an email from the halls saying that if we were caught with more than six people in our flat, the university would be notified and we could be kicked off the course, but it seems to be just intimidation tactics,” he said. Potter, 20, said he didn’t blame the university for the situation, and understood it “had to enforce” measures, but found it frustrating to be unable to support fellow students who were struggling.

https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/oct/07/its-like-a-prison-students-speak-of-lockdown-struggles

Lockdown rules are so arbitrary that the government should just tell northern England it can only breathe every other day

One of the most enjoyable rules confusing us at the moment is the one about pubs and restaurants shutting at 10pm. Because it makes no difference, but looks as if we’re doing something, which is the important thing. So over the next few weeks, we should see more of these strange restrictions. We’ve heard about potential plans to shut pubs and restaurants altogether in certain regions. Next, the government will announce that all teaspoons must face north, and no one is allowed to eat a tomato in the afternoon. From Tuesday in Leicestershire, no one will be allowed to look at a tree. Humming will be banned across Nottingham, and in Humberside, you can only breathe in on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and breathe out on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. On Sundays, you have to live underwater.

https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/coronavirus-north-second-lockdown-pubs-restaurants-scotland-hancock-sunak-b885874.html

AI cameras introduced in London to monitor social distancing and lockdown restrictions

Artificial Intelligence cameras are being used in London and other cities in the UK to monitor social distancing. The sensors were initially developed by Vivacity to track the flow of traffic, cyclists and pedestrians and monitor how roads are being used. But when the country went into lockdown in March, Vivacity added on an extra feature to the AI scanners so it could register the distance between pedestrians. This data is shared in a monthly report with the Government.

https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/ai-cameras-london-social-distancing-rules-a4566446.html

Poorest areas of England four times as likely to face lockdown as richest

England’s poorest communities are nearly four times as likely to face lockdown restrictions as the wealthiest areas, a Guardian analysis has found, as local leaders warned of a “winter of dangerous discontent” in the north of England without urgent financial support. A study of official figures shows a wide disparity in the resurgence of coronavirus across the country, with the most deprived areas bearing the brunt of the second wave. In Liverpool, almost two-thirds of the areas with the highest infection rates were among the poorest 10% of communities in England. More than half of Birmingham and Manchester’s worst-hit areas are among the country’s most deprived.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/07/poorest-areas-of-england-four-times-as-likely-to-face-lockdown-as-richest

Why aren't local lockdowns working?

Pubs, bars and restaurants in Edinburgh, Glasgow and much of Scotland’s central belt will be closed from Friday at 6pm, while pubs, bars and restaurants in Merseyside, Newcastle and Manchester will follow suit on Monday. This means the majority of people in Scotland and Wales are now under some form of lockdown, and England may be heading the same way. In Northern Ireland, meanwhile,

Diane Dodds, the economy minister, has called on Westminster to provide additional funds in order to facilitate the possibility of a further lockdown.
https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2020/10/why-aren-t-local-lockdowns-working

The forgotten city? One hundred days on, Leicester remains in country's longest local lockdown

It has now been 100 days since the jewel of the East Midlands became the first place in the UK to enter into local coronavirus lockdown. As the rest of the country started returning to some semblance of normality following the three-month national shuttering, health secretary Matt Hancock dropped the bombshell that restrictions would not only remain in place in Leicester, they would in fact be tightened. Non-essential shops were to be shut once more; bars and restaurants would not be allowed to open; different households would remain banned from mixing. Haircuts stayed off limits.
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/leicester-local-lockdown-first-100-days-b864795.html

Locking down early may help economies recover faster, says IMF

Strict, early lockdowns may be less economically damaging than voluntary measures because they reduce infection rates more quickly and pave the way for faster recoveries, the International Monetary Fund has said. By cross-referencing jobs and mobility data with health and economic figures for 128 countries, the fund showed that lockdowns caused more short-term harm than voluntary restrictions but may have "positive overall effects on the economy" by allowing a broader and quicker economic reopening. Central to the analysis was the discovery that "lockdowns and voluntary social distancing played a near comparable role in driving the economic recession", particularly in advanced economies where people were able to work from home. "Addressing health risks appears to be a pre-condition to allow for a strong and sustained economic recovery."
https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/locking-down-early-may-help-economies-recover-faster-says-imf-rg7vjrg9t

Coronavirus: World Bank supports lockdown

Up to 150 million people could slip into extreme poverty, living on less than $1.90 a day, by late next year depending on how badly economies shrink during the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank said Wednesday in an outlook grimmer than before. Some 82 percent of the people entering extreme poverty are expected to be in middle-income countries such as India, Nigeria and Indonesia, the bank said. Many will be more educated urban residents, meaning cities will see an increase in the kind of poverty traditionally rooted in rural areas.
https://english.alarabiya.net/en/coronavirus/2020/10/08/Up-to-150-million-could-join-extreme-poor-due-to-coronavirus-pandemic-World-Bank

We should be counting years of life lost or saved

A group of researchers led by Olga Yakusheva, a University of Michigan economist, has sought to estimate the net number of lives saved (or lost) by pandemic-mitigating policies in the US in 2020. The team finds that these public-health measures saved between 913,762 and 2,046,322 lives, but also could result in an "indirect collateral loss" of 84,000 to 514,800 lives, implying 398,962 to 1,962,322 net lives saved. That is a wide range, but still clearly a positive outcome.
https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/we-should-be-counting-years-of-life-lost-or-saved-20201008-p56362.html

Johnson weighs tougher measures after England lockdown failures

Boris Johnson on Wednesday confronted the fact that his attempt to control coronavirus through a series of local lockdowns had failed across large parts of England. New restrictions were now inevitable: the only question was how far would they go? Rishi Sunak, the chancellor, has led ministerial efforts to forestall tougher lockdown measures, aligning himself with Tory MPs who fear the costs of closing down large sections of the economy cannot be justified. But Mr Sunak is now

resigned to new economic restrictions in the English regions and the need for more support for companies struggling to survive the pandemic. He said on Monday that he was ready to deploy the "might of the British state" to further help people through the crisis and on Wednesday one ally of the chancellor said: "We have not ruled out going further."
https://www.ft.com/content/af8d7157-e081-4e92-a185-ce7ea7377af8

PM Johnson says COVID cases rising but lockdown approach correct
British Prime Minister Boris Johnson insisted on Wednesday that his government's approach to controlling the spread of COVID-19 was still the right one, despite rising infection rates. Johnson's strategy over the summer, when new nationwide infections were in the low hundreds per day, was to try to shut down localised outbreaks while reopening the wider economy. Since then, new cases have risen sharply, with more than 14,000 reported on Wednesday and data beginning to show a slow rise in the number of virus patients admitted to hospital. "The local and regional approach combined with the national measures remains correct," Johnson told parliament when asked why infections continued to rise in areas where local lockdown measures have been put in place.
https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-johnson-lo/pm-johnson-says-covid-cases-rising-but-lockdown-approach-correct-idUKKBN26S1RK

Scientific Viewpoint

The real lessons from Sweden's approach to covid-19
The great thing about using a small country to support your argument is that your opponents are unlikely to know what is really going on there. Perhaps that is why Sweden, with 10.3m people, has become a much-cited example in the debate about how to deal with covid-19. Liberty-loving Swedes are supposedly pursuing a mask-free, lockdown-light strategy that will create herd immunity without bankrupting the economy. Sweden's success, it is said, is a standing rebuke to the left-wing killjoys who love bossing folk around and shutting everything down.
https://www.economist.com/leaders/2020/10/10/the-real-lessons-from-swedens-approach-to-covid-19

Study: Most People Infected With Coronavirus During U.K. Lockdown Had No Symptoms When Tested
A team of researchers in the U.K. are calling for more widespread coronavirus testing after finding that more than four in five Britons who tested positive during the country's lockdown did not exhibit the symptoms most commonly associated with a Covid-19 infection, like a fever, lasting cough or a loss of taste or smell. "The fact that so many people who tested positive were asymptomatic on the day of a positive test result calls for a change to future testing strategies," said Irene Petersen, a professor at UCL in a statement. "More widespread testing will help to capture 'silent' transmission and potentially prevent future outbreaks."
https://www.forbes.com/sites/carlieporterfield/2020/10/08/study-most-people-infected-with-coronavirus-during-uk-lockdown-had-no-symptoms-when-tested/

Why Edinburgh University's lockdown study is not all it seems
While it has been widely accepted that the closure of UK schools in March was bad for the life chances of its children, a research paper from the University of Edinburgh has gone as far as to say that the move could have contributed to a higher Covid-19 death toll. The study, published in the British Medical Journal, suggested lockdown restrictions were the most effective way of reducing peak demand for intensive care unit beds, but argued they were also likely to prolong the epidemic because, once lifted, they left a large population susceptible to the virus. Some commentators have seized on the study as evidence that the government was too quick to impose a full lockdown, including shutting schools, and should have allowed herd immunity to build up in the younger population instead. However, assumptions made by the study mean its conclusions would only hold water if all social distancing restrictions were lifted, resulting in a large second wave and others after

that, and if an effective vaccine were not forthcoming.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/08/lockdown-could-have-increased-covid-death-toll-scottish-study-finds

Germany faces 'uncontrollable' spread as Europe renews lockdowns
German health experts warned on Thursday that the coronavirus could "spread uncontrollably" in the country, as infections surged across Europe and governments prepared to renew some lockdown measures. In Belgium, Brussels' crowded bars and cafes were shut for a month, a return to the stricter protocols imposed at the height of the epidemic in March and April. And in France, officials were to apply tighter restrictions in several major cities, two days after a maximum alert protocol went into force in Paris.
https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-10-germany-uncontrollable-europe-renews-lockdowns.html

Japan's response to first coronavirus wave late but had good results, report says
Japan's virus countermeasures spanning January to July — during which time the country saw its first major wave of COVID-19 — were "belated but produced good results," according to a report published Wednesday by the Asia Pacific Initiative, a Tokyo-based global think tank founded in the wake of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. Insufficient disaster preparedness, disjointed messaging from public officials, a stubborn resistance to raising testing capacity as well as political friction between national and municipal leaders seemed to expose the shortcomings of the "Japan Model." And yet, using only voluntary countermeasures and "soft lockdowns" that bore no punitive measures, the country did "the best it could with what it had," the report said.
https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/10/08/national/japan-coronavirus-response-late-effective/

No symptoms for 86% of lockdown COVID cases, UK study says
People who were asymptomatic accounted for 86% of the people who tested positive for COVID-19 in a UK sample population during lockdown, a study showed on Thursday, meaning the current policy of testing people with symptoms might miss many cases. In England, people are encouraged to get tested for COVID-19 only if they have symptoms of a persistent cough, fever, or loss of taste or smell, with suspected contacts of positive cases told to self-isolate in the first instance. But epidemiologists at University College London found that such an approach might miss the vast majority of cases, complicating Prime Minister Boris Johnson's attempts to clamp down on a second wave of the virus. UCL scientists used the Office for National Statistics Infection Survey, which looks at the prevalence of COVID-19 in the community and not only those who get a test because they have symptoms.
https://uk.news.yahoo.com/no-symptoms-86-lockdown-covid-143425146.html

Ireland's top doctor says acceleration of COVID-19 'very worrying'
The spread of COVID-19 in Ireland has reached an exponential growth phase and a coming surge in hospitalisations will create a "very significant challenge" for Irish society, a leading public health official said on Wednesday. On Monday the Irish government banned indoor restaurant dining across the country and limited the number of visitors to people's homes to try to curb the accelerating second wave of coronavirus infections - seen as arising from increased socialising after the lifting of lockdown. But the government rejected a recommendation from public health officials on the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) to impose a much stricter lockdown. In a statement on Wednesday, the Public Health Emergency Team officials said that the situation had worsened further since their weekend recommendation.
https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-ireland/irish-officials-warn-of-exponential-growth-in-covid-19-idUKKBN26S2ZJ

COVID-19 vaccines NOT affected by coronavirus mutations, study finds
Scientist infected ferret blood with two forms of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. These were the initially dominant 'D' strain and the now prevalent 'G' variant. A vaccine currently in development was found

to be effective against both. Reassuring research indicates a vaccine should be effective against all strains. Means vaccines for the coronavirus pandemic will not have to be regularly changed and adapted, as is the case for seasonal flu
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-8818667/COVID-19-vaccines-NOT-affected-coronavirus-mutations-study-finds.html

NHS ready to roll out coronavirus vaccine next month if jab gets green light
A coronavirus vaccine could be rolled out from next month with the jabs being offered at five giant sites across the UK, it has been reported. Leaked documents say the NHS is hopeful that two vaccines will be available before the end of the year with officials drawing up plans to ensure they are given to those at the top of the priority list. Trainee nurses, physiotherapists and paramedics will be deployed to the vaccination sites so they can treat tens of thousands of people a day, it has been claimed. According to the documents, major cities including Leeds, Hull and London have been earmarked as locations for the vaccination sites. There will also be hundreds of mobile units scattered across the country and vaccination teams will visit care homes and vulnerable people.
https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/nhs-ready-roll-out-coronavirus-22811078

Coronavirus vaccine blow as Oxford trial faces another delay to investigate side effects
The hotly anticipated University of Oxford vaccine faces knock-on delays with its trials. A month-long pause in the jab's development could mean volunteers who had already been given one shot may not be able to get the planned second. The delay is due to American regulators investigating potential side effects, the Times reports. A previous delay on September 6 was triggered by AstraZenaca, which is developing the vaccine with Oxford, after a trial participant in the UK fell ill. Other people who had received the first shot were due for a second one next week, which has now been cancelled.
https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/oxford-coronavirus-vaccine-blow-trial-22810498

EU agrees to buy 200 million doses of Leiden coronavirus vaccine
The European Commission has signed a contract with Leiden-based pharmaceuticals company Janssen for the supply of 200 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine. Of those, at least 7.8 million doses would be allocated to the Dutch market, as soon as the vaccine has approval, health minister Hugo de Jonge told MPs on Thursday. The vaccine, if successful, is likely to become available in the second quarter of 2021, De Jonge said on the second day of debate about the government’s coronavirus legislation. Janssen, part of the giant Johnson & Johnson pharmaceuticals group, has already begun trials of the vaccine in Belgium and the US, where it is quicker to get permission for human testing and recently launched more trials in the Netherlands, Spain and German. The vaccine will be partly produced in the Netherlands and partly elsewhere, broadcaster NOS said.
https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2020/10/eu-agrees-to-buy-200-million-doses-of-leiden-coronavirus-vaccine/

Moderna says it won't enforce coronavirus vaccine patents during pandemic
Moderna will not enforce patent rights related to its experimental coronavirus vaccine during the pandemic, announcing Thursday that its leadership feels "a special obligation under the current circumstances" to address the global health crisis. The committment earned praise from an intellectual property activist who said Moderna's pledge "should be matched by every manufacturer." Moderna said it will allow open access to the patents for the "pandemic period," and is willing to out-license the same intellectual property once the pandemic is over. In doing so, the biotech joins Gilead in making its patent-protected discoveries available in the name of fighting COVID-19, although Gilead has restricted its Veklury licensing activity only to low- and middle-income countries.
https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/moderna-coronavirus-vaccine-patents/586678/

The state of coronavirus vaccine development in the U.S.

Virtual symposium, cohosted by Johns Hopkins and the University of Washington, brought together leading experts from government, media, and academia
https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/10/07/fauci-slaoui-francis-collins-speak-at-vaccine-symposium/

PGI trial: 53 participants healthy after first dose of Covid vaccine
The late-phase human clinical trials of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, which is also known as 'Covishield' in India, have been running smoothly at Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) and have not shown any adverse side-effects so far. An official statement released by the institute today reads, "The second phase of human clinical trials of Covishield, the potential vaccine developed by the Oxford University, is going well here at PGIMER. Till date, 97 volunteers have been screened. Of them, 65 volunteers have already been vaccinated since September 25 when PGIMER started administering the first dose of the vaccine to the volunteers. Among 65 volunteers given first dose, 53 have already completed seven days post vaccination without any major side effects."
https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/pgi-trial-53-participants-healthy-after-first-dose-of-covid-vaccine-152829

Coronavirus vaccine set to be 'ready for Christmas with mass inoculation by Easter'
Jeremy Hunt is confident the UK will have a coronavirus vaccine by Christmas, with the majority of the population being inoculated by Easter. Mr Hunt, chair of the Health Select Committee today told Sky News that the UK has four candidates for a vaccine. He said: "Most people are confident that one of them will come through. "There is so much effort going into this all over the world. "If I was a betting man I'd say we'll have one by Christmas and it will have been received by the bulk of the population by Easter."
https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/coronavirus-vaccine-set-ready-christmas-19069204

Chile scientists study potential coronavirus mutation in remote Patagonia
Scientists in Chile are investigating a possible mutation of the novel coronavirus in southern Patagonia, a far-flung region near the tip of the South American continent that has seen an unusually contagious second wave of infections in recent weeks. Dr. Marcelo Navarrete of the University of Magallanes told Reuters in an interview that researchers had detected "structural changes" in the spikes on the distinctive, crown-shaped virus. He said research is underway to better understand the potential mutation and its effects on humans. "The only thing we know to date is that this coincides in time and space with a second wave that is quite intense in the region," Navarrete said. The Magallanes region of Chile is largely a remote, glacier-strewn wilderness dotted with small towns and the regional hub Punta Arenas, which has seen cases of COVID-19 spike in September and October following a first wave earlier this year.
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-chile-mutation-idUSKBN26T3F4

Coronavirus Ireland: Christmas could be cancelled as Covid surges across nation and medics urge move to Level 4
The country faces a nationwide lockdown at Christmas unless stricter measures are introduced in the face of surging coronavirus cases, health experts have warned. Already there are warnings from some health experts over the situation at Christmas unless harder lockdowns are introduced now. The Level 3 restrictions introduced yesterday will not be enough to drive down the number of cases, Professor Anthony Staines, head of health systems at DCU, told the Irish Independent. "We need to go to Level 4 today," he said.
https://www.independent.ie/world-news/coronavirus/christmas-could-be-cancelled-as-covid-surges-across-nation-and-medics-urge-move-to-level-4-39600035.html

Coronavirus: UAE says receiving COVID-19 vaccine does not reduce risk of infection
The UAE government spokesman Dr. Omar al-Hammadi said on Tuesday that receiving the

coronavirus vaccine does not reduce the risk of getting infected with the COVID-19 virus, state news agency WAM reported. “Volunteers taking part in the coronavirus vaccine trial should adhere to relevant preventive procedures, including wearing facemasks and maintaining social distancing. Taking the trial vaccine doesn't necessarily means a person is far from infection of the virus,'' al-Hammadi said in a press conference. “After taking the second dose of the vaccine, volunteers will need a period of up to four weeks to enhance their immunity, and even after this period, their immune systems will only protect them, not other people and their families and colleagues. Therefore, it is essential for them to continue adhering to the precautionary measures,” he added.
https://english.alarabiya.net/en/coronavirus/2020/10/07/Coronavirus-UAE-says-receiving-COVID-19-vaccine-does-not-reduce-risk-of-infection

Lilly, with new data, seeks emergency clearance for COVID-19 antibody drug
Eli Lilly has asked the Food and Drug Administration to approve an experimental antibody drug for emergency use in treating COVID-19, making it the first of an emerging class of medicines to be submitted to public health regulators. Lilly aims to use one of its antibodies in higher-risk patients recently diagnosed with mild-to-moderate cases of COVID-19. But the drugmaker on Wednesday shared new findings suggesting a combination of two antibodies may help treat COVID-19 patients as well. Lilly plans to ask for emergency clearance of that regimen in November, and file for a standard approval as early as the second quarter of 2021.
https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/lilly-covid-19-antibody-drug-eua-fda/586576/

Coronavirus Resurgence

Pubs and restaurants take blame for UK’s Covid spike
Health authorities across the UK believe the normalisation of eating out and drinking in pubs has contributed to the UK’s second wave of Covid-19, triggering howls of rage from the battered hospitality sector, which says there is little proof they are responsible for spreading the virus. However, the dispute over the evidence is unlikely to stop England’s politicians following Scotland’s lead in shutting pubs and restaurants in the north of England from next week — a move likely to coincide with the end of Britain’s post-lockdown economic recovery.
https://www.ft.com/content/fd154869-e40d-463f-9624-c6d89cc6b113

Coronavirus: Germany’s health minister ‘very concerned’ at surge in Covid cases
Germany is seeing a sharp jump in new coronavirus infections, a development that is raising fears the pandemic is picking up pace in a country that so far has coped better than many of its European neighbors. The country's disease control agency, the Robert Koch Institute, reported 4,058 new infections and 16 deaths over the past 24 hours, taking the total number of confirmed cases to 310,144, with 9,578 deaths. That death toll is one-fourth of Britain's and one-third of the confirmed virus toll in Italy. “I'm very concerned about this,” Health Minister Jens Spahn told reporters in Berlin, which has become one of the hotspots for new cases. He urged Germans to respect social distancing and hygiene measures to avoid reaching a point “where we lose control.”
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/coronavirus-germany-covid-cases-lockdown-infections-b881770.html

Europe struggles to stem rapid resurgence of coronavirus
Several mainland European countries have recorded their highest daily number of Covid-19 infections since widespread testing began, as governments struggle to stem a rapid resurgence of the virus that risks overwhelming some healthcare systems. The figures came as the World Health Organization reported a record one-day increase in global coronavirus cases, with the total rising by 338,779 in 24 hours. The previous record for new cases was 330,340 on 2 October. As a region, Europe is now reporting more cases than India, Brazil or the United States.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/08/germany-fears-spiralling-covid-spread-as-cases-rise-suddenly

Italy Makes Masks Mandatory Outside, Imposes COVID Test For UK Arrivals

Italy has imposed stricter coronavirus regulations today as cases in the country are on the rise. It is now mandatory to wear masks in outdoor spaces across the whole of Italy, and visitors arriving from countries including the UK will have to provide a negative COVID-19 test result. With 3,678 coronavirus cases confirmed in the last 24 hours, Italy's new cases have passed the 3,000 mark for the first time since April 24. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has brought in tougher measures in a bid to avoid another economy-crippling lockdown for Italy.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebeccahughes/2020/10/08/italy-makes-masks-mandatory-outside-imposes-covid-test-for-uk-arrivals/

France braces for wider Covid restrictions

France was preparing Thursday for tighter coronavirus restrictions in several major cities, two days after a maximum alert protocol went into force in Paris that included bar closures. "The virus has been spreading faster in recent weeks," President Emmanuel Macron said late Wednesday. "In places where it is spreading too fast, especially where it is spreading among the elderly who are most at risk, and where there are more and more intensive care beds being occupied, we must proceed to more restrictions," he said on French TV.

https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-10-france-braces-wider-covid-restrictions.html

'Rural Surge' Propels India Toward More Covid-19 Infections Than U.S.

Defiance of the coronavirus rules is happening across rural India, and it is propelling this nation's virus caseload toward the No. 1 spot globally. Infections are rippling into every corner of this country of 1.3 billion people. The Indian news media is calling it "The Rural Surge." In the Indian megacities where the pandemic first hit, vigorous public awareness campaigns have left the populace mostly on guard. But when it comes to government efforts to contain the virus, rural India is resisting. In many villages, no one is wearing masks. There is no social distancing. People are refusing to get tested and they are hiding their sick.

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/world/asia/india-covid-19-rural.html

'Catastrophically short of doctors': Virus wallops Ukraine

Early in the pandemic, Ukraine's ailing health care system struggled with the outbreak, and authorities introduced a tight lockdown in March to prevent hospitals from getting overwhelmed. The number of cases slowed during the summer but began to rise again quickly, prompting the government at the end of August to close Ukraine's borders for a month. Despite that, the number of positive tests in the country reached a new peak of 4,661 a day in the first weekend of October. Overall, confirmed COVID-19 infections in the country have nearly doubled in the past month, topping 234,000, and experts say all reported numbers in all countries understate the true toll of the virus.

https://indianexpress.com/article/world/catastrophically-short-of-doctors-virus-wallops-ukraine-6716142/

Sweden tries to isolate COVID-19 cases without a lockdown as infections surge

Sweden, almost alone in Europe in rejecting a broad lockdown this northern spring, has introduced new guidelines to curb a surge in coronavirus infections but is sticking to its largely voluntary approach. The Nordic country, which only had minor restrictions throughout its epidemic, had until recently been spared by the second wave of COVID-19 cases currently sweeping Europe. Authorities' hopes that this was the result of collective immunity built as the disease spread rapidly through communities earlier in the year were dashed in recent days when a surge in new cases put Stockholm on track to reach last northern spring's infection record. The new measures, in force for less than a week, recommend that all members of a household should isolate for a week if one of them becomes infected. Those unable to work from home will be eligible for sick pay.

https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/the-wall-street-journal/sweden-tries-to-isolate-covid19-cases-without-a-lo

ckdown-as-infections-surge/news-story/bf670b3d296b7f0488a2c9f9a1f94000

Ukraine's medical system may not stand, health minister says

Ukraine's medical system could break down because of a surge in new coronavirus cases and the number of hospitalised people, the country's health minister warned on Thursday. Ukraine registered a record 5,397 COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, up from the previous record of 4,753 new cases reported on Wednesday. The number of deaths grew by 93 and reached 4,690, Maksym Stepanov told a televised briefing. "The medical system will simply not stand it if we all, without exception, simply do not begin to adhere to the rules," Stepanov said.

https://www.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-ukraine-cases/update-1-ukraines-medical-system-may-not-stand-health-minister-says-idUSL8N2GZ18M

Rising COVID cases will stall UK recovery, budget watchdog warns

A sharp rise in coronavirus cases is likely to cause Britain's economic recovery to stall until the resurgence comes under control, the country's budget watchdog said. Britain has recorded more than 14,000 new cases on each of the past two days, the most since mass testing began in April, and has increased curbs on socialising, with Scotland announcing the closure of pubs in its two biggest cities. "There will be some kind of hiatus in the recovery," said Charlie Bean, a former Bank of England deputy governor who now serves on the board of the Office for Budget Responsibility. "How long and how potentially deep that is, I think it's very difficult to know at this stage until we see how effective any measures are in bringing this resurgence of cases back under control," he told parliament's Treasury Committee.

https://in.reuters.com/article/us-britain-budget-obr-idINKBN26T003

New Lockdown

Jordan returns to weekend lockdown as COVID-19 cases mount

Jordan will enter a nationwide 48-hour lockdown on Friday for the first time in months as health officials worry a major spike in coronavirus infections could threaten its stretched healthcare system, officials said. The country has seen what officials say is an "exponential" rise, with around 10,000 cases confirmed in just over a week – a near-doubling of the total number of infections since the first cases in early March and a reversal what had been among the lowest infection and death rates in the Middle East. Senior officials are struggling to avoid a broader lockdown that the hard-hit economy can ill afford.

https://www.metro.us/jordan-returns-to-weekend/

Coronavirus: England expected to be split into three different lockdown tiers next week

England is expected to be carved into three different lockdown tiers next week, with millions of people facing tougher restrictions as the government tries to get a handle on rising coronavirus cases and hospital admissions. Pubs, restaurants and leisure facilities are expected to be closed in parts of the North put into the strictest tier, according to two sources who have seen blueprints of the current plans. Under the proposals, people living in the strictest tier - tier three - are also expected to be ordered not to have any social contact with anyone outside their household in any setting, according to one person familiar with the blueprints being drawn up by the government.

https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-three-tiered-lockdown-being-primed-for-england-with-no-household-mixing-among-rules-12098983

North of England leaders vow to oppose lockdown without financial support

Ministers are facing open revolt from leaders in northern England over fresh coronavirus restrictions due to be announced within days, with mayors, MPs, council chiefs and business groups vowing to fiercely oppose any new measures without substantial financial support. Pubs, bars and restaurants across Merseyside, Greater Manchester and parts of West Yorkshire and the north-east could be

forced to close next week in an effort to slow the region’s soaring infection rate. The leaders of the big northern cities are planning a formal alliance in opposition to any attempt by government to force restrictions on them without significant Treasury funding.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/08/north-of-england-leaders-vow-to-oppose-lockdown-without-financial-support?CMP%EF%BF%BD_gu=&utm_source%EF%BF%BDcebook=&fbclid=IwAR1wLpcpwA5Us3s7baPDjJm2YsStIceOeN6uPzsP1T2sT4x0_ndXAcKhXSM