

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

8th Mar 2021

Five Minute Briefing

This isn't done: Experts warn that no matter what our Covid end goal is we still have a ways to go

What is the end goal here?

- Get to zero cases
- Stop hospitalisations and deaths
- To get to an acceptable number of cases

Many predict a resurgence in COVID-19 at the end of this year - we have to know how to respond to this.

- If those surges are just cases and not hospitalisations and deaths because vaccines are preventing people from getting really sick - do we want to shut down society again?
- If it comes with hospitalisations and deaths, at what level do we raise the red flag and say we're shutting things down again
- These plans need to be developed right now

We don't get to normal in one country and that's it. The pandemic needs ending all over the world if we want to get back to life as it was before, the whole world needs to be vaccinated so we have a long way still to go.

Now is the time to spend a few billion in building up global surveillance networks for new pathogens, expanding the existing testing infrastructure and bulking up global vaccine manufacturing capability - if it is not being done now (when we know how damaging and disruptive a pandemic can be) will it ever get done? Another pandemic could be upon us at any moment and we're be off-guard once more and many will die

This isn't done yet - Experts warn that no matter what our Covid end goal is, we have a ways to go

'This isn't done': Experts warn that no matter what our Covid end goal is, we have a ways to go

Experts stressed now was the time, when the world was fully aware how damaging and disruptive a pandemic could be, to take just a few of the billions of dollars that are being spent in recovery and dedicating them toward building up global surveillance networks for new pathogens, expanding the existing testing infrastructure, and bulking up global vaccine manufacturing capability. "If we're not doing it now, we're not going to do it," Mina said. After all, another pandemic could begin at any moment. "We don't have to be taken off guard again," Mina said. "But if another pandemic starts today, we will be taken off guard."

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/03/05/this-isnt-done-covid-end-goal/>

Countries urge drug companies to share vaccine know-how

In an industrial neighborhood on the outskirts of Bangladesh's largest city lies a factory with

gleaming new equipment imported from Germany, its immaculate hallways lined with hermetically sealed rooms. It is operating at just a quarter of its capacity. It is one of three factories that The Associated Press found on three continents whose owners say they could start producing hundreds of millions of COVID-19 vaccines on short notice if only they had the blueprints and technical know-how. But that knowledge belongs to the large pharmaceutical companies who have produced the first three vaccines authorized by countries including Britain, the European Union and the U.S. — Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca. The factories are all still awaiting responses

<https://apnews.com/article/drug-companies-called-share-vaccine-info-22d92afbc3ea9ed519be007f8887bcf6>

COVID-19: UK should prepare now for 'difficult autumn' and 'hard winter', warns Public Health England official

The UK should prepare for a "difficult autumn" due to the threat of new coronavirus variants emerging and a potential surge in other respiratory viruses, a senior health official has warned. Dr Susan Hopkins, Public Health England's strategic response director for COVID-19, said the population may have less immunity to respiratory viruses such as flu due to the coronavirus pandemic. She told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show that it was "highly unlikely" that a new COVID variant would derail the plan to start easing England's lockdown "for the next three to five weeks". But Dr Hopkins added: "We'll need to monitor carefully as new strains come into the country from around the world."

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uk-should-prepare-for-difficult-autumn-warns-public-health-england-official-12238728>

Coronavirus variants should not derail English lockdown easing, says health official

The emergence of new variants of the coronavirus should not derail a plan to start easing a nationwide lockdown in England over the coming weeks, Public Health England (PHE) official Susan Hopkins said on Sunday. "I think it won't change it for the next three to five weeks, that would be highly unlikely," Hopkins, PHE's strategic response director, told the BBC's Andrew Marr show. "We will need to watch it carefully as new strains come into the country from around the world and we will need to be very ready for autumn."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-england-variants/coronavirus-variants-should-not-derail-english-lockdown-easing-says-health-official-idUSKBN2AZ08K>

Coronavirus: will immunity rapidly fade or last a lifetime?

The COVID vaccines are working. Data from Israel and Scotland shows that they are protecting people and may also be decreasing the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. If it all holds up, people will be protected from severe disease, the amount of virus will progressively decrease, and we can truly plan for a way out of the pandemic. Evidence is also growing that once you've been infected, there is a pretty good chance that you will be protected from further infections, or at the very least, have less severe disease. This makes sense, as it's why your immune system evolved in the first place. However, an important question in immunology, when it comes to infectious diseases and vaccines, is: how long protection might last? There are several variables here, from the type of pathogen infecting you, to how bad the initial disease is, to your overall health, and your age. All of this makes predicting what might happen with COVID challenging.

<https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-will-immunity-rapidly-fade-or-last-a-lifetime-155905>

The vaccinations versus the virus variations - the race is on

Coronavirus: Europe in vaccine race to save summer

Saving the summer depends on two Europe-wide problems: getting people vaccinated and then agreeing rules about whether or not the right to travel should be linked to your vaccination status. The chief economist of the Bank of Spain, Oscar Arce, told the Spanish newspaper El País: "If the vaccination levels are high in June, the tourist season will be saved. But if it's delayed to the end of the summer the economy will suffer a great deal. In those three months of radical uncertainty we

have a lot at stake."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56292087>

Chile vaccinates over 3.5 million people against COVID-19

More than 3.5 million people have been vaccinated in Chile against COVID-19 almost a month after the start of a mass inoculation campaign, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday. It said in a communique that a total of 3,512,326 people have been vaccinated in the country, with 2,259,013 over the age of 60. Vaccination is progressing according to plan, Minister of Health Enrique Paris said Tuesday, adding that "we will continue this process in order to inoculate priority groups by the end of March." Chile began vaccinating health workers at the end of December, and on Feb. 3, it started a mass vaccination of people aged 90 and above. The country's total accumulated COVID-19 cases was 832,512, along with 20,684 deaths, according to the ministry.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-03/03/c_139779922.htm

Uruguay starts vaccination campaign, last in South America

Uruguay, the last country in South America to receive delivery of coronavirus vaccines, started its inoculation campaign Monday with a focus on teachers, soldiers, police and firefighters. Some 90 vaccination centers countrywide opened their doors to give a first dose of the Chinese CoronaVac shot to some 140,000 essential workers, almost a year to the day since the country recorded its first cases of Covid-19 on March 13. "Today we have the means to confront this scourge," Health Minister Daniel Salinas told reporters, adding that Uruguay had secured orders for all the vaccines necessary to immunize everyone 18 and older in the country of 3.4 million people.

<https://news.yahoo.com/uruguay-starts-vaccination-campaign-last-170052934.html>

China says it aims to vaccinate 40% of population by June

Health experts in China say their country is lagging in its coronavirus vaccination rollout because it has the disease largely under control, but plans to inoculate 40% of its population by June. Zhong Nanshan, the leader of a group of experts attached to the National Health Commission, said the country has delivered 52.52 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines as of Feb. 28. He was speaking Monday at an online forum between U.S and Chinese medical experts hosted by the Brookings Institution and Tsinghua University. The target is the first China has offered publicly since it began its mass immunization campaign for key groups in mid-December.

<https://apnews.com/article/immunizations-coronavirus-pandemic-china-asia-pacific-taiwan-d5f6cfea6060b2a66b2d68b133210cf2>

Austria plans vaccine drive in area hit by SA virus variant

Austrian officials said Wednesday that they plan to offer vaccinations to most residents in a district that has seen significant numbers of infections with the South African coronavirus variant. Tyrol province's Schwaz district, east of the provincial capital of Innsbruck and home to about 84,000 people, has been a source of concern for weeks. Schwaz accounts for 66 of 88 currently active confirmed cases of the more transmissible variant in the province, the Austria Press Agency reported. The plan announced Wednesday calls for a vaccination drive starting next week. Health Minister Rudolf Anschober said the rollout will see vaccinations offered to all aged 16 and over.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-austria-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-2853bebaf5cef7d0adb253c3618e1218>

New Zealand's Auckland emerges from lockdown, Australia starts AstraZeneca vaccinations

Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city, emerged on Sunday from a strict weeklong lockdown imposed after a community cluster of the more contagious British coronavirus variant. There were no new local COVID-19 cases recorded on Sunday, health officials said, marking a full week of no community transmissions across the country. Footage on TVNZ, New Zealand's state-owned television network,

showed people lining up at coffee shops on Sunday morning with many saying they were feeling relieved. Auckland, a city of nearly two million, will continue to have limits on public gathering and masks are obligatory on public transport. Restrictions might be further eased on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-newzealand/new-zealands-auckland-emerges-from-lockdown-australia-starts-astrazeneca-vaccinations-idUSKBN2AY0Q7>

Vaccines are starting to reach the developing world

China provides COVID-19 vaccines to Arab countries

China provided on Thursday a batch of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines to the Arab League general secretariat in Cairo, fulfilling its promise to share the vaccines with other countries. The league's Assistant Secretary-General, Hossam Zaki, expressed his appreciation for China's medical assistance to the pan-Arab body. He said China's medical support will effectively enhance the anti-epidemic capabilities of the Arab world. "The Arab countries are willing to maintain long-term friendly cooperative relations with China and push the Arab-Chinese strategic partnership to a higher level," the AL senior official said.

<http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202103/06/WS6042be2da31024ad0baad30b.html>

AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccines Arrive in Uganda

Uganda received 864,000 doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford COVID-19 vaccine on March 5, shipped under the international COVAX initiative. "The long awaited Covid Vaccines are here," tweeted Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary Dr. Diana Atwine. "The vaccines are safe and efficacious." The Ministry of Health said that vaccinations would begin on March 10, and proceed in a phased rollout with the most at risk receiving doses first.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccines-arrive-034956793.html>

Malawi receives first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines from COVAX - Malawi

Malawi received COVID-19 vaccine doses shipped via the COVAX Facility, a partnership between CEPI, Gavi, UNICEF and WHO. This is a historic step towards the goal of COVAX to ensure equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines globally, in what will be the largest vaccine procurement and supply operation in history. The delivery is part of a first wave of arrivals in Africa, and the first tranche of allocations for Malawi that will take place in the coming months and year through the COVAX Facility. The COVAX Facility shipped 360,000 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine from Serum Institute of India from Mumbai, India, to Lilongwe, Malawi, arriving on the evening of 5 March. The arrival in Lilongwe marks a milestone for Malawi in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic which has claimed over 1000 lives and created a heavy burden on health facilities.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/malawi/malawi-receives-first-shipment-covid-19-vaccines-covax>

Vaccines are being tested against variants

Exclusive: Oxford study indicates AstraZeneca effective against Brazil variant, source says

Preliminary data from a study conducted at the University of Oxford indicates that the COVID-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca PLC is effective against the P1, or Brazilian, variant, a source with knowledge of the study told Reuters on Friday. The data indicates that the vaccine will not need to be modified in order to protect against the variant, which is believed to have originated in the Amazonian city of Manaus, said the source, who requested anonymity as the results have not yet been made public. The source did not provide the exact efficacy of the vaccine against the variant. They said the full results of the study should be released soon, possibly in March.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-brazil-variant-exc/exclusive-oxford-study-indicates-astrazeneca-effective-against-brazil-variant-source-says-idUSKBN2AX1NS>

Willingness to take a COVID-19 vaccine is rising

COVID-19 vaccine confidence is growing, global survey suggests

A survey of 14 countries* which ran between November 2020 and February 2021 found that almost 6 in 10 people (58%) would take a vaccine if it was offered to them now and that willingness has risen in 9 of the countries. Led by Imperial College London's Institute of Global Health Innovation (IGHI) in collaboration with YouGov, more than 13,500 people took part in each survey, which has also highlighted major differences in attitudes towards vaccines around the globe.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/216493/covid-19-vaccine-confidence-growing-global-survey/>

Steady rise in number seeking vaccine approvals

COVID-19 vaccine: Mexico experts recommend approving Bharat Biotech's Covaxin

The interim results from the vaccine manufacturer's late stage trials shows its COVID-19 vaccine to be about 81 per cent effective in preventing illness from the coronavirus.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2021/mar/06/covid-19-vaccine-mexico-experts-recommend-approving-bharat-biotechs-covaxin-2273050.html>

Moderna, via Takeda, seeks authorization for COVID-19 vaccine in Japan

Shares of Moderna Inc. were down 0.9% in premarket trading on Friday after the company said it is pursuing approval for its COVID-19 vaccine in Japan in partnership with Takeda Pharmaceutical Co. . Takeda submitted the new drug application and will be tasked with importing and distributing the vaccine from the Cambridge, Mass.-based company. Takeda is also conducting the Phase 1/2 trial of the vaccine in adults who are at least 20 years old there; enrollment ended in February. If approved, Takeda will distribute 50 million doses of Moderna's two-dose vaccine in Japan in the first half of 2021.

<https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/moderna--via-takeda--seeks-authorization-for-covid-19-vaccine-in-japan-9884053>

Vaccine hesitancy numbers remain stubbornly resistant

Vaccine hesitancy in Pakistan heightens risk of COVID resurgence

Pakistan's success at managing the coronavirus pandemic – with relatively low rates of severe disease and death – and distrust of government-led and foreign-funded public health initiatives has driven vaccine hesitancy, which could put the country's fragile gains against COVID-19 at risk, say experts and officials. Since the pandemic began, Pakistan, a country of 220 million people, has registered more than 586,000 cases of the virus, with 13,128 deaths, as per government data.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/5/in-pakistan-vaccine-hesitancy-heightens-risk-of-covid-19-resurge>

Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy a speed bump to America's vaccine roll-out

Polls show that about a third of Americans are sceptical about vaccines or do not want to get them, highlighting the challenges of getting 70 to 85 per cent of America's population vaccinated. Experts like Dr Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, cite that figure as the threshold needed to stamp out the spread of Covid-19. The upshot is that after the initial crush of demand for vaccines exceeding limited supply, there will eventually be more vaccines available in America than people who want to take them.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/covid-19-vaccine-hesitancy-a-speed-bump-to-americas-vaccine-roll-out>

Where the pandemic still rages

As Brazil tackles contagious new COVID-19 variant, its crisis is a warning to the world, say scientists

Preliminary studies suggest that the variant that swept through the city of Manaus is not only more contagious, but it also appears able to infect some people who have already recovered from other versions of the virus. And the variant has slipped Brazil's borders, showing up in two dozen other

countries and in small numbers in the United States. Although trials of a number of vaccines indicate they can protect against severe illness even when they do not prevent infection with the variant, most of the world has not been inoculated. That means even people who had recovered and thought they were safe for now might still be at risk and that world leaders might, once again, be lifting restrictions too soon. “You need vaccines to get in the way of these things,” said William Hanage, a public health researcher at Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, speaking of variants that might cause reinfections. “The immunity you get with your cemeteries running out of room, even that will not be enough to protect you.”

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/as-brazil-tackles-contagious-new-covid-19-variant-its-crisis-is-a-warning-to-the-world-say-scientists-9374611.html>

Brazil's Covid-19 Crisis Is A Warning To The Whole World, Scientists Say

COVID-19 has already left a trail of death and despair in Brazil, one of the worst in the world. Now, a year into the pandemic, the country is setting another wrenching record. No other nation that experienced such a major outbreak is still grappling with record-setting death tolls and a health care system on the brink of collapse. Many other hard-hit nations are, instead, taking tentative steps toward a semblance of normalcy. But Brazil is battling a more contagious variant that has trampled one major city and is spreading to others, even as Brazilians toss away precautionary measures that could keep them safe. On Tuesday, Brazil recorded more than 1,700 COVID-19 deaths, the highest single-day toll of the pandemic.

<https://www.forbesindia.com/article/global-news/brazils-covid19-crisis-is-a-warning-to-the-whole-world-scientists-say/66815/1>

Coronavirus Crisis in Brazil Deepens as Covid Variant Spreads and Deaths Spike

The three cities exemplify the wildly diverse experience that has been Covid in Brazil. Restrictions have varied from city to city and are often eased, only to be reimposed weeks later — a mishmash of policies that have little to no enforcement, lowering their efficacy and prolonging the situation. Politicians setting the rules have been caught evading their own orders and often publicly bicker over who’s to blame for the crisis. The glimmer of hope offered by vaccination remains elusive. The country has only a few doses at hand, not enough to cover even the priority groups. Jonas Donizette, a former mayor who heads a grouping of 400 municipal chiefs, blames the federal government for not acquiring vaccines. Cities, he says, are going off on their own to try and buy them, something that has never happened before.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-03-05/coronavirus-crisis-in-brazil-deepens-as-covid-variant-spreads-and-deaths-spike>

Russia's Excess Death Toll Approaches 400K

Russia recorded more than 55,000 excess deaths in January, data from the country’s official statistics agency (Rosstat) published Friday showed. Since the start of the pandemic until the end of January — the latest such data is available — Russia has now recorded 394,000 more deaths than in the previous period. That represents a 24% increase in fatality and one of the highest excess death tolls in the world, even after adjusting for population. Excess deaths are calculated by comparing fatalities during the pandemic with mortality rates in the same months of previous years. It is seen by demographers as the most reliable indicator of the human toll of the coronavirus.

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/03/05/russias-excess-death-toll-approaches-400k-a73168>

Where restrictions are tightening

Hungary tightens pandemic restrictions amid rising deaths

Authorities in Hungary are tightening pandemic restrictions in an effort to mitigate a rapid rise in deaths and hospitalizations caused by COVID-19. Businesses will be required to close their doors for two weeks beginning Monday, with only grocery stores, pharmacies and gas stations permitted to

remain open. Kindergartens and primary schools will also be closed until April 7. Sporting events may only be held without spectators, and businesses are urged to allow employees to work from home.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/hungary-tightens-pandemic-restrictions-amid-rising-deaths-hungary-covid-buda-pest-ap-cases-b1812375.html>

Norway should prepare for more COVID-19 restrictions, PM says

Norway will likely need stronger restrictions to combat the latest resurgence in coronavirus infections, Minister Erna Solberg said on Sunday. "Ahead of us is another hill to climb, probably with tighter national measures before we can ease and then lift the restrictions," Solberg said. The Nordic country has maintained one of Europe's lowest rates of infection but a recent resurgence in cases has led to concerns that a third wave of the outbreak may be underway. In the capital region, where the more contagious variant first identified in Britain as B.1.1.7 now dominates, non-essential stores are already closed, restaurants are only allowed to provide takeaway service and some schools are shut.

https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-norway-idUKKBN2AZ0L3?taid=60453c84d4aa3f00019192ae&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

Czechs seek help abroad to treat their COVID-19 patients

With hospitals in some parts of the Czech Republic filled up, the country has turned to Germany and other European countries with a request for help. The Czech Republic, one of the hardest-hit European Union countries, has been facing a surge of new cases attributed to a highly infectious coronavirus variant that is believed to originate in Britain. Interior Minister Jan Hamacek said on Wednesday neighboring Germany has offered dozens of beds in its hospitals to treat Czech COVID-19 patients. He said 19 of them were immediately ready. Hamacek said that Switzerland was another country ready to help with 20 beds in its hospitals while offering to take care of the transport of the patients.

<https://apnews.com/article/europe-prague-coronavirus-pandemic-czech-republic-germany-df230eac5ede39903a81e956b4a9525>

Vaccine nationalism

France, EU back Italy's decision to block Covid-19 vaccine shipment to Australia

Europe's vaccine solidarity got a boost on Friday after France said it could emulate Italy's move to block coronavirus vaccine exports outside the European Union if that's what is needed to enforce the bloc's own contracts with drugs manufacturers. The European Union defended the Italian authorities' decision to stop a large shipment of doses destined for Australia as part of a longstanding feud with drug manufacturer AstraZeneca, and Germany. The EU's executive arm said the decision was not targeting Australia but that it had been taken to ensure that AstraZeneca delivers the number of doses it committed to dispatching to EU countries.

<https://www.france24.com/en/health/20210305-france-eu-back-italy-s-decision-to-block-covid-19-vaccine-shipment-to-australia>

Australian PM plays down Italy vaccine blockade

Australia's prime minister on Friday played down the impact of Italy's landmark decision to block the export of 250,000 Covid-19 vaccine doses due to be delivered. Scott Morrison insisted the blocked shipment of the AstraZeneca jabs was understandable and would not affect Australia's vaccine programme. "This particular shipment was not one we'd counted on for the rollout, and so we will continue unabated," Morrison said.

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210305-australian-pm-plays-down-italy-vaccine-blockade>