

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

25th Apr 2022

Lockdown Exit

Biden admin to promote availability of COVID antiviral pill

President Joe Biden and his administration want Americans and their doctors to know that the country has an ample supply of the life-saving COVID-19 antiviral treatment Paxlovid and that it no longer needs to be rationed. First approved in December, supply of the Pfizer regimen was initially very limited, but as COVID-19 cases across the country have fallen and manufacturing has increased it is now far more abundant. The White House is now moving to raise awareness of the pill and taking steps to make it easier to access. Paxlovid, when administered within five days of symptoms appearing, has been proven to bring about 90% reduction in hospitalizations and deaths among patients most likely to get severe disease.

<https://apnews.com/article/biden-covid-business-health-medication-fa6cd0dcc9dec4d1076b14a521e9a6e5>

Shanghai, China Covid Lockdown: Residents Complain Online

Chinese internet users rallied to outwit government censors on a video documenting weeks of lockdown in Shanghai, flooding social media feeds as frustration continued to escalate over strict Covid Zero rules. The six-minute video titled "The Sound of April" was posted on Friday and soon got censored as it went viral. Chinese Wechat users then uploaded the film from different accounts and in various forms including upside-down and mirrored versions until late night, as newly-uploaded clips were also removed. The film, on a slowly-moving frame of overhead shots of the city in black-and-white, spliced in sound clips from government press briefings, voice call recordings seeking medical help and information transparency, hungry and frustrated residents chanting in unison for government rations, and chats between neighbors and ordinary people helping each other out.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-23/china-web-users-race-to-post-censored-video-on-lockdown-troubles>

Covid-19 Restrictions in Israel: Indoor Mask Mandate Dropped

Israel has lifted an indoor mask mandate in place for nearly a year as the country's new cases of coronavirus continue to drop. The end of the masking requirement took effect Saturday night. Masks remain mandatory in hospitals, elderly care facilities and on international flights. Israel has seen new cases of COVID-19 drop since the peak of the latest wave of infections in January. Serious cases of coronavirus have plummeted from a high of over 1,200 during the omicron variant outbreak to around 200. Since the start of the pandemic two years ago, Israel has recorded over 4 million cases of coronavirus and at least 10,658 deaths — over one-fifth of them since January, according to the Health Ministry

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-24/israel-lifts-indoor-mask-mandate-as-coronavirus-cases-drop>

No Covid tests on arrival for vaccinated travellers from May 1

The Test & Go process for foreign arrivals will be terminated at the end of the month and vaccinated travellers will be only advised to do self-antigen tests for Covid-19 from May 1, to stimulate tourism and the economy, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said on Friday. "Tourism is recovering and antigen tests will be more convenient and faster for visitors," Gen Prayut said after chairing a meeting of the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) at Government House. "Many countries are relaxing travel restrictions significantly and our country depends considerably on tourism to support our economy," the prime minister said.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2298846/no-covid-tests-on-arrival-for-vaccinated-travellers-from-may-1>

Woman catches Covid twice in 20 days

31-year-old healthcare worker caught Covid twice within 20 days, researchers in Spain have claimed. The woman was infected by the Delta variant in late December but then caught the Omicron strain in January, tests from the research showed. The woman did not develop symptoms after her first positive PCR test but less than three weeks later, she developed a cough and a fever which made her take a second test. Following further tests, it was discovered the woman had been infected by two strains of Covid.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/woman-covid-twice-20-days-spain-health-care-worker-omicron-delta-b995389.html>

Shanghai easing virus rules, Hong Kong ending entry ban

Officials in Shanghai promised Friday to ease anti-virus controls on truck drivers that are hampering food supplies and trade, while Hong Kong's government announced the end of a 2-year-old ban on non-residents flying into the city as its outbreak fades. Streets in Shanghai were largely empty despite an easing of restrictions that confined most of its 25 million people to their homes. Many residents still were barred from leaving their neighborhoods. A deputy mayor, Zhang Wei, promised "every effort" to resolve problems that prompted complaints about lack of food and fears the shutdown of China's most populous city might disrupt global trade.

<https://apnews.com/00d51808c0e637e749b4fcb60cd101a4>

COVID-19 third leading cause of death again in 2021- U.S. study

COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death in the United States for the second year in a row in 2021, with death rates rising for most age groups, a government study showed on Friday. COVID-19 was the underlying or contributing cause of 460,513 deaths in the United States last year, a nearly 20% jump compared to 2020, the study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed. The researchers analyzed death certificate data for deaths occurring among residents in the United States during January to December last year. They found that 2021 saw the highest overall death rate since 2003, with heart disease and cancer being the first and the second leading cause of death, respectively.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/covid-19-third-leading-cause-death-again-2021-us-study-2022-04-22/>

New Details of Shanghai Nursing Home Covid Deaths Suggest City Is Overwhelmed

China's policy of lockdowns, coupled with low vaccination rates among older people, hasn't been effective during the highly contagious Omicron wave. Despite a high rate of vaccination in China overall, with 88% in the country vaccinated, millions of elderly people, including most of Donghai's residents, remain unvaccinated. In Shanghai, only 62% of people 60 and over are vaccinated. The rate drops to a minuscule 15% for those over 80. Many are suspicious of the shots, skeptical of Chinese brands or vaccines in general, while others figured full vaccination of people around them would be enough of a shield.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/shanghai-nursing-home-covid-deaths-11650641053>

UK patient had COVID-19 for 505 days straight, study shows

A U.K. patient with a severely weakened immune system had COVID-19 for almost a year and a half, scientists reported, underscoring the importance of protecting vulnerable people from the coronavirus. There's no way to know for sure whether it was the longest-lasting COVID-19 infection because not everyone gets tested, especially on a regular basis like this case. But at 505 days, "it certainly seems to be the longest reported infection," said Dr. Luke Blagdon Snell, an infectious disease expert at the Guy's & St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. Snell's team plans to present several "persistent" COVID-19 cases at an infectious diseases meeting in Portugal this weekend.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-infectious-diseases-1987841b2ed3f2b35d2e9153a6b9375c>

Weekly Covid cases continue to fall in Africa

Africa is experiencing its longest-running decline in Covid-19 infections since the onset of the pandemic. This is according to the World Health Organisation Africa (WHO Africa), which said weekly cases have fallen for the past 16 weeks, while deaths have dropped for the past eight. Infections—largely due to the Omicron-driven fourth pandemic wave – have tanked from a peak of over 308 000 cases weekly at the start of the year to less than 20 000 in the week ending on April 10. Over the past week, around 18 000 cases and 239 deaths were recorded, a decline of 29% and 37% respectively compared with the week before.

<https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news/weekly-covid-cases-continue-to-fall-in-africa-843641f6-c571-43d1-8dd0-3d0704b7ce3c>

South Australia records four new COVID-19-linked deaths along with an increase in daily cases

South Australia has recorded four COVID-related deaths along with 4,500 new infections. Three men — aged in their 70s — and a man in his 80s who tested positive to the virus have passed away. There are 246 people with the virus in hospital, including 10 people in ICU and two people on a ventilator. The number of active cases has also risen for the first time in almost a fortnight – to 28,991. The number of new cases jumped despite a 13 per cent reduction in testing.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-22/south-australia-records-four-covid-19-deaths/101007662>

Exit Strategies

Covid-19 Cases Jump in Beijing as New Deaths Triple in Shanghai

Beijing said it is at a critical point in its efforts to halt a Covid-19 outbreak in the city, as new cases spread from school students and a tour group, while deaths in Shanghai more than tripled from a day earlier. The Chinese capital recorded 22 new cases on Sunday, its highest daily tally this year. Shanghai, which a week ago had recorded no new deaths in the latest wave of infections, said 39 Covid patients died Saturday—more than three times Friday's toll. While still low by global standards, the latest numbers are a challenge to the ability of China's top leaders to wipe out outbreaks with their zero-Covid policy. As pockets of infections flare up in the country's most important cities, local officials are desperate to avoid a repeat of the economic disruption and growing public discontent seen in the financial hub of Shanghai, large parts of which have been under lockdown for weeks.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-cases-surge-in-beijing-as-deaths-triple-in-shanghai-11650788552>

People who live, work in Beijing's Chaoyang will have to take 3 COVID tests in coming week

Beijing's Chaoyang district will require people who live and work in the district to undergo three coronavirus tests this coming week, the city government of Beijing said on Sunday. Chaoyang is the biggest district in Beijing and is home to 3.45 million people. The city government's requirement comes after Beijing reported 22 new coronavirus cases on Saturday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/people-who-live-work-beijings-chaoyang-will-have-take-3-covid-tests-coming-week-2022-04-24/>

Beijing on alert after COVID-19 cases discovered in school

Beijing is on alert after 10 middle school students tested positive for COVID-19, in what city officials said was an initial round of testing. City officials suspended classes in the school for a week following the positive test results on Friday. The Chinese capital also reported four other confirmed cases that day that were counted separately. Mainland China reported 24,326 new community-transmitted infections on Saturday, with the vast majority of them asymptomatic cases in Shanghai, where enforcement of a strict “zero-COVID” strategy has drawn global attention. China has doubled down on the approach even in face of the highly transmissible omicron variant.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-china-beijing-shanghai-65dd1070e40f9c6bc74ae7458192a971>

Shanghai tightens city's lockdown in 'societal zero-Covid' pursuit

Shanghai added 17,629 new cases in the previous 24 hours, 4.7 per cent fewer than a day earlier, according to data released on Friday. Symptomatic cases fell 26.7 per cent to 1,931, in the biggest one-day decline since March 1, while 11 patients died

<https://www.scmp.com/business/china-business/article/3175131/coronavirus-shanghai-extends-standstill-order-april-26>

Mask mandates return to US college campuses as cases rise

The final weeks of the college school year have been disrupted yet again by COVID-19 as universities bring back mask mandates, switch to online classes and scale back large gatherings in response to upticks in coronavirus infections. Colleges in Washington, D.C., New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Texas have reimposed a range of virus measures, with Howard University moving to remote learning amid a surge in cases in the nation's capital. This is the third straight academic year that has been upended by COVID-19, meaning soon-to-be seniors have yet to experience a normal college year.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-new-york-education-pennsylvania-04bea7874bb2351e71525f3068758a19>

Singapore Phases Out the Use of a Controversial Covid Contact Tracing App

Singapore will move away from a key Covid-19 contact tracing app that previously attracted controversy due to government disclosures about its use for criminal investigations, but retain the data under a previously passed law. The health ministry on Friday said most venues will no longer require the public to check in using the TraceTogether program from April 26, a mobile application and device used by authorities for identifying the close contacts and locations visited by infected persons.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-22/singapore-phases-out-use-of-controversial-contact-tracing-app?srnd=technology-vp>

Polish health minister upbeat on Moderna vaccine talks

Poland can reach a compromise with Moderna on increasing the flexibility of COVID-19 vaccine contracts, the health minister said on Friday, striking an upbeat tone after initial talks with the U.S. pharmaceutical company. Poland has said it will not take or pay for more doses of COVID-19 vaccine under the European Union's supply contract as it already has sufficient doses, potentially setting the stage for a legal battle with manufacturers. The country has seen lower vaccine uptake than many other European countries and is seeing its public finances stretched by the effects of the war in neighbouring Ukraine, which has resulted in 2.9 million refugees entering Poland.

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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/philadelphia-lifts-indoor-mask-mandate-11650659319>

China's GDP, dubious COVID statistics and East Timor's election

Not for the first time, China once again dominated the news this week. The release of new economic data provided a temperature check of the world's second-largest economy, while dubious COVID-19 death rates focused attention on Beijing's reputation for secrecy and narrative control at all

costs. Elsewhere, Asia's youngest nation went to the polls, and Japan got a rare taste of rising inflation after decades of sluggish economic growth.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/4/22/chinas-gdp-dodgy-covid-figures-and-east-timors-election>

Thailand to 'fully re-open'

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<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2298946/thailand-to-fully-re-open>

COVID rules are winding back, but some Australians are still locking down

Cities around Australia are again heaving with life. Masks are off, vaccine mandates are being wound back, capacity limits are a thing of the past and close contact rules are at their most relaxed for more than two years. "I think it's fantastic for everyone that can partake in it and feels comfortable to do so," said Victorian man Stephen Feitsma. "I wish I could, that we could do the same." Mr Feitsma spoke to the ABC from his home on Melbourne's Mornington Peninsula, where he has spent almost all of his time for the last two years in a bid to avoid being exposed to COVID-19.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-23/immunocompromised-australians-still-living-in-fear-as-covid-rule/101007956>

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Partisan Exits

Shanghai Reports Record Daily Covid Deaths in Current Outbreak

Shanghai reported its highest number of daily Covid-19 deaths in the current outbreak, as China continues to stick to its Covid Zero policy with strict lockdown measures imposed in the city. The city recorded 39 fatalities for Saturday, bringing its total number of virus-related deaths to 87 since late February, according to a report on Sunday by the Shanghai Health Commission. The average age of the people who died was 78.7 and all had underlying diseases, according to the report. Shanghai logged 21,058 new local Covid infections, the vast majority of which were mild or asymptomatic cases, the commission said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-24/shanghai-reports-record-daily-covid-deaths-in-current-outbreak>

China should act to ease COVID impact, boost growth over 5%, central bank official says

China should take steps to soften the economic impact of COVID-19 and boost annual economic growth back above 5%, a top central bank official said on Sunday. Wang Yiming, a member of the Monetary Policy Committee of the People's Bank of China, told an economic forum the effective management of macroeconomic policies was critical in laying the foundation for the country to achieve the national growth target of around 5.5%. Gross domestic product rose 4.8% in the first quarter from the same period last year.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-should-act-ease-covid-impact-boost-growth-over-5-cbank-official-2022-04->

Rio's Carnival parade returns after long pandemic hiatus

Colorful floats and flamboyant dancers are delighting tens of thousands jammed into Rio de Janeiro's iconic Sambadrome, putting on a delayed Carnival celebration after the pandemic halted the dazzling displays. Rio de Janeiro's top samba schools began strutting their stuff late Friday, which was the first evening of the two-night spectacle. Ketula Melo, 38, a muse in the Imperatriz Leopoldinense school dressed as the Iemanjá deity of Afro-Brazilian religions, was thrilled to be back at the Sambadrome. "These two years were horrible. Now we can be happy again," Melo said as she was about to enter Friday night wearing a black and white costume made of shells that barely covered her body.

<https://apnews.com/4b60a46eac0fe4e4182bf5bd6d6d9908>

Shanghai Lockdown Bolsters a Fringe Independence Movement

Stewing resentment over a government lockdown in Shanghai is bolstering a fringe idea: independence for China's most cosmopolitan city. Over much of the past month, as the world has shed Covid-19 restrictions, 25 million Shanghainese have been confined to their homes to crush an outbreak. The paralysis of China's richest city has astounded its urbane residents, who are normally spoiled for choice with 100,000 restaurants but are now scrounging for food. This painful episode is providing a ragtag group of pro-independence activists born in the city but living in such places as New York and London new urgency to promote their unconventional plan.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/shanghai-lockdown-bolsters-a-fringe-independence-movement-11650706204>

Is Covid-19 Emergency Over? For Both Political Parties, It Depends on Issue

Finding the right policies to battle a global pandemic was hard enough. For the White House, unwinding some of those policies is becoming even more complicated. From restrictions along the U.S.-Mexican border to federal mask mandates, the Biden administration is facing legal challenges and political minefields in determining the fate of an array of pandemic-era rules that either were put in place by former President Donald Trump or instituted during the start of Mr. Biden's presidency. Rolling back some of the policies, such as the so-called Title 42 border rule that allows for migrants to be quickly expelled, or student-loan forgiveness, has touched off intraparty fights, dividing progressives and moderates within the Democratic Party. For Democrats, the administration's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic could present challenges ahead of the November midterm elections, with many incumbent members of Congress facing vulnerabilities and Mr. Biden's narrow majorities at risk.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/is-covid-19-emergency-over-for-both-political-parties-it-depends-on-issue-11650706204?mod=hp_lead_pos8

Mask Mandate Is Gone, but Turbulence Remains for Airlines, Fliers

For two years, masks were a fraught issue for airlines, comforting some passengers, angering others and making flight attendants into enforcers. Now, the masks are gone—but the friction is set to continue. Airlines are hopeful that easing mask rules will tamp down on in-flight conflicts, after a federal judge in Florida this week struck down the Biden administration's Covid-19 mask mandate for public transportation. The Justice Department has said it would appeal that decision, but in the meantime, the mandate isn't being enforced and U.S. carriers have said masks are optional for passengers and staff. It has also left airlines to decide what to do with thousands of passengers who broke mask rules during the pandemic, and earned bans. United Airlines Holdings Inc. President Brett Hart said the Chicago-based airline is getting back in touch with people who were banned from United flights over the course of the pandemic.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/mask-mandate-is-gone-but-turbulence-remains-for-airlines-fliers-11650639388?mod=hp>

NYC Suspends School Staff for Allegedly Using Fake Vaccine IDs

The New York City Department of Education suspended about 70 employees for allegedly using fake vaccination cards, the teachers' union said. The department placed the employees on unpaid leave with benefits, effective April 25, and the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District and law enforcement agencies are investigating the incident. "Fraudulent vaccination cards are not only illegal, they also undermine the best line of protection our schools have against Covid-19 – universal adult vaccination," said Nathaniel Styer, a spokesperson for the DOE. It wasn't immediately clear how the department discovered the alleged fake cards.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-22/nyc-suspends-school-staff-for-alleged-fake-vaccine-ids>

A Social-Media Scandal Cost Top Chinese Scientist \$2 Billion

Wu Yiling is one of China's highest ranked scientists. With a fortune that neared \$6 billion, he was also part of the world's 500 richest people. That was until last week, when the son of another Chinese billionaire sparked debate online with a post doubting the efficacy of Wu's drug used to treat Covid-19. The herbal remedy, Lianhua Qingwen, is one of three traditional treatments the central government has recommended and was sent to households in Shanghai and Hong Kong during the latest omicron wave.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-22/a-social-media-scandal-cost-top-chinese-scientist-2-billion>

Judge who fired employee for not getting vaccinated did not abuse power - ruling

A bankruptcy judge who fired an employee who was denied a religious exemption from a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement did not engage in discrimination or an abuse of power, a federal appeals court judge ruled. Chief U.S. Circuit Judge Michael Chagares in a newly released opinion dismissed a complaint the ex-employee filed with the Judicial Council of the 3rd Circuit in a rare judicial misconduct case over a federal court employee vaccine requirement. The decision is dated Feb. 22 but was only released this week. As is typical with cases filed under the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act, the ruling did not identify the complainant, judge or even court to which it pertains.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/judge-who-fired-employee-not-getting-vaccinated-did-not-abuse-power-ruling-2022-04-22/>

Portugal becomes first EU country to give fast-track entry to Britons since Brexit in move that could spark a 'domino effect'

Is seen as bid to lure Britons away from rival destinations such as Spain and Italy British passports must now be checked manually, increasing waiting times But passport e-gate lanes were set up for Britons at Portugal airports this week

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-21/portugal-lifts-face-mask-requirement-health-minister-says>

Continued Lockdown

Rise in Hong Kong suicides during Covid should spark action

In late February, the number of suicides in Hong Kong began to rise; at the peak on March 23, four people committed suicide every day on a seven-day rolling average basis. Professor Paul Yip Siu-fai, director of the University of Hong Kong's Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, noted that if the trend continued, the number of suicide cases this year could hit 1,400, exceeding the historical peak during the severe acute respiratory syndrome epidemic 19 years ago when 1,264 people, or 18.8 per 100,000 people, took their own lives. A government survey in 2010-13 estimated that one in seven Hongkongers aged 16 to 75 suffers from anxiety, depression or other mood disorders. Ageing can also have a negative impact on mental health.

<https://www.scmp.com/comment/letters/article/3175123/rise-hong-kong-suicides-during-covid-shows-need-boost-mental-health>

Thailand ends mandatory quarantine for vaccinated visitors

Visitors to Thailand who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus will no longer need to undergo any test or quarantine on arrival starting May 1, a measure the authorities hope will help rejuvenate the country's lucrative tourism industry. "Many countries have already eased their restrictions," Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said Friday. "We are a country that relies on the tourism industry, especially during these times. This will help move the economy forward." Under the new rules announced by the Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration, unvaccinated travelers will still have to provide proof of negative results from a RT-PCR test taken no more than 72 hours before arrival. All visitors still must register with an online "Thailand Pass" system and provide proof of health insurance with coverage of at least \$10,000 for COVID-19 treatment.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-business-health-thailand-prayuth-chan-ocha-b0aab05cc60e1284f9ec628f545e93f9>

Shanghai lockdown takes heavy toll on young families

Residents trying to juggle work and taking care of preschoolers are among the hardest hit by the prolonged restrictions. Many say their biggest worry is the quarantine rules which have led to parents being separated from their children

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3175273/shanghai-lockdown-takes-heavy-toll-young-families>

Scientific Viewpoint

Long Covid May Be Result of Coronavirus Persisting in Feces

Covid-19 patients can harbor the coronavirus in their feces for months after infection, researchers found, stoking concern that its persistence can aggravate the immune system and cause long Covid symptoms. In the largest study tracking SARS-CoV-2 RNA in feces and Covid symptoms, scientists at California's Stanford University found that about half of infected patients shed traces of the virus in their waste in the week after infection and almost 4% patients still emit them seven months later.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-15/coronavirus-persisting-in-feces-offers-clues-to-long-covid-cause>

EU regulator backs using Pfizer COVID shot as booster after other vaccines

A European Medicines Agency (EMA) committee on Friday recommended approving the use of Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine, Comirnaty, as a booster for adults who have previously been inoculated with other vaccines. The recommendation from Europe's drug regulator comes days after global COVID-19 cases surpassed 500 million, according to a Reuters tally, as the highly contagious BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron surges in many countries. Some European countries are now seeing a slower uptick in new cases, or even a decline, but the region is still reporting over 1 million cases about every two days, according to the Reuters tally published on Thursday

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-regulator-backs-using-pfizer-covid-shot-booster-after-other-vaccines-2022-04-22/>

'Best therapeutic choice': WHO backs Pfizer's COVID antiviral

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has given its backing to Pfizer's Paxlovid treatment for COVID-19 after studies showed the antiviral pill reduced the risk of high-risk patients being admitted to hospital by 85 percent. The WHO announced on Thursday it was making a "strong recommendation" for the use of Paxlovid - a combination of nirmatrelvir and ritonavir - for people with mild and moderate COVID-19 but at risk of hospital admission, calling it the "best therapeutic choice for high-risk patients to date".

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/22/best-therapeutic-choice-who-backs-pfizers-covid-anti-viral>

Spanish health worker battled Delta and Omicron within three weeks of each other, scientists find

People can get reinfected with Covid within three weeks, scientists say. Experts have told how a 31-year-old Spanish healthcare worker battled Delta and Omicron within a 20-day period. Researchers

believe the unidentified woman's case is the shortest reinfection gap since the pandemic began. The woman, whose battle with the virus was showcased at a medical conference, had received her Covid booster vaccine. Doctors in Catalonia who treated her it shows fully jabbed people 'cannot assume they're protected against reinfection' — even if they have battled the virus before. Dr Gemma Recio, of the Institut Catala de la Salut, added: 'This case highlights the potential of Omicron to evade the previous immunity acquired either from a natural infection with other variants or from vaccines. 'In other words, people who have had Covid cannot assume that they are protected against reinfection, even if they have been fully vaccinated.'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10734977/Spanish-health-worker-battled-Delta-Omicron-three-weeks-scientists-find.html>

Patient died after 505-day Covid infection, the longest on record

UK doctors treated what they think is the longest Covid infection on record: 505 days. The patient was immunocompromised and eventually died. The patient first caught Covid in early 2020. They had symptoms and the infection was confirmed with a PCR test. They were in and out of hospital many times over the next 72 weeks, for both routine checks and care. On each occasion – about 50 in all – they tested positive, meaning they still had Covid. The doctors, from King's College London and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, say detailed lab analysis revealed it was the same, persistent infection, rather than repeated bouts.

<https://boingboing.net/2022/04/22/man-died-after-505-day-covid-infection-the-longest-on-record.html>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Shanghai reports 39 new COVID-related deaths on April 23

The Chinese financial hub of Shanghai reported 39 new deaths among its COVID-19 patients on April 23, up from 12 the day before, the local government said on Sunday. The city also recorded 19,657 new local asymptomatic coronavirus cases, down from 20,634 a day earlier. The number of confirmed symptomatic infections stood at 1,401, also down from 2,736 the previous day. Shanghai is currently battling China's biggest-ever COVID-19 outbreak.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-shanghai-reports-39-new-covid-related-deaths-april-23-2022-04-24/>

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https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-shanghai-reports-39-new-covid-related-deaths-april-23-2022-04-24/?taid=6264a8207d8a32000141dbdc&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

20,052 new Covid cases, 129 more deaths

The country registered 20,052 more Covid-19 cases and 129 new fatalities during the previous 24 hours, the Public Health Ministry announced on Saturday morning. Friday's figures did not include 19,936 positive results from antigen tests over the past 24 hours. This would raise the total to 39,988. This compared with 21,808 new cases and 128 coronavirus-related fatalities reported on Friday morning. As of Friday, a total of 188,342 people received Covid-19 treatment, including 45,847 in hospitals (down from 49,711 the previous day). The remainder were in hospital facilities or in home/community isolation, according to the daily update posted by the Department of Disease Control.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2299150/20-052-new-covid-cases-129-more-deaths>

Shanghai Covid Cases Bounce Back as Strict Lockdown Persists

Shanghai reported higher Covid-19 cases and deaths on Friday, following five straight daily declines, as the city vows to step up lockdown enforcement to stamp out community spread in China's worst virus outbreak. There were 23,370 new local infections reported in the financial hub Friday, compared with 17,629 cases the day before, the Shanghai Health Commission said Saturday morning. The city is entering its fourth week of strict lockdown since April 1, while people living in the eastern part or neighborhoods with earlier reported cases have been confined to their apartments for even longer. Frustration among residents has been building due to lack of access to food or medical care, moldy government rations, and the location of quarantine centers.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-23/shanghai-covid-cases-bounce-back-as-strict-lockdown-persists>

NZ has first case of Covid XE variant; two children under 9 among deaths

Two young children are among 19 deaths of people with Covid-19 announced today. New Zealand also has its first known case of the XE variant of Omicron, discovered in a traveller on April 20, a day after they arrived in New Zealand. It's the first known detection in New Zealand of the variant, a combination of the BA.1 and BA.2 sub variants of Omicron and for which early evidence indicates might be slightly more transmissible than BA.2, which itself is more transmissible than BA.1. The variant was discovered through whole genome sequencing and the person was isolating at home, the Health Ministry said. XE had been spreading overseas and its arrival here wasn't unexpected. "At this stage, the public health settings already in place to manage other Omicron variants are assessed to be appropriate for managing XE and no changes are required. "There is no evidence to date that XE causes more severe disease than other Omicron lineages, noting that it takes weeks or months to identify the severity of each new variant."

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-omicron-outbreak-nz-has-first-xe-variant-case-two-children-under-9-among-deaths/BKV7JT7GVJY3PWFJ4LD6JXN3C4/>