

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

27th Apr 2022

Lockdown Exit

Beijing to test 20 mln for COVID in bid to avert Shanghai lockdown misery

Three-quarters of Beijing's 22 million people lined up for COVID-19 tests on Tuesday as authorities in the Chinese capital raced to stamp out a nascent outbreak and avert the debilitating city-wide lockdown that has shrouded Shanghai for a month. Having seen the struggles of China's commercial hub to meet the basic needs of its increasingly frustrated 25 million residents, people in Beijing were stocking up on food and supplies.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/beijing-test-20-mln-covid-shanghai-lockdown-misery-looms-large-2022-04-26/>

Covid Pills to Become More Widely Available

The Biden administration on Tuesday is expected to outline plans to make it easier for infected people to get Covid-19 treatments, which some health leaders and patient advocates say are too difficult to obtain despite a federal program to help make them more widely available. The administration has heavily touted vaccines to reduce the risk of serious illness from Covid-19. Officials also have been urging greater use of two pills given they are easy to take at home: Pfizer Inc.'s Paxlovid and Merck & Co.'s and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics LP's molnupiravir, also known as Lagevrio. Both were cleared for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in December. The authorization of those pills marked a turning point in the treatment of Covid-19 because people can take the therapies at home shortly after they develop symptoms, helping prevent hospitalization.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-pills-to-become-more-widely-available-11650963601>

More Than Half of People in U.S. Likely Had Covid-19, CDC Says

Nearly 60% of people in the U.S., including three in four children, exhibited signs of previous Covid-19 infection as of February, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report said. The estimated proportion of people in the U.S. with detectable, infection-induced antibodies jumped from 34% in December 2021 to 58% by February 2022, according to a study the CDC released Tuesday, highlighting the reach of the winter Omicron surge that washed over the country. "We do believe that there is a lot of protection in the community both from vaccination, as well as from boosting and from prior infection," CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said. "Those who have detectable antibodies from prior infection, we still continue to encourage them to get vaccinated."

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/more-than-half-of-people-in-u-s-likely-had-covid-19-cdc-says-11651003428>

China Covid Situation Worsened by Lack of Local mRNA Vaccine

Weeks into a Covid-19 outbreak in Shanghai that brought China's financial hub to a standstill, the government of President Xi Jinping has demonstrated its willing to go to extremes in its quest to contain the virus. One thing Xi has so far been unwilling to do is deploy a powerful tool against the highly contagious omicron variant: mRNA vaccines. Those shots could reduce the chances of elderly and other vulnerable Chinese getting seriously ill or dying—and possibly help the country transition away from its "Covid Zero" stance.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-26/china-covid-situation-worsened-by-lack-of-local-mrna-vaccine>

Covid Case Metrics Fall Behind Omicron Variant

Throughout the pandemic, tallying hospitalizations has been one of the best ways of measuring the virus's consequences. Case numbers undercount the number of sick and lump in the barely symptomatic with the gravely ill. Deaths are a final reckoning but come weeks or even months too

late to have any predictive value. Hospitalizations tally the strain on the health system and the financial costs, as well as the impact on those who spend weeks in an inpatient bed.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-26/covid-case-metrics-fall-behind-omicron-variant>

About 6 in 10 Americans have signs of previous COVID-19 infection: CDC

Almost 6 in 10 Americans have signs of previous COVID-19 infection, showing the widespread reach of the virus, according to new data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC study shows that the percentage of people testing positive for antibodies — an indication of previous COVID-19 infection — increased from about 34 percent in December to about 58 percent in February. That period of a sharp increase coincides with the surge in cases from the omicron variant. But the antibody testing shows that even more people than reported have been infected, as has long been estimated, given that not all cases are detected or reported.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/3463931-about-6-in-10-americans-have-signs-of-previous-covid-19-infection-cdc/>

WA COVID mask mandate lifts along with capacity restrictions as Omicron peak passes

Western Australia's mask mandate will be dropped from Friday, as the state moves to new baseline public health measures. Other changes include removing capacity limits at all venues, including the two square metre rule, and the 75 per cent limit at stadiums. The G2G pass system will also be dropped, as will the requirement for domestic arrivals to be triple-dose vaccinated. Proof of vaccination requirements for entry into venues such as pubs and nightclubs will also be removed, but they will remain for hospitals and aged care facilities.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-26/covid-mask-mandate-lifts-in-wa/101016318>

Relief, revival as Singapore scraps its COVID curbs

Strict limits on workplaces and gatherings were no more on Tuesday, with employees lingering outside workplaces and public transport teeming with commuters eager for normalcy after two years of containment. "Almost full office today, first time in quite a while," said Slava Nikitin, 34, a product manager. "There were queues for elevators this morning, even though we have six elevators." Singapore has been lauded for its speed and success in its vaccine rollout, with 93% of the population inoculated, one of the highest rates in the world, helping to limit COVID fatalities to just 1,331.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/the-great-reboot/relief-revival-singapore-scraps-its-covid-curbs-2022-04-26/>

Which Countries Are Open to Unvaccinated Tourists?

The U.K. doing away with all coronavirus-related travel restrictions on March 18 was major news—that is, until six more European countries (and counting) followed suit since. Whether they're vaccinated or not, travelers entering the region now have even more destinations in which they won't have to take a pre- or post-arrival test, follow any quarantine rules, or fill out passenger-tracking forms. International travelers still need the requisite visas, of course, but there are now nations on every continent that have adopted a post-pandemic attitude toward travel—even internally with mask-free living and no-quarantine requirements for those who test positive. The loosening of restrictions is sparking optimism for wanderlust after two years of stay-home pandemic rules and border closings. It's also, alternately, serving as a red flag for travelers still taking a more cautious approach.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/storythreads/2022-03-18/where-can-you-travel-with-no-covid-restrictions-list-of-top-2022-destinations>

Workers Are Winning the Return-to-Office War Because They're Right

The masks are coming off. Restaurants are filling up. International travel is resuming. But one thing is missing from this picture of returning normality: the rows of office workers bent over their desks. Just over two months ago, I wrote that returning to the office was the great class struggle of our time. I'm happy to report that, so far at least, the workers are winning. In the U.S., office occupancy

rates seem to have flatlined at about 43% according to Kastle Systems, which collects figures on the number of workers who are working at their desks in America's ten largest business districts by measuring key swipes. Occupancy rates fell to 42.8% on April 13, having risen to 43.1% on April 6. Across the Atlantic, London's occupancy peaked at 42% last month.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-04-25/workers-are-winning-the-return-to-office-war-because-they-are-right>

Singapore Almost Returns to Pre-Pandemic Normal With Latest Curbs Lifted

Singapore is shedding key pieces of its pandemic armor with relative alacrity. While officials have long been adamant the city-state would never have a U.K.-style "Freedom Day," sweeping changes that take effect Tuesday get pretty close. It may just be a question of semantics. In what the nation's health minister called a "happy day," Singapore abandoned limits on group size, jettisoned social distancing and dropped curbs on the number of people who can work from offices. Many venues will no longer require folks to check in with the government contract-tracing app. Vaccinated visitors can forgo pre-departure tests.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-04-25/singapore-almost-returns-to-pre-pandemic-normal-with-latest-curbs-lifted>

Exit Strategies

Without funding, US will lose Covid vaccines, treatments: White House

For much of the past two years, America has been first in line for COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. Now, as drugmakers develop the next generation of therapies, the White House is warning that if Congress doesn't act urgently the U.S. will have to take a number. Already the congressional stalemate over virus funding has forced the federal government to curtail free treatment for the uninsured and to ration monoclonal antibody supplies. And Biden administration officials are expressing increasing alarm that the U.S. is also losing out on critical opportunities to secure booster doses and new antiviral pills that could help the country maintain its reemerging sense of normalcy, even in the face of potential new variants and case spikes.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/without-funding-us-will-lose-covid-vaccines-treatments-white-house-122042600164_1.html

China's Covid booster campaign slows as staff redirected to mass testing

China's booster vaccination drive is slowing as medical staff are redirected to carry out mass testing with coronavirus cases rising across the country. Relatively low vaccination rates will leave tens of millions of Chinese people vulnerable to severe illness if the government's tough "zero-Covid" policy fails to contain the Omicron variant. In the final week of March, China administered 770,000 third-dose jabs a day to over 60s following outbreaks in Shanghai and Jilin. But that figure had fallen to 590,000 a day by mid-April, according to data released by the country's health department.

<https://www.ft.com/content/53398a2a-a8fa-477a-a1ca-9a9d9a44ddbc>

WA announces major overhaul to mask, proof of vaccination COVID-19 rules

West Australians will finally be able to ditch their face masks in most indoor settings, as the state prepares to ease a swathe of public health measures. From 12.01am Friday, people aged 12 and over will only be required to wear masks will in hospitals, aged care, disability care facilities and on public transport, taxis and rideshares. Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson announced proof of vaccination requirements will also be scrapped except at hospitals and residential aged care facilities.

<https://7news.com.au/news/coronavirus-wa/wa-announces-major-overhaul-to-mask-proof-of-vaccination-covid-19-rules-c-6582396>

Biden administration secures 20 million courses of Covid-19 antiviral pill

The Biden administration has secured the purchase of 20 million treatment courses of Paxlovid, Pfizer's antiviral Covid-19 pill, a senior administration official told CNN on Monday. The administration will work with the manufacturer to accelerate production and delivery of the new drug to pharmacies across the country, the official told reporters. A tranche of 100,000 courses will initially be available to pharmacies per quarter while demand and uptake are monitored.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/04/26/politics/paxlovid-biden-administration-covid-19-pill/index.html>

Mexico to enable COVID vaccination of all children aged 12 and above

Mexico will let all children aged over 12 be registered for COVID-19 vaccination from Thursday, Deputy Health Minister Hugo Lopez-Gatell said. Lopez-Gatell, the country's coronavirus czar, was speaking at a regular government news conference on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/mexico-enable-covid-vaccination-all-children-aged-12-above-2022-04-26/>

Turkey ready to lift all COVID-19 measures, Erdogan says

President Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday that Turkey is ready to lift all measures against the coronavirus, adding that mask wearing will no longer be obligatory indoors. Speaking after the final meeting of the advisory science council, Erdogan said masks will still be mandated on public transport and in medical institutions until daily new cases drop below 1,000. Turkey had previously lifted the requirement to wear masks outdoors and in indoor areas with good ventilation.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-ready-lift-all-covid-19-measures-erdogan-says-2022-04-26/>

South Korea Downgrades Covid-19 From Riskiest-Disease Category

South Korea has downgraded Covid-19 from the country's riskiest category of infectious disease, a first step toward treating the virus more like the seasonal flu. The country is one of the first to make such a move. The downgrade, approved Monday by health officials, will take effect after a four-week transition period. Once it does, South Koreans who test positive will no longer be required to go into quarantine, which currently lasts seven days by law. Doctors will no longer need to report a positive case immediately, as infection-tracking diminishes in importance. Those showing symptoms will be able to get treatment at local clinics rather than solely at hospitals, due to the reduced fears of virus spread.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/south-korea-downgrades-covid-19-from-riskiest-disease-category-11650885199>

U.S. judge to block plan to lift COVID border restrictions for migrants

A federal judge in Louisiana said that he intends to rule that U.S. authorities cannot immediately proceed with plans to lift pandemic restrictions that empowered U.S. agents at the Mexico border to turn back migrants without giving them a chance to seek asylum. U.S. District Judge Robert Summerhays stated his intention after a hearing in a case brought by 21 states against the administration of President Joe Biden. The judge said both sides would confer regarding the specific terms of a temporary restraining order and would attempt to reach agreement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/us-judge-intends-temporarily-block-plan-lift-covid-border-restrictions-migrants-2022-04-25/>

Coronavirus: daily cases fall below 400 as Hong Kong sticks with plan to further ease social-distancing rules in second half of May

Hong Kong will stick to its plan to further relax social-distancing measures in the second half of May, the city's leader has said, ruling out an earlier reopening even as the daily number of cases fell below 400 for the first time in nearly three months. But Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor also shrugged off worries Hong Kong could return to a more hermetic lifestyle again, saying a drastic resurgence of infections was unlikely due to the level of immunity the city had already attained.

https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3175506/coronavirus-hong-kong-set-further-ease-social?module=lead_hero_story&pgtype=homepage

Administration expands availability of COVID antiviral pill

President Joe Biden's administration is taking steps to expand availability of the life-saving COVID-19 antiviral treatment Paxlovid, as it seeks to reassure doctors that there is ample supply for people at high risk of severe illness or death from the virus. Paxlovid, produced by Pfizer, was first approved in December. Supply of the 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.

<https://apnews.com/article/biden-covid-business-health-medication-a5adf6c2e7894e479e795b5a6d1aeb84>

Albania to end virus restrictions before summer vacations

Albanian authorities have decided to lift all remaining COVID-19 restrictions before the summer vacation season. The Technical Committee of Experts, the country's highest executive body during the pandemic, said Tuesday that coronavirus-related measures will end in Albania as of May 1. The decision means masks no longer will be required indoors and nightclubs won't be subject to an 11 p.m. curfew. Proof of vaccination or a negative PCR test for the virus won't be needed at border crossings.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-europe-albania-0ba8898decf6ad06b385539ee226180f>

Shanghai's Lockdown Missteps Undermine Financial Hub Ambitions

Expats are ditching the city, jeopardizing efforts by local authorities to lure "high-end" foreign talent. "Until this latest crisis, Shanghai had established a good reputation as an attractive place to do business relative to other places in China," says Eric Zheng, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai. "This is obviously a huge test for the Shanghai government: How to rebound back to its old self?"

[bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-25/shanghai-lockdown-renews-covid-zero-economic-questions?srnd=premium-europe](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-25/shanghai-lockdown-renews-covid-zero-economic-questions?srnd=premium-europe)

Partisan Exits

US Vice President Kamala Harris Tests Positive for Covid, Isn't Biden Contact

Vice President Kamala Harris tested positive for Covid-19, making her the highest-ranking Biden administration official to report being infected. Harris received positive results Tuesday on both rapid and PCR tests and "has exhibited no symptoms, will isolate and continue to work from the vice president's residence," according to spokeswoman Kirsten Allen. Harris, 57, isn't considered a close contact of President Joe Biden, her office said. The vice president was traveling in California last week and returned to Washington on Monday, while Biden traveled to Oregon and Washington state before spending the weekend at his Wilmington, Delaware home.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-26/kamala-harris-tests-positive-for-covid-19-isn-t-biden-contact>

A Former Wall Street Banker Led the Fight to Bring Down the U.S. Mask Mandate

Most Americans have never heard of Leslie Manookian, but the former banker is the reason why they no longer have to wear a mask on a plane. Manookian, 58, who worked for Goldman Sachs Group Inc. in the 1990s and later Alliance Capital Management, was behind the lawsuit that last week led a federal judge in Tampa, Florida, to strike down the mask mandate for public transportation. The judge said the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lacked the authority to impose it. "It is so inspiring to see millions of Americans celebrating, cheering, dancing and singing on airplanes, posting messages about how happy they are to be unmasked, to be liberated," Manookian said in an interview from her home in the ski resort town of Sandpoint, Idaho. "I think the lawsuit has given people a sense of hope in a very dark time."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-26/ex-wall-street-banker-led-fight-to-bring-down-u-s-mask-mandate>

Anger Erupts at Xi's 'Big White' Army of Lockdown Enforcers

"Being a big supporter of authority and power seems to be deeply rooted in some residents' mindsets," said Liu, who has been locked down in his compound since April 1. "There are not many people who question authority, or the very validity of the Covid-Zero policy." Big White describes the brigades of police, medical workers and volunteers in white hazmat suits who have become ubiquitous throughout the pandemic. China's state media has used the term since the virus emerged in 2020 in Wuhan to soften their image: The moniker is the same as the local name for Baymax, the gentle inflatable robot in the movie "Big Hero 6."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-26/anger-erupts-at-xi-s-big-white-army-of-lockdown-enforcers>

Confusion, fear behind reluctance to take Covid booster, says experts

With only 4.64 lakh people taking their third Covid jab since April 10, Indians could be grappling with vaccine fatigue, a reluctance to take a booster shot that experts attribute to a combination of fear, confusion and misinformation. As India's Covid graph inches upwards, not enough people are getting their booster shots. Among the reasons for the apparent lethargy are the fear of adverse effects, the view that Covid is now a mild infection and doubts over whether a precaution dose is indeed useful, said scientists, public health experts and industry insiders. According to virologist Dr T Jacob John, vaccine fatigue has set in, also because the "cacophony of new experts" has been confusing.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/confusion-fear-behind-reluctance-to-take-covid-booster-says-experts-122042600546_1.html

Continued Lockdown

Fed up with COVID lockdown, bankers, fund managers looking to leave Shanghai

Finance sector professionals in Shanghai are preparing to move back to Hong Kong and other offshore centres after spending only a few years in the Chinese city as a harsh COVID-19 lockdown has hurt their business prospects and upended daily lives. Thousands of bankers, traders and investors in the financial hub of the world's second-largest economy have found themselves confined to their homes, with some even struggling to secure food and other essentials for their families.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/fed-up-with-covid-lockdown-bankers-fund-managers-looking-leave-shanghai-2022-04-26/>

China's Covid Crisis Threatens Global Supply Chain Chaos for Summer 2022

China's stringent rules to curb Covid-19 are about to unleash another wave of summer chaos on supply chains between Asia, the U.S. and Europe. Beijing's zero-tolerance approach amid an escalating virus outbreak brings the pandemic full circle, more than two years after its emergence in Wuhan upended the global economy. Shipping congestion at Chinese ports, combined with Russia's war in Ukraine, risks a one-two punch that threatens to derail the recovery, already buffeted by inflation pressures and headwinds to growth. Even if the virus is reined in, the disruptions will ripple globally — and extend through the year — as bunched-up cargo vessels start sailing again.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2022-04-25/china-s-covid-crisis-threatens-global-supply-chain-chaos-for-summer-2022>

Covid Lockdowns Show Xi Jinping Puts Ideology Before China's Economy

China's worst equity selloff since early 2020 reflects a growing concern about President Xi Jinping: He can't afford the political costs of shifting from a Covid Zero strategy that is pummeling the economy. In Shanghai, a weekslong Covid-19 lockdown got even worse, with workers in hazmat suits fanning out over the weekend to install steel fences around buildings with positive cases. In Beijing, the process is just getting started, as authorities on Monday began shutting down a bustling district in the capital to quash fresh outbreaks and ordered mandatory testing elsewhere. The threat of paralyzing China's two largest and wealthiest cities with a strategy abandoned by most countries

helped push the CSI 300 down 4.9%, the gauge's steepest one-day drop since the first such lockdown in Wuhan two years ago.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-25/xi-puts-ideology-before-economy-with-market-busting-lockdowns>

Scientific Viewpoint

Adults given AstraZeneca much more likely to have Covid 'breakthrough' infections

Adults given the AstraZeneca vaccine were much more likely to suffer "breakthrough" Covid infections compared to those given the Pfizer vaccine, researchers have found. A study involving all fully vaccinated adults in Belgium showed substantially higher protection from mRNA vaccines such as Pfizer and Moderna compared to the AstraZeneca and Janssen brands, which used a more traditional viral vector formula. People who had recovered from Covid infection prior to being vaccinated also had the lowest risk of breakthrough infection overall.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/20092782.adults-given-astrazeneca-much-likely-covid-breakthrough-infections/>

Longer gap between coronavirus vaccine generate nine times as many antibodies, study

Longer intervals between primary Covid-19 vaccine doses generate nine times as many antibodies, according to a study. The study, which is available only as a preprint and not peer-reviewed yet, found that higher antibody levels due to longer gaps between doses had more effect in younger participants. Post-dose 1, those with previous infection had up to ten times higher antibody levels than naive individuals. After dose 2, those with previous infection had antibody levels more than twice as high as those who hadn't had previous infection. While dosing intervals didn't affect antibody levels in those with previous infection, a longer gap between infection and vaccination was linked to higher antibody levels, said researchers at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). The findings were presented at this year's European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) in Portugal. Understanding the immune response to vaccination against Covid is integral to controlling the virus and reducing the number of deaths.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/longer-gap-between-coronavirus-vaccine-generate-nine-times-as-many-antibodies-study/articleshow/91090475.cms>

Do Vaccines Protect Against Long Covid?

As the pandemic enters its third year, long Covid has emerged as an increasingly important concern. And many people are wondering whether getting a Covid shot can reduce their chances of developing long-term symptoms. The jury is still out, but a growing number of studies suggest that getting a Covid vaccine can reduce — though not eliminate — the risk of longer-term symptoms. The United Kingdom's Health Security Agency conducted an analysis of eight studies that had been published on the topic before mid-January. It reported that six of the studies found that vaccinated people who became infected with the coronavirus were less likely than unvaccinated patients to develop symptoms of long Covid. The remaining two studies found that vaccination did not appear to conclusively reduce the chances of developing long Covid.

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/long-covid-vaccines.html>

The BMJ Interview: WHO chief scientist optimistic for a pan-coronavirus vaccine in two years

Soumya Swaminathan tells Mun-Keat Looi of her worries about the relaxation of testing for global surveillance and the "two track pandemic" It's a challenging time to be a scientist, let alone the first ever chief scientist at the World Health Organization, a relatively new role. Barely nine months into her tenure Soumya Swaminathan was faced with a once in a century global health emergency and an entirely new virus that would change the face of science and medicine dramatically. "It is incredible what we've learnt about this virus in just over two years," she tells The BMJ, "we haven't

learnt as much about some other pathogens in decades of research.”

<https://www.bmj.com/content/377/bmj.o1003>

COVID-19 breath tests could be the future of living with the virus, but this pandemic solution has a catch

Whether it is a PCR test or the at-home variety, sending a swab up the nose to swirl around and test for COVID-19 has become a familiar but uncomfortable part of living through the pandemic. However, what if there was an alternative? For the first time, health authorities in the United States have given the green light to a COVID-19 breathalyser, a device promised to deliver results in less than three minutes. As new sub-variants once again push up case numbers, some experts hope it will be the first of many new tools to diagnose and, therefore, improve the way we live with the virus. There is even hope breath testing could eventually be used to detect and monitor other conditions, such as cancer.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-26/covid-breathalysers-could-be-the-future-of-testing/101004214>

Study explores SARS-CoV-2 antibody responses in mild COVID-19 cases

Currently, the risk of reinfection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) ranges from 0% to 19.5% for 10 months after infection, indicating that protective immunity develops and is sustained post-infection. Various studies in animal models and humans have revealed that antibodies and B and T lymphocytes are vital to the protection and immune memory. Further, the quantity and quality of these immune responses are pivotal to long-term immunity, but the underlying mechanisms remain unclear yet. Age is an essential factor driving the outcome of diseases including COVID-19. Different studies have observed functional cellular and humoral responses among children against SARS-CoV-2 who primarily develop mild or asymptomatic disease. According to several reports, polyfunctional antibodies neutralize SARS-CoV-2 entry and recruit innate immune effectors such as neutrophils, complement systems, natural killer (NK) cells, and monocytes. These polyfunctional antibodies were inversely correlated with the severity of disease post-infection, indicative of diverse humoral responses.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220426/Study-explores-SARS-CoV-2-antibody-responses-in-mild-COVID-19-cases.aspx>

Covid-19 news: People hospitalised with omicron still face severe risk

People hospitalised with the supposedly milder omicron variant require similar levels of respiratory support and intensive care as those infected with delta. Heba Mostafa at John Hopkins University in the US and her colleagues studied more than 2000 people who tested positive for covid-19 between November and December 2021. The team recorded which variant the participants were infected with and their clinical outcomes. Results reveal 73 per cent of the participants who were hospitalised with delta needed extra oxygen, while 25 per cent required intensive care. Similarly, 67 per cent of those who were hospitalised with omicron required extra oxygen and 17 per cent needed intensive care.

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2237475-covid-19-news-people-hospitalised-with-omicron-still-face-severe-risk/>

New protein-based COVID-19 vaccine could help boost rates, say pharmacists

For New Brunswickers who have been hesitant or unable to get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, there's now a new option. Novavax Nuvaxovid, the first protein-based COVID vaccine authorized for use in Canada for people 18 and older, became available in New Brunswick last week, says the Department of Health. There are about 320 doses in the province, said spokesperson Bruce Macfarlane. Only four pharmacies are currently administering them — one each in Fredericton, Dieppe, Saint John and Miramichi. Ayub Chishti, pharmacist and manager of the Fredericton location, Campus Pharmacy, said the uptake so far "hasn't been that great."

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/novavax-nuvaxovid-protein-covid-19-vaccine-new-brunswick-1.6430>

India approves two COVID vaccines for children under 12

India has approved emergency use of Biological E's COVID-19 vaccine Corbevax for children aged five to 12 and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin for six to 12-year olds, the country's health minister said in a tweet on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-approves-two-covid-vaccines-children-under-12-2022-04-26/>

U.S. FDA approves Gilead's COVID-19 drug for young children

The U.S. drug regulator on Monday granted the first full approval for treating COVID-19 in children aged 28 days and older to Gilead Sciences Inc's (GILD.O) drug remdesivir. The move comes months after the agency expanded the drug's emergency use authorization to also include children below 12 years of age weighing at least 3.5 kilograms. The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) decision makes the drug the first approved COVID-19 treatment for children less than 12 years of age, the agency said. The approval is applicable to children who are hospitalized, or have mild-to-moderate disease and are at high risk of severe COVID-19

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-fda-approves-gileads-covid-19-drug-remdesivir-young-children-2022-04-25/>

U.S. Nears One Million Covid-19 Deaths

The Covid-19 mortality count—over 990,000 and still rising—is reflected in death certificates recorded by the CDC. Of these certificates, at least 90% list Covid-19 as the underlying cause of death, the CDC said. The remainder list the disease as a contributing cause. These records show how deaths have swept through the U.S. since the pandemic began, hitting states and populations unevenly. Early hot spots included places like New York City and New Jersey. The burden later shifted southward, including in states where vaccination rates have lagged. Vaccines have shown they reduce the risk of severe illness and death.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-nears-one-million-covid-19-deaths-11650838998>

Pandemic Links to Children's Liver Ailment Eyed in U.K. Probe

Health authorities are investigating potential links between the pandemic and an outbreak of mysterious, acute hepatitis that's sickened children in the U.K., the U.S. and other countries. The U.K. has detected adenovirus, a family of pathogens that cause a range of illnesses including the common cold, in three-quarters of the cases of the liver-inflaming disease, officials said Monday. Now they're studying whether a lack of prior exposure to adenoviruses during pandemic restrictions or a previous infection with SARS-CoV-2 or another virus may be related. The researchers analyzed 111 cases found in the U.K. as of April 20, the government said, including 81 in England.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-25/pandemic-links-to-children-s-liver-ailment-eyed-in-u-k-probe>

Can Nasal Sprays Work on Covid? Meissa Vaccines Thinks So

"Covid isn't just a sprint, it's a marathon," says Moore, the relentlessly upbeat founder of Meissa Vaccines Inc. Today's vaccines have largely won the sprint of preventing serious disease, "and thank goodness for that," he says. "But now we need something else to gain control of the virus." Moore is among a growing cohort of virologists proposing we spray vaccines up people's noses rather than inject them into arms. The advantage of that approach, they argue, is it can trigger the body to develop infection-blocking defenses in the sinuses and throat and allow it to start fighting illness much faster than an injected vaccine can.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2022-04-25/can-nasal-sprays-work-on-covid-meissa-vaccines-thinks-so>

Majority of family members of Covid patients treated in the ICU report PTSD symptoms

A majority of family members of Covid-19 patients treated in ICUs reported significant symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in the following months, according to a study published Monday that

sheds new light on the impact of hospital visitation restrictions during the pandemic. The prevalence of PTSD symptoms was roughly twice the rate typically seen after a family member's ICU stay before the pandemic, which the authors said was likely explained by the lack of access to loved ones during their ICU stay. "Those with higher scores reported more distrust of practitioners," according to the study, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, and PTSD symptoms were especially prevalent among women and Hispanic family members. Earlier studies have shown that "active engagement of families at the bedside reduces stress-related symptoms," especially those of PTSD, the researchers said, but early in the pandemic, most hospitals prohibited or strictly limited in-person visits by family members to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/04/25/majority-of-family-members-of-covid-icu-patients-report-ptsd-symptoms/>

What is Omicron XE? Symptoms of the new Covid variant as hundreds of cases found in UK - 637 cases of the new variant have been detected in England

A new sub-variant of Omicron has been found in UK as the country battles a renewed surge of the coronavirus. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said that 4.9 million people in the UK were infected with Covid-19 as of last weekend - a record high during the pandemic. The surge in cases is thought to be down to people mixing more freely since Covid restrictions were dropped and the Omicron BA.2 sub-variant.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/omicron-xe-symptoms-covid-variant-uk-b2064734.html?amp>