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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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U.S. breaks COVID-19 hospitalization record at over 132,000 as Omicron surges

Jan 10 (Reuters) - COVID-19 hospitalizations in the United States reached a record high on Monday, according to a Reuters tally, as a surge in infections caused by the highly contagious Omicron variant strains health systems in several states.

There were 132,646 people hospitalized with COVID, surpassing the record of 132,051 set in January last year.

Hospitalizations have increased steadily since late December, doubling in the last three weeks, as Omicron quickly overtook Delta as the dominant version of the virus in the United States.

Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Vermont, Virginia, Washington D.C., and Wisconsin have reported record levels of hospitalized COVID-19 patients recently, according to the Reuters analysis.

While potentially less severe, health officials have warned that the sheer number of infections caused by the Omicron variant could strain the hospital systems, some of which have already suspended elective procedures as they struggle to handle the surge of patients amid staff shortages.

The seven-day average for new cases has doubled in the last 10 days to 704,000. The United States has averaged over a half a million cases for the last six consecutive days, according to a Reuters tally.

Only seven states have not set records for COVID-19 cases in 2022 - Arizona, Idaho, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio and Wyoming, according to a Reuters tally.

Washington, D.C., is leading the country in new infections in the past week based on population, followed by Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Vermont.

Deaths are averaging 1,700 per day, up from about 1,400 in recent days but within levels seen earlier this winter.



Medical staff treat a coronavirus disease (COVID-19) patient in their isolation room on the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Western Reserve Hospital in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, U.S., January 4, 2022. REUTERS/Shannon

T-cells from common colds can provide protection against COVID-19 -

LONDON, Jan 10 (Reuters) - High levels of T-cells from common cold coronaviruses can provide protection against COVID-19, an Imperial College London study published on Monday has found, which could inform approaches for second-generation vaccines.

Immunity against COVID-19 is a complex picture, and while there is evidence of waning antibody levels six months after vaccination, T-cells are also believed to play a vital role in providing protection. The study, which began in September 2020, looked at levels of cross-reactive T-cells generated by previous common colds in 52 household contacts of positive COVID-19 cases shortly after exposure, to see if they went on to develop infection.

It found that the 26 who did not develop infection had significantly higher levels of those T-cells than people who did get infected. Imperial did not say how long protection from

the T-cells would last.

“We found that high levels of pre-existing T cells, created by the body when infected with other human coronaviruses like the common cold, can protect against COVID-19 infection,” study author Dr Rhia Kundu said.

The authors of the study, published in Nature Communications, said that the internal proteins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus which are targeted by the T-cells could offer an alternative target for vaccine makers.

Current COVID-19 vaccines target the spike protein, which mutates regularly, creating variants such as Omicron which lessen the efficacy of vaccines against symptomatic infection.

“In contrast, the internal proteins targeted by the protective T-cells

we identified mutate much less,” Professor Ajit Lalvani, co-author of the study, said.

“Consequently, they are highly conserved between the various SARS-CoV-2 variants, including Omicron. New vaccines that include these conserved, internal proteins would therefore induce broadly protective T cell responses that should protect against current and future SARS-CoV-2 variants.”

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

01/10/2022

We Have No Right To Be Pessimistic

In order to welcome the year of the Tiger we are preparing a series of outdoor celebrations. Due to the continued spread of the epidemic, it is necessary to postpone the in-person events, but we will still hold them by way of streaming live on TV and on the internet.

Over the past two years, Covid-19 has greatly interrupted the order of our society. As of today, the number of deaths worldwide has reached 5.48 million. The number of deaths in the United States has exceeded

836,000. The average number of infected people has reached at least over one-half million. This terrible number is making many health experts feel very helpless.

We are still seeing many long lines at the Covid-19 testing centers. The Covid-19 home testing kits promised by the government are still not fully distributed. More than 100,000 people daily are still pouring into emergency rooms of hospitals all over the country.



Although President Biden has strongly urged and called on people repeatedly to get vaccinated, tens of millions of people still turn a blind eye to getting the shot. Why don't they understand that most of the people who are going to the hospital are people who are not vaccinated?

We still strongly appeal to everyone to take special self-protection measures, including wearing your masks, washing your hands frequently and avoid going to

crowded public places.

Today there is more sad news from New York City. This morning, 19 people were swallowed up by a five-alarm fire in a large, 8-story apartment building.

This is really a very sad moment. This is a human tragedy for all of us. We still need to face reality, no matter how difficult it may become. We have no right to be pessimistic.



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Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



A member of the Proud Boys gestures in front of the Oregon State Capitol during a protest in support of the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol in Washington, in Salem, Oregon, January 8. REUTERS/John Rudoff



Supporters of Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic rally in the street outside what is believed to be the location of his lawyer's office during an ongoing day of legal proceedings over the cancellation of his visa to play in the Australian Open, in Melbourne, Australia, January 10, 2022. REUTERS/Loren Elliott



A horse puts its head into the car to eat a carrot near the Cossack cultural complex in the village of Borgustanskaya in Stavropol region, Russia. REUTERS/Eduard Korniyenko



Emergency personnel from the FDNY provide medical aid as they respond to an apartment building fire in the Bronx borough of New York City, January 9. REUTERS/Lloyd Mitchell



Women wearing kimono and protective masks ride on an escalator at Coming of Age Day celebration ceremony venue, amid the coronavirus outbreak, in Tokyo, Japan, January 10. REUTERS/Kim Kyung-Hoon



A woman looks on from a canoe after leaving her flooded house during floods caused by heavy rain in Maraba, Para state, Brazil January 9. REUTERS/Ueslei Marcelino

Omicron Infections Will Reach One Million Americans Daily Before Its Hits Its Peak



“I wouldn’t be surprised if, on the whole, we’re infecting up to a million people a day right now, and we’re just picking up maybe a 10th of that or less than a 10th of that.” – Dr. Scott Gottlieb, Former Head of the FDA.

KEY POINTS

The highly transmissible omicron variant is driving a surge in Covid cases across the U.S.

However, Dr. Scott Gottlieb told CNBC on Friday he believes the coronavirus is significantly more widespread in the U.S. than official case counts reflect.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if, on the whole, we’re infecting up to a million people a day right now,” the former FDA chief said.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Dr. Scott Gottlieb told CNBC last Friday he believes the coronavirus is significantly more widespread in the U.S. than official case counts reflect as the highly contagious delta variant sweeps the nation. “I wouldn’t be surprised if, on the whole, we’re infecting up to a million people a day right now, and we’re just picking up maybe a 10th of that or less than a 10th of that,” the former Food and Drug Administration commissioner said in an interview on “Squawk Box.” Gottlieb now serves on the board of

Covid vaccine maker Pfizer. The current seven-day average of new daily coronavirus cases in the U.S. is roughly 67,000, according to a CNBC analysis of Johns Hopkins University data. That’s up 53% compared with a week ago, as the country grapples with a surge in new infections driven largely by delta, first discovered in India and now the dominant variant in the U.S. “What it reflects is a reality where you have a highly transmissible variant that’s

widely spread across the U.S. right now that’s spreading mostly in a population that’s either vaccinated and developing mild symptoms or no symptoms at all; or spreading in a younger population that’s also less likely to develop symptoms because they’re younger, healthier.” Gottlieb said, when asked by “Squawk Box” co-host Andrew Ross Sorkin how the physician arrived at his “staggering” estimation of 1 million new infections a day.



ple who are showing up in the hospital are younger people. If that’s where the infection is occurring, then there must be a lot more infection underneath the small numerator that’s showing up in the hospital,” added Gottlieb, who led the FDA from 2017 to 2019 in the Trump administration. He’s become a closely watched voice during the pandemic, routinely appearing on CNBC and other media outlets to offer his analysis on the health crisis.

The highest seven-day day average of new Covid cases recorded in the U.S. was roughly 251,000 on Jan. 8, according to CNBC’s analysis. Case counts had dropped off dramatically in the spring as the country’s vaccination campaign picked up speed.

But in recent weeks, as U.S. cases again started to accelerate, Gottlieb has said a large number of coronavirus infections were likely going unreported, partly because the testing landscape is different now than at previous stages in the pandemic. In the early days, Gottlieb suggested the actual case counts were much higher than official tallies due to scarce testing resources. Now, he has said it’s a different situation, where the discrepancy between case counts and true infection levels stems from people who remain asymptomatic or develop only mild symptoms not going to get tested. Additionally, Gottlieb previously told CNBC people can now complete at-home tests and those results are unlikely to make their way to health authorities and then show up in official case counts.

Last Friday, Gottlieb reiterated his view that the U.S. is much further into the surge of

delta-driven infections than others believe. “This delta wave will pass, probably at some point in September,” he predicted. (Courtesy cnbc.com)

Related

Major Medical Groups Call for Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for All Health Workers

Dozens of major medical groups, including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, are calling for employers to mandate COVID-19 vaccines for all health care workers. “Our health care organizations and societies advocate that all health care and long-term care employers require their workers to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This is the logical fulfillment of the ethical commitment of all health care workers to put patients as well as residents of long-term care facilities first and take all steps necessary to ensure their health and well-being,” the groups wrote in a July 26 statement (pdf).



A health care worker administers a shot of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to a woman at a pop-up vaccination site operated by SOMOS Community Care during the COVID-19 pandemic in Manhattan in New York City, on Jan. 29, 2021. (Mike Segar/Reuters)

They argued that because of the “Delta” variant, which is believed to be more contagious, and more reports of COVID-19 hospitalizations, health care settings should make vaccines mandatory. An increase in vaccinations, the statement says, will prevent the possibility of more lockdowns or other COVID-19-related orders. Their statement made no mention of individuals who had already contracted COVID-19 but recovered and developed natural immunity. Because health care workers come into frequent contact with COVID-19 cases, previous studies have shown they are more likely to have contracted the virus.

Another study from the National Institutes of Health showed that those who recovered from the virus had a “lasting immunity” to the pathogen because, as the agency noted, “after people recover from infection with a virus, the immune system retains a memory of it” and “immune cells and proteins that circulate in the body can recognize and

kill the pathogen if it’s encountered again, protecting against disease and reducing illness severity.”



Meanwhile, a number of workers in the health care field aren’t vaccinated, according

to data collected by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and analyzed by LeadingAge, reported the Washington Post. About 38 percent of nursing home staff, for example, weren’t vaccinated as of July 11, the data shows.

A recent analysis by WebMD and Medscape revealed that an estimated 25 percent of hospital workers who had regular contact with patients weren’t fully vaccinated. About 56 percent of Americans aged 12 and older are fully vaccinated, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in July.

Ezekiel Emanuel, a University of Pennsylvania bioethicist who organized the joint statement released on July 26, told the Washington Post that he believes mandating vaccines among health care workers will boost the overall uptake in Americans getting the vaccine.

“Despite everything—cajoling, making access readily available at any pharmacy, making it free, having the president plead—all of this hasn’t really moved the needle very much in the nation,” he told the paper on July 26.

Weeks ago, the largest union of health care workers in the United States, 1199SEIU, said it opposed mandatory COVID-19 vaccines for employees.



“Whether there is a legal challenge that we can make, or whether it’s just a pure organizational

challenge that we can make, we are not going to just give in,” George Gresham, the head of the union, told local news website Gothamist in June. The Epoch Times has contacted the 1199SEIU for comment.

It comes as protests erupted across the UK, Ireland, Italy, France, Greece, and elsewhere over the past weekend over vaccine mandates. European leaders have proposed vaccine passport-like systems to mandate that people show whether they’re vaccinated or have tested negative for COVID-19 before entering certain businesses or public spaces. (Courtesy <https://www.usnews.com/>)

How Nations Of The World Handle The Coronavirus Health Crisis Impacts Their Tourism Favorability



KEY POINTS

Tourism Policy Responses to the coronavirus (COVID-19)

The tourism economy has been heavily hit by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and measures introduced to contain its spread. Depending on the duration of the crisis, revised scenarios indicate that the potential shock could range between a 60-80% decline in the international tourism economy in 2020. Beyond immediate measures to support the tourism sector, countries are also shifting to develop recovery measures. These include considerations on lifting travel restrictions, restoring traveller confidence and rethinking the tourism sector for the future.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has triggered an unprecedented crisis in the tourism economy, given the immediate and immense shock to the sector. Revised OECD estimates on the COVID-19 impact point to **60% decline in international tourism in 2020**. This could rise to **80% if recovery is delayed until December**. International tourism within specific geographic-regions (e.g. in the European Union) is expected to rebound first. **Domestic tourism**, which accounts for around 75% of the tourism economy in OECD countries, is expected to recover more quickly. It **offers the main chance for driving recovery**, particularly in countries, regions and cities where the sector supports many jobs and businesses. **The impact of the crisis is being felt throughout the entire tourism ecosystem, and reopening and rebuilding destinations will require a joined up ap-**

proach. Tourism businesses and workers are benefiting from economy-wide stimulus packages, with many governments also introducing tourism specific measures. Governments and industry are focusing their efforts on: **Lifting** travel restrictions and working with businesses to access liquidity supports, apply new health protocols for safe travel, and help to diversify their markets. **Restoring** traveller confidence and stimulating demand with new safe and clean labels for the sector, information apps for visitors and domestic tourism promotion campaigns. **Preparing** comprehensive tourism recovery plans, to rebuild destinations, encourage innovation and investment, and rethink the tourism sector. These actions are essential, but to reopen the tourism economy successfully and get businesses up and running, **more needs to be done in a coordinated way**

as tourism services are very interdependent. The travel and tourism industry and governments should continue to reinforce their coordination mechanisms to accompany the businesses, notably the smallest ones, and the workers. Particular attention should be given also to the most sensitive/vulnerable destinations in the recovery phase.

Looking ahead, the measures put in place today will shape tourism of tomorrow. Governments need to already consider the **longer term implications of the crisis**, while staying ahead of the digital curve, supporting the low carbon transition, and promoting the structural transformation needed to **build a stronger, more sustainable and resilient tourism economy. The crisis is an opportunity to rethink tourism for the future.**

Germany, Canada, and New Zealand are most favorably impacted, while the United States, Brazil, and India are soon unfavorably.

Based on nations' handling of health crises, most travelers are more comfortable traveling domestically as opposed to internationally over the next five years. Those who feel comfortable enough to travel internationally in the next few years are more likely to visit nations which have made significant strides to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

New York, August 28, 2020 – Necessary safety measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have inevitably disrupted tourism flows and tampered with our ability to travel freely, and while these precautionary hurdles have not lessened our resolve to go on a vacation getaway, they instead appear to have made us re-think the distance we are willing to travel for a break in our daily routines.

The Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index (NBI) 2020, a survey of 20,000 global citizens in 20 different nations, reveals that when pondering travel in the next five years, a vast majority feels most comfortable traveling domestically rather than internationally – given how various nations around the world respond to health crises. The only exception, are those from Brazil, who are equally split on their comfort level regarding domestic and international travel:

Comfort level traveling domestically v. internationally										
China	Australia	India	Canada	S. Korea	Germany	Italy	France	Sweden	U.K.	
87%	73%	71%	68%	65%	65%	58%	55%	54%	54%	
Comfortable Traveling Internationally										
58%	27%	58%	24%	28%	23%	30%	21%	25%	28%	
Turkey	Egypt	U.S.	Argentina	Russia	S. Africa	Poland	Mexico	Japan	Brazil	
54%	50%	50%	48%	44%	42%	41%	38%	29%	36%	
Comfortable Traveling Internationally	27%	48%	28%	29%	28%	37%	27%	36%	8%	37%

In the next five years domestic travel might become more prevalent, and nations may have to temporarily adjust their tourism strategies, offerings, and price points to be more attuned with, and suited to, the needs and interests of their respective citizens.

Though fewer in number, some global citizens still feel comfortable exploring the world in the next five years – signaling that international travel will not come to a complete standstill. Nonetheless, travel plans and flow patterns will be directly affected by how nations respond to health crises, and how comfortable these measures make travelers feel. The top five nations which global citizens would feel most comfortable visiting in the next five years, based on how they respond to healthcare crises, are:



The top five nations which global travelers would feel most comfortable traveling to in the near future are those which have made significant strides to contain the propagation of the COVID-19 pandemic within their own borders. Consequently, it is unsurprising that the nations with the highest levels of net favorability, based on how they respond to healthcare crises, are:



The handling of health crises by some countries has led to significant negative favorability impacts. The following markets have the greatest 'net negative' favorability in terms of their health crises management:



The United States ranks last out of the 50 measured nations in net favorability for its handling of healthcare crises. This particular instance helps further illustrate that the reputational losses incurred by poor perception in the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic may have a greater toll on near-future tourism flows. Not only does it appear that travel in the next few years will mostly occur within nations' borders – but while those willing to go beyond their own national boundaries are likely to travel to countries close in geographical proximity, they are even more likely to travel to nations which appear to have made significant strides to contain the proliferation of the pandemic – highlighted as follows by the top international destinations for each of the 20 measured NBI nations:



Research Roundup

The long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry is still largely unknown. New NBI 2020 results especially demonstrate that the ways in which countries handle health crises impacts favorability towards those nations. Those which have made significant progress to contain the COVID-19 pandemic are seen more favorably. Nations with net gains in favorability have a unique opportunity to attract international travelers in a time when most are cautious about venturing beyond their own nation's borders; while those with net losses in favorability, must work actively to regain trust.

“These important findings confirm that good governance – especially when it also produces benefits outside a nation's borders – is the key to a powerful and positive international reputation. This, in turn, tends to attract more trade, tourism, foreign investment and talent. In today's world of global challenges, doing good and doing well are inseparable,” added Simon Anholt.

NBI 2020

These results, along with NBI 2020 ratings, will provide critical insight to nations working to manage their brands and restore their business and tourism sectors quickly after the pandemic. Having a deep understanding of current perceptions, in the global context and in these turbulent times, can help guide future communications and marketing efforts for greater likelihood of success.

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(Courtesy ipsos.com)

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