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8 February 2021

COVID-19(21)12

**TO: LABOUR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
ALL MEMBERS & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
BIWEEKLY MEMBERS MEETING PARTICIPANTS
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

COVID-19 UPDATE AS OF 8 FEBRUARY 2021

Action Required: *Members are invited to note:*

- *Information below provided by WHO for 7 February 2021 and general epidemiological information on Covid 19 issued by WHO. Covid case numbers, hospital admissions and deaths continue to substantially increase across Europe and the Americas.*
- **105,394,301** Confirmed cases of COVID-19, **3310957** additional cases have been confirmed since last week's report. 3.14 % last week. There were also increased fatalities **2,302,302** deaths recorded which is additional deaths 4.04% growth last week. Many countries still cannot report all cases, so numbers will considerably increase. Currently **223** Countries, areas or territories have cases.
- *Member organisations are invited to ask Shipping Companies about whether crew members should be vaccinated concurrently or separately and to advise the Director of Employment Affairs (Natalie.Shaw@ics-shipping.co.uk). The information is requested by the Industry Vaccination Taskforce to assist planning how to lobby for vaccination support.*
- Members are invited to note the following documents attached for information:
 - EUR/NAT Brief on Restrictions due to COVID-19: 3 February 2021 Annex 1
 - Effects of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on Civil Aviation: Economic Impact Analysis: 27 January 2021 Annex 2
 - Webinar - Public Health Corridors Application: *Held in English on 17 February 2021 at 0900 EST time on Zoom.*
In order to register for the webinar, please click on the following link:
https://icao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_45L5wnmKTzuUb1SKA3w71Q
For anybody who wants to learn more about Public Health Corridors, especially Focal Points. Additionally, please share registration information with public health authorities to also learn about the application.
 - WHO Weekly Epidemiological Update: 3 February 2021 Annex 3
 - WHO Weekly Operational Update: 2 February 2021 Annex 4
 - CDC [New Travel requirements](#) (Includes guidance on vaccination to travel): 2 /2/21
 - CDC Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Recovery from COVID-19 for All Air Passengers Arriving in the United States. [FAQ for passengers and Aircraft Operators/Airlines/Crew](#): 3 February 2021
 - CDC [New Variants of the Virus that Causes COVID-19](#): 2 February 2021

- CDC update [Requirement for Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances & at Transportation Hubs](#) (inc all passengers & all personnel operating conveyances): 2 /2/21

SITUATION IN NUMBERS BY WHO REGION

Region	Cases	Deaths
Global	105,394,301	2,302,302
Africa	2,655,316	65,736
Americas	46,913,216	1,092,521
Eastern Mediterranean	5,828,434	136,946
Europe	35,481,004	780,934
South-East Asia	13,033,797	200,267
Western Pacific	1,481,789	25,885

TOP 12 COUNTRIES WITH CASES AS AT YESTERDAY (Top first)

	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	
1	USA	USA	The Same
2	India	India	The Same
3	Brazil	Brazil	The Same
4	Russia	Russia	The Same
5	UK	UK	The same
6	France	France	The same
7	Spain	Spain	The same
8	Italy	Italy	The same
9	Turkey	Turkey	The same
10	Germany	Germany	The same
11	Columbia	Columbia	The same
12	Argentina	Argentina	The same

TOP 12 COUNTRIES

	INCREASED CASES YESTERDAY	HIGH FATALITIES YESTERDAY
1	USA	USA
2	Brazil	Mexico
3	France	Brazil
4	UK	UK
5	Russia	Russia
6	Italy	Italy
7	Mexico	Argentina
8	Indonesia	South Africa
9	India	Columbia
10	Germany	Germany
11	Argentina	Portugal
12	Peru	Indonesia

Vaccines

Scientists are developing booster jabs to tackle Covid-19 variants, a health minister says, amid concerns about the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine's efficacy against the South Africa strain. The vaccine provides good protection against the dominant UK 'Kent' variant. A small study suggests it offers minimal protection against mild disease from the South Africa variant. 147 cases of the variant were found in the UK. In South Africa, where the variant known as 501.V2 or B.1.351 accounts for 90% of new Covid cases, the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine rollout has been put on hold awaiting further advice. Early research suggests other vaccines are also likely to offer less protection against the South African variant than against the original virus. South Africa's suspension of the rollout of the vaccine is only temporary now and the context differs from the UK where the Kent Variant is the dominant strain.

Dr English, a communicable disease control specialist hopes to see new vaccines available tailored to the South African variant within months as the technology is well-established. The South African mutations change the part of the virus that vaccines target meaning all vaccines produced to date are likely to be affected in some way. Trials for Novavax and Janssen vaccines conducted in South Africa showed less effectiveness against this variant.

Prof Madhi, who led the South African Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine trial said there was "still some hope" the jab may perform well against the South Africa variant in protecting against severe disease. He said he was extrapolating that from the efficacy of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine which used similar technology and had similar immune effects.

Australia

Please note information kindly provided by MIAL which has advised of the following Border Closure Changes More information is available directly on their website.

<https://mial.com.au/members/novel-corona-virus-update>.

Southern Australia: New Cross Border Travel Direction No. 34. Greater Melbourne added to the list of restricted locations and high-risk sites (Melbourne) identified with testing and quarantine requirements for arrivals. Essential traveller exemptions. These changes do not include the announced removal of the hard border with Western Australia.

Tasmania : New Direction in Relation to Persons Arriving in Tasmania. Vessels arriving in Tasmania must provide information to Biosecurity Tasmania. Vessels must arrive at approved maritime entry points, which includes all the major ports. Travellers from high-risk areas must not travel to Tasmania's islands without approval.

Australian Capital Territory has opened its borders with all states and Northern Territory. Arrivals from Victorian exposure sites must quarantine and get tested.

Queensland: From 1am 06/02/21 the South West region of Western Australia will be removed as a COVID-19 hotspot. LGAs in the Metropolitan Perth and Peel regions of Western Australia will remain hotspots until 1am on 14/02/21.

Western Australia: Some restrictions to ease but movement out of Perth-Peel region still restricted. Domestic maritime workers should make a G2G application – it appears they can now apply either via the regional or interstate portal.

New South Wales – can now accommodate seafarer flying in above the international passenger cap by application.

Western Australia – details re how to make G2G application intra-State.

Southern Australia – Premier’s announcement not yet reflected in directions.

Queensland – MSQ update #139

Commonwealth/National Cabinet - increases to incoming passenger cap announced, some interesting comments re vaccines.

Austria

Austria has eased its lockdown measures, despite stubbornly high infection rates and appearance of more infectious virus strains. Schools have reopened, with pupils receiving regular antigen tests. Non-essential shops, museums and zoos have also opened again, with limits on customer numbers. Hairdressers and beauticians are now open, but people will have to show negative Covid tests before getting their hair cut. FFP2 masks are mandatory in shops and confined public spaces. Restaurants and hotels remain closed.

There’s some concern about the move to ease restrictions, particularly with the emergence of some cases of the South African variant in the province of Tyrol.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz announcing easing restrictions last week, said the safest course of action would be to maintain lockdown, but children needed to return to school and to curb unemployment. The lockdown will be reimposed if numbers of new infections get too high.

Dubai

Dubai has announced plans to help the UN distribute two billion coronavirus vaccines to some of the world’s poorest countries in the year ahead. The city will combine its extensive network of air and sea transport resources as it acts as a global supply hub. Emirates, Skycargo and DP World will form a logistics alliance to expedite global transport of urgently needed vaccines through Dubai. Dubai already has one of the world's largest centres specialising in aid distribution logistics and now plans to combine all its cargo-handling facilities and expertise to support the vast global effort to vaccinate against coronavirus. Last week, a Dubai-based international port management organisation agreed to help the UN ship vaccines to low and middle-income countries at no cost.

Europe

Europol, the EU law enforcement agency, has warned that criminals are selling fake negative Covid-19 test certificates. The fear is this could enable people to cheat travel restrictions. It comes as a BBC investigation also found falsified NHS certificates for sale online.

Israel

Israel's vaccination programme is showing signs of driving down infections and illness in the over-60s. The fall appears most pronounced in older people and areas furthest ahead with immunisation. This suggests it is the vaccine, not the current lockdown, taking effect.

Israeli Ministry of Health figures show 531 over-60s, out of almost 750,000 fully vaccinated, tested positive for Covid (0.07%). Far fewer fell ill, with 38 becoming hospitalised with moderate, severe or critical disease a tiny proportion. It assessed medical records of almost a million people, 743,845 were over 60 until at least seven days after having a second vaccine dose. There were three deaths in vaccinated over-60s which may have contracted the

infection earlier, before immunity could build. Before the vaccine had time to take effect, over 7,000 infections were recorded, just under 700 cases of moderate to critical illness and 307 deaths. Data suggests infections and illnesses fell consistently from 14 days after a first jab. While the biggest fall observed was in people seven days after a second dose of the vaccine, this cannot be used to determine whether it is appropriate to delay second doses.

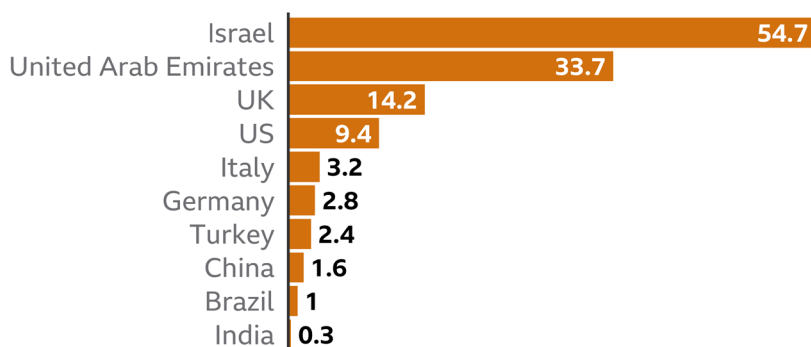
Israel has consistently given both doses no more than three weeks apart. The first dose is not expected to provide protection for at least two weeks so it is not possible to untangle impact of the second dose from the first dose starting to become effective. The first dose takes longer to show any effect as it primes the immune system to recognise and fight off the virus.

Israel has delivered five million vaccine doses to about nine million people and about one million people have received two doses. The jury is still out on whether the vaccine completely stops people from carrying and passing on Covid. Currently, while many people remain unvaccinated, those jabbed are being told to socially distance and wear masks.


The Ministry of Health's data only reviewed infections and illness in vaccinated people and did not involve a control group of unvaccinated people. However, a team of researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science, Tel-Aviv University, and Technion Israel Institute of Technology attempted to confirm if the observed fall in cases is due to the vaccine or just the effect of lockdown restrictions. Prof Rossman, Prof Segal, and Dr Shalit analysed national data by age and city and identified bigger falls in infections and hospitalisations both in the over-60s, who were vaccinated first and in cities which vaccinated the largest proportion of their populations first. These relative changes were not seen in earlier lockdowns. This gives early encouraging signs linking the falls to the vaccine and not just to current restrictions.

Maccabi Israel's second-largest healthcare provider published figures showing 66 people of 248,000 vaccinated (0.03%) caught Covid, over a week after receiving a second vaccine dose. All had mild symptoms and none hospitalised. Maccabi compared the infection rate with 900,000 unvaccinated people with a similar demographic profile. In this group during the same time 8,250 caught Covid over 30 times as many. They estimated the vaccine was 92% effective when used in a population similar to the 95% Pfizer found in a controlled clinical trial.

Vaccine doses per 100 people in countries with highest total vaccinations



Note: Total vaccinations refers to the number of doses given, not necessarily the number of people vaccinated

Source: Our World In Data, 0900 GMT on 1 Feb with latest available data 

Japan

Information kindly provided by JSA. On February 2, the Prime Minister announced the extension of the State of Emergency against COVID-19 until March 7 for Tokyo, Osaka, and other eight prefectures.. Crew change in Japan is still allowed under strict restrictions.

[On-signers]

Seafarers who have stayed in the UK, South Africa, Ireland, Brazil, and Israel in the last 14 days: Must stay in the designated facility for three (3) days. They must take a COVID-19 test on the third day and be released 4th day if the result is negative.

- Seafarers coming from other countries:
All seafarers (including Japanese nationals) from any country (except the UK, South Africa, Ireland, Brazil, and Israel) are requested to submit a certificate of the negative test result of the pre-entry COVID-19 test conducted within 72 hours before boarding.
- If seafarers may not have an effective negative certificate, they shall take the same process as for seafarers from the UK, South Africa, Ireland, Brazil, and Israel.
- Where seafarers can embark on a vessel within a quarantine period, seafarers can move to the vessel.

[Off-signers]

If vessels arrive in Japan within 14 days after departure from a foreign port, any seafarers who are planning disembarkation shall take a Covid-19 test on-arrival (unless the quarantine officer exempts them). Seafarers must stay on board, waiting for the result. During this period, cargo operation is not allowed. A second PCR test is also required after three days from the first one. Ports where the COVID-19 test is available may be limited. Disembarkation in Japan is still not easy (especially for a short-voyage-vessel).

In any case above, seafarers cannot use public transportation.

Portugal

Portugal has become to latest country to advise against using the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine for people over 65. However, the health ministry says vaccination of a person over 65 years should not be delayed if the AstraZeneca vaccine is the only one available. It is the latest recommendation from an EU member state approving the jab with restrictions, citing insufficient data on its efficacy for older people. The EU drugs regulator has approved the AstraZeneca vaccine for all adults, but each member determines its own roll-out policy.

The first batch of AstraZeneca vaccines arrived in Portugal on Sunday, numbering 42,300 doses. Germany, France, Austria and Norway have said they will only administer the shot to under-65s, with Poland limiting it to under-60s, and Spain and Italy to under-55s

South Korea

Cats and dogs will be tested for Covid-19 if they display symptoms, the city government of Seoul says. The testing programme in Seoul comes several weeks after South Korea reported its first Covid-19 case involving a kitten in Jinju.

Only cats and dogs exhibiting symptoms, such as fever, coughing and breathing difficulties, will be tested. If a pet tests positive, they must isolate at their owner's home for 14 days. Various animals globally, including tigers, gorillas and mink, have tested positive for Covid during the pandemic. Infectious disease experts say there is no evidence animals significantly spread the virus causing Covid-19. Currently, there are no known cases of pets passing Covid to humans. The probability of this is considered low.

Spain

Please find below an update on the travel restrictions published in recent weeks in the Official Spanish Gazette: This has kindly been provided by Anave.

On 3 February, flights between the Federal Republic of Brazil/ Republic of South Africa and Spanish airports were restricted until 09:00 h of 17 February 2021. The Order establishes that any flight proceeding from any airport in Brazil or South Africa and leading to any airport in Spain, with or without stopovers, will only be permitted to transport nationals from Spain or Andorra, or residents in Spain or Andorra or passengers in international transit to a non-Schengen country doing a stopover of less than 24 hours without leaving the transit area of the Spanish airport. There are no exceptions for seafarers.

Restrictions for flights and passenger ships proceeding from United Kingdom to Spain were extended until 18:00 h of 16 February 2021. Flights proceeding from UK with Spain as destination, with or without stopovers, will only be permitted to transport nationals of Spain or Andorra, or residents in Spain or Andorra. Seafarers arriving in Spain from the UK are exempt.

Border controls between Portugal and Spain are being established again until 01:00 h of 10 February 2021. There are exemptions for those travelling regarding working reasons, hence seafarers are included. Since 15 January there are restrictions to travel to UK. Passengers over 11 years old arriving to their territory by means of sea, air or land must present a negative Covid-19 test done 72 had prior to the departure. Seafarers are exempted from this restriction as far as they demonstrate they work onboard a ship (employment contract or seaman's book).

Extension of temporary restriction of non-essential trips from third countries to the EU and associated Schengen countries until 24:00h of 28 February 2021. Seafarers are exempted.

Sri Lanka

Members are advised that a Multinational Offshore Covid-19 Treatment Centre is being introduced positioned off the Port of Galle in Sri Lanka from 16th February 2021 to accept and treat COVID-19 afflicted seafarers from any ship passing Sri Lanka so that ships can continue trading without any interruption. Full details are attached at Annex 5.

United Kingdom

Up to 88% of people still have antibodies in their blood to fight Covid six months after infection, according to a study of almost 1,700 people. Data from one of the world's largest follow-up Covid studies also provides detail about likely symptoms experienced by those infected. While 26% had a cough and 28% a fever, a bigger proportion 43% lost the sense of taste or smell. However, 40% had none of these and about 20% had no symptoms at all.

The data also supports previous studies on who is most likely to be infected with Covid at some point during the pandemic. Among a group of nearly 20,000 people who were regularly tested monthly during the pandemic, younger adults, black or South Asian people and those living in deprived areas were most likely to test positive for the antibodies.

The UK Biobank collates data on blood, urine and saliva samples, heart and brain scans and the genetic data of half a million people who volunteered to have information analysed to assist global medical research. Just under 20,000 of these participants each gave a blood sample every month between 27 May and 4 December 2020. 1,699 tested positive for antibodies indicating a past Covid-19 infection.

Most already tested positive in the first month of the study, suggesting acquisition of the infection in the first wave. By the end of the study, six months later, 88% still had detectable antibodies. This echoes findings from previous, smaller studies in healthcare workers. It is possible that some or all of the 12% whose tests went from positive to negative retained some protection against subsequent infection although their antibodies fell below the study threshold. Not everyone was equally likely to show signs of previous infection.

The antibody study mirrors other data showing groups hit hardest by the virus. Among the 20,000 participants, 16% of the black people tested positive for antibodies, compared with: 14% of South Asian people, 8.5% of white people and 7.5% of Chinese people. There were regional differences too, with Londoners most likely to have antibodies and people in Scotland least likely. 13.5% of the adults under 30 tested positive, compared with 6.7% of the over-70s.

An Office of National Statistics study of blood test results from a random sample of people over 16, found around one in seven English people had antibodies in their blood in mid-January. The figure was one in nine in Wales, one in 11 in Northern Ireland and one in 10 in Scotland. This suggests people were previously infected with the virus but it is unlikely to be the total infected since the start of the epidemic as antibodies although present for at least six months after infection decline over time. Vaccinations also increase antibodies in those given jabs, to help fight off the virus.

United States

A letter from federal maritime commissioners Bentzel and Maffei is the latest effort made by union leaders, port officials and politicians to move dockworkers up the vaccination queue.

The Port of Los Angeles executive director Gene Seroka told Lloyd's List logistics companies, port directors and union officials have worked every angle possible since December to receive help with testing and vaccinating dockworkers, but no results have been achieved. 'We haven't seen a longshore worker get a vaccine yet,' said Mr Seroka.

Federal maritime commissioners pleaded President Biden for US maritime workers to get priority for vaccinations against Covid. The letter from commissioners Bentzel and Maffei is the latest effort by union leaders, port officials and politicians at all levels to move dockworkers up the queue for vaccination. They noted the workers critical role in moving medical supplies, personal protective equipment and handling an unprecedented amount of consumer goods at gateway ports. They said a large-scale workforce disruption from Covid would be disastrous for immediate and long-term fluidity of the supply chain and delivering goods to Americans. They cited figures from the US west coast's International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association showing 1,034 maritime workers contracted Covid in California, Washington and Oregon. They also referred to numbers from the International Longshoremen's Association, representing workers on the east and US Gulf coasts, showing 784 positive tests with 1,855 quarantines from last March to January 25.

In December, directors of five US west coast ports, along with representatives of the ILWU and Pacific Maritime Association wrote to the governors of California, Oregon and Washington to request priority treatment for workers. Port of Los Angeles executive director Seroka told Lloyd's List that logistics companies, port directors and ILWU officials have worked every angle possible since then to get help with testing and vaccinating dockworkers with no result. Port of Long Beach executive director Cordero said that the coronavirus vaccine should be distributed immediately to longshore and other waterfront workers in the US. As of February 1, LA County has received just 800,000 vaccine doses for its 10m residents.

Executive Order 13998, *Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel*, requires masks to be worn on all public maritime vessels, including ferries", the USCG issued MSIB 02-21 providing further context and clarification. This is attached at Annex 6.

Please note:

Regarding enforcement, USCG created an email (wearamask@uscg.mil) for any persons wishing to report vessels not operating in accordance with the Executive Order or CDC Order.

Vessels that do not implement the mask requirement may be issued a Captain of the Port (COTP) order directing the vessel's movement and operations; repeated failure to impose the mask mandate could result in civil penalties and/or criminal action.

Natalie Shaw
Director Employment Affairs