

Coronavirus Disease – COVID-19

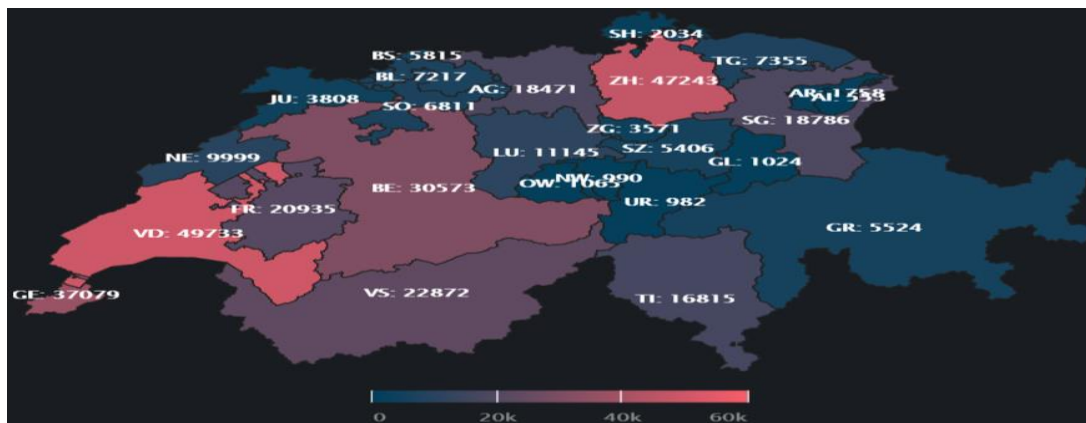
04.12.2020

- The death toll from the coronavirus outbreak is over 1,515,873 worldwide, with the highest number of deaths in USA (283,072) and Brazil (175,307). There have been more than 65,757,854 global cases in 210 countries and territories. [1]
- The WHO has urged European countries to prepare for vaccinations against Covid-19, stressing that community acceptance will be crucial to the success of the health programmes. More than 200 Covid vaccines are under development, some of which have already completed phase 3 clinical trials with an efficacy rate of more than 90%. This week the UK became the first country to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19. The UK's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency is also reviewing vaccines from the US company Moderna and the Oxford University/AstraZeneca team. Dr Hans Kluge, the WHO's regional director for Europe, said the promise of vaccines was phenomenal, and the rewards potentially gamechanging. *"The virus still has the potential to do enormous damage unless we do everything in our power to stop its spread and part of the solution will be vaccination,"* he said. But he added: *"To be sure that we reap the full reward of those vaccines, we need to have plans in place."* He noted that the WHO was working with countries to expand their cold chain capacity, vaccine safety monitoring and community engagement. [2]
- The WHO does not recommend countries issuing "immunity passports" for those who have recovered from COVID-19, but is looking at prospects of deploying e-vaccination certificates. Estonia and the United Nations health agency in October started a pilot project for a digital vaccine certificate - a *"smart yellow card"* - for eventual use in interoperable healthcare data tracking and to strengthen the WHO-backed COVAX initiative to boost vaccinations in developing countries. *"We are looking very closely into the use of technology in this COVID-19 response, one of them how we can work with member states toward an e-vaccination certificate,"* said Siddhartha Datta, Europe's WHO programme manager for vaccine-preventable diseases. Introducing such a certificate, which would make it possible to identify and monitor people who have been vaccinated, has not been finalised and would have to be drawn up in accordance with national laws, Datta said. [3]
- Blood samples taken in the US in December 2019 contained antibodies for the virus – one month before the country's first confirmed case. The findings, published in a government study, add to previous evidence the virus was spreading across the globe before it was on the radar of health authorities. Antibodies were found in 39 samples taken between December 13 and 16 in California, Oregon and Washington. The first confirmed case in the US was not recorded until January 20 in Washington, in someone returning from China. The study, in the Clinical Infectious Diseases journal, also found antibodies in blood samples taken in early January across five other states. In total, antibodies were found in 106 of the 7,389 samples taken by American Red Cross from December 13 to January 17. The samples were given to the Centres for Disease Control for analysis. The body develops antibodies in response to the virus, so their presence in the samples suggests it reached the US much earlier than first thought. China reportedly identified the first symptomatic case of Covid in November 2019, several weeks before authorities there said they had uncovered a new virus. [4]

Countries	Deaths	Cases	Recovered
USA	283,072	14,551,416	8,569,650
Brazil	175,307	6,487,516	5,725,010
India	139,473	9,593,688	9,042,308
Mexico	108,173	1,144,643	843,231
UK	60,113	1,674,134	N/A
Italy	58,038	1,664,829	846,809
France	54,140	2,257,331	166,940
Iran	49,695	1,016,835	708,106
Spain	46,038	1,693,591	N/A
Russia	42,176	2,402,949	1,888,752
Argentina	39,305	1,447,732	1,274,675
Colombia	37,305	1,343,322	1,233,115
Peru	36,104	968,846	901,544
South Africa	21,803	800,872	739,367
Poland	19,359	1,041,846	666,413
Germany	18,426	1,139,772	820,600
Indonesia	17,479	563,680	466,178
Belgium	17,033	584,857	38,577
Chile	15,558	557,135	531,543
Turkey	14,316	733,261	418,331
Ecuador	13,612	195,884	169,804
Ukraine	13,195	787,891	397,809
Canada	12,407	396,270	314,608
Iraq	12,387	560,622	489,772
Romania	12,052	500,273	390,212
Netherlands	9,623	543,924	N/A
Bolivia	8,982	145,186	124,015
Czechia	8,641	537,663	468,302
Philippines	8,509	436,345	399,345
Pakistan	8,260	410,072	350,305
Sweden	7,067	278,912	N/A
Bangladesh	6,772	473,991	390,951
Egypt	6,713	117,156	103,082
Morocco	6,063	368,624	318,987
Saudi Arabia	5,940	358,336	348,238
Hungary	5,513	238,056	68,525
Switzerland	5,243	344,497	260,600
Portugal	4,724	307,618	229,018
China	4,634	86,584	81,679
Bulgaria	4,503	155,193	57,141
Guatemala	4,224	124,805	113,273
Austria	3,651	297,245	243,775
Tunisia	3,359	99,280	73,607
Panama	3,141	171,219	148,396
Jordan	2,960	234,353	177,195
Honduras	2,938	109,760	48,953
Israel	2,896	341,760	326,966
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,865	92,793	57,545
Greece	2,706	111,537	9,989
Algeria	2,480	85,927	55,538
Moldova	2,384	113,829	98,276
Dominican Republic	2,335	146,009	115,992
Armenia	2,277	139,692	114,990
Japan	2,240	155,232	131,176
Ireland	2,080	73,228	23,364
Myanmar	2,059	96,520	74,973
Croatia	2,032	143,370	117,148
Kazakhstan	1,990	134,706	118,643
North Macedonia	1,847	65,231	41,656
Afghanistan	1,847	47,388	37,347
Serbia	1,834	206,940	31,536
Paraguay	1,796	85,477	60,086
Costa Rica	1,757	142,505	91,424
Ethiopia	1,724	111,579	77,385
Slovenia	1,653	83,133	60,957
Nepal	1,567	238,861	221,847
Azerbaijan	1,551	138,000	83,800

Kenya	1,506	87,249	68,110
Oman	1,435	124,329	115,866
Georgia	1,425	152,704	126,904
Kyrgyzstan	1,285	74,373	66,113
Sudan	1,271	18,535	10,672
Libya	1,219	85,529	56,048
Belarus	1,190	143,383	120,571
Nigeria	1,179	68,303	64,291
El Salvador	1,142	39,718	36,286
Lebanon	1,067	132,817	84,142
Slovakia	957	113,392	77,142
Venezuela	909	103,548	98,521
Australia	908	27,949	25,629
Kuwait	886	143,917	139,148
Albania	870	41,302	20,974
Denmark	867	86,743	68,632
Palestine	797	94,676	70,206
Yemen	624	2,239	1,525
Uzbekistan	611	73,592	70,861
Lithuania	590	69,582	27,760
UAE	586	174,062	157,828
S. Korea	536	36,332	28,611
Montenegro	516	36,932	25,866
Cameroon	441	24,487	22,177
Syria	432	8,147	3,748
Finland	408	26,758	18,100
Malaysia	376	70,236	59,061
Zambia	357	17,730	17,102
Norway	354	37,371	27,414
Angola	352	15,361	8,244
Bahrain	341	87,432	85,598
Luxembourg	339	36,429	27,356
DRC	337	13,281	11,753
Senegal	336	16,297	15,707
Ghana	325	52,096	50,924
Zimbabwe	280	10,424	8,754
Jamaica	260	10,987	6,730
Madagascar	255	17,513	16,657
Latvia	242	19,993	1,849
Qatar	239	139,643	136,872
Haiti	233	9,331	8,114
Uganda	206	21,612	9,110
Malawi	185	6,043	5,472
Mauritania	181	9,005	7,785
Belize	164	7,236	3,571
Bahamas	163	7,549	5,934
Mali	162	4,880	3,281
Nicaragua	161	5,838	4,225
Namibia	151	14,599	13,774
Guyana	151	5,528	4,618
Malta	149	10,320	8,120
Guadeloupe	149	8,427	2,242
Cuba	136	8,531	7,770
Ivory Coast	132	21,389	21,022
Mozambique	132	15,918	14,030
Sri Lanka	129	26,290	19,438
Estonia	125	13,939	8,549
Gambia	123	3,767	3,610
Eswatini	122	6,474	6,044
Trinidad and Tobago	121	6,725	5,861
Somalia	121	4,525	3,480
Suriname	117	5,322	5,203
Hong Kong	112	6,702	5,465
Cabo Verde	107	10,938	10,454
Chad	102	1,708	1,539
Congo	94	5,774	4,988
Tajikistan	87	12,308	11,718
Equatorial Guinea	85	5,159	5,023
Liberia	83	1,663	1,358
Uruguay	80	6,455	4,707

- Vaccine maker Moderna said Thursday it expects to have between 100 million and 125 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine available by the first quarter of 2021, with most of those designated for the US market. The company has applied for emergency use authorization for its vaccine from the US Food and Drug Administration and FDA advisers are scheduled to discuss the application Dec. 17. Moderna has also applied to European drug regulators for conditional approval. “Today, Moderna re-affirmed its expectation of having approximately 20 million doses available in the U.S. by the end of 2020,” the company said in a statement. [5]
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced that vaccinations will *begin “as soon as we get a go-ahead from the scientists,”* and that the first phase of the rollout will prioritize frontline healthcare workers and older citizens. [5]
- French Prime Minister Jean Castex said on Wednesday that his government would order citizens into isolation for seven days after skiing holidays abroad. Checkpoints would be set up at the borders with Switzerland and Spain. The measure would be implemented if Switzerland and Spain do not close their winter sports destinations until January, as France has done, he said. Castex said the conclusion to be drawn from this is that people should not go skiing in Spain or Switzerland. Cross-border commuters would not be affected, he added. The Swiss government’s decision at the beginning of November to support the health service with up to 2,500 army personnel has now received the approval of parliament. [6]



Cases in Switzerland. [7]

• Funding opportunity for researchers

PSPACE (Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe) Fast Track Call for Proposals

- <https://prace-ri.eu/prace-support-to-mitigate-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic/>

The US Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program - a call for proposals on COVID-19

- <https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/ProgramFY.htm?programFYId=256400>

Anyone submitting to US (NIH, DoD) or EU Horizon 2020 calls can contact the Grants Office for support: grantsoffice@research.unibe.ch. The Grants Advisors responsible for the ISPM are Aline Schögl (aline.schoegler@research.unibe.ch) and Leah Witton (leah.witton@research.unibe.ch).

Sources

- [1] <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>
- [2] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2020/dec/04/coronavirus-live-news-biden-to-ask-americans-to-wear-masks-for-100-days-as-global-deaths-pass-15m>
- [3] <https://fr.reuters.com/article/idUKKBN28D111>
- [4] <https://www.pressreader.com/canada/covid-19-news/20201203>
- [5] <https://edition.cnn.com/world/live-news/coronavirus-pandemic-12-04-20-intl/index.html>
- [6] <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/in-depth/coronavirus>
- [7] <https://www.corona-data.ch/>