



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Wednesday 20211215

New Omicron cases in Delhi (Hindustan Times: 20211215)

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/all-4-of-delhi-s-new-omicron-cases-are-asymptomatic-says-hospital-101639534590343.html>

All 4 of Delhi's new Omicron cases are asymptomatic, says hospital

The hospital statement comes a day after Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain informed that Omicron was detected in four new patients in the national capital who had tested positive for the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), thus taking the total Omicron tally in the Union territory to six.



Omicron, the new variant of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, is said to be highly infectious and capable of undergoing frequent mutations. (File Photo)

All four of the new Omicron cases reported in national capital Delhi are asymptomatic ones, according to the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital (LNJP), where these patients are admitted. Dr Suresh Kumar, the MD of the hospital, told the ANI news agency that of the four patients infected with the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, two had come from the United Kingdom while the other two were their close contacts.

The hospital statement comes a day after Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain informed that Omicron was detected in four new patients in the national capital who had tested positive for the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), thus taking the total Omicron tally in the Union territory to six.

The LNJP hospital, where all the patients are being treated, provided details of the Omicron cases late at night on Tuesday. According to Dr Kumar, one of the six patients discharged earlier in the day had come from Zimbabwe on December 2 and reported mild symptoms like slight throat discomfort and

weakness. “But he returned completely healthy after 10 days,” he noted. “Omicron patients have mild symptoms, stable oxygen rates, and no need for the ICU.”

Of the 38 total Covid-19 patients currently admitted at the hospital, two or three more shall be discharged within Wednesday, he said, adding that the medical facility currently has 50 dedicated Covid beds in view of the new variant of the virus but that number can be increased if need be.

Omicron, the new variant of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus said to be highly infectious and capable of undergoing frequent mutations, was first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) from South Africa on November 25 this year. As per the WHO, the first known confirmed B.1.1.529 infection was from a specimen collected on November 9.

On November 26, the WHO named the new B.1.1.529 strain as ‘Omicron’, also classifying it as a ‘variant of concern’.

New Delhi’s air continues (Hindustan Times: 20211215)

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/all-4-of-delhi-s-new-omicron-cases-are-asymptomatic-says-hospital-101639534590343.html>

New Delhi’s air continues to be ‘very poor’



HIV at higher risk for heart failure (Hindustan Times: 20211215)

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/people-with-hiv-at-higher-risk-for-heart-failure-study-101639534656864.html>

PEOPLE WITH HIV AT HIGHER RISK FOR HEART FAILURE: STUDY

A new study found that people with HIV are at higher risk of developing heart failure than people without HIV.



People with HIV at higher risk for heart failure: Study(Unsplash)

A new study found that people with HIV are at higher risk of developing heart failure than people without HIV.

The research, published in Mayo Clinic Proceedings, is one of the largest studies to investigate heart failure risk in people with HIV and how that risk varies by age, gender, race, and ethnicity.

"Cardiovascular disease has been an important concern for people with HIV for many, many years," said the study's senior author Michael J. Silverberg, PhD, MPH, a research scientist and HIV epidemiologist at the Kaiser Permanente Division of Research. "Most of the research in this area has focused on the risk of stroke and heart attacks. With this study, we now see the cardiovascular impacts for people with HIV extend to end-stage conditions such as heart failure."

Silverberg and his colleagues identified 38,868 people with HIV who were Kaiser Permanente members between 2000 and 2016 in one of 3 regions: Northern California, Southern California, and the Mid-Atlantic States. Next, they matched each person with up to 10 Kaiser Permanente members from the corresponding region who were the same age, gender, and race but did not have HIV; this group included 386,586 people. Lastly, they identified the people in both groups who had developed heart failure during follow-up.

The study found that people with HIV were 68 per cent more likely to develop heart failure than people who did not have HIV, and people who were age 40 or younger, female, or of Asian or Pacific Islander ethnicity were at the highest risk.

"In terms of young people, it's possible that they had fewer other complicating health issues, which made heart failure stand out," said the study's first author Alan S. Go, MD, a senior research scientist at the Division of Research. "In women, preliminary data suggest HIV may have a greater impact on their cardiac function than it does in men, due in part to hormonal regulation and enhanced myocardial fibrosis, but that needs to be investigated further. And, overall, not a lot is known about cardiac issues and HIV among Asians and Pacific Islanders."

The analyses accounted for whether a person had risk factors for heart disease or was on medications to prevent heart problems. "Our study showed that the higher risk wasn't due to differences in access to care," said Dr Go. "They were all getting the highest-quality care." The study also showed that the higher heart failure risk was not because people with HIV had more risk factors for heart disease or just experienced more heart attacks. In fact, there was a higher prevalence of risk factors for cardiovascular disease among those without HIV, Dr Go said.

The researchers said their study highlights why it is important for people with HIV and their health care providers to be aware that shortness of breath, fatigue, leg swelling, coughing, and chest pain can be signs of early heart failure. "HIV patients often receive all of their care in busy HIV primary care clinics, and it is possible that signs and symptoms of heart failure may be missed, resulting in delays in treatment," said Silverberg.

Kaiser Permanente has been at the forefront of addressing heart disease in people with HIV. "An early study from Kaiser Permanente Northern California was among the first to show that people with HIV are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease," Silverberg said, adding, "So, we've been aware of the heart problems in this setting for a long time, and our patients have received excellent preventive care. Despite that, we are still seeing a higher risk of heart failure, and we need more research to understand why so we can intervene earlier."

Oxford study reveals Covid vaccines (Hindustan Times: 20211215)

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/oxford-study-reveals-covid-vaccines-induce-lower-antibody-levels-against-omicron-101639470335262.html>

OXFORD STUDY REVEALS COVID VACCINES INDUCE LOWER ANTIBODY LEVELS AGAINST OMICRON

As per a new Oxford study, two doses of Pfizer and AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines induce lower antibody levels against Omicron coronavirus variant



Oxford study reveals Covid vaccines induce lower antibody levels against Omicron (Twitter/TRF_Stories)

Two doses of Pfizer and AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines generate lower levels of antibodies against the Omicron variant of coronavirus, according to a study which suggests that those previously infected or vaccinated may be at an increased risk of infection.

Researchers from the University of Oxford in the UK analysed the impact of the Omicron variant of concern on one of the immune responses generated by vaccination.

Play Video

Pfizer said on Wednesday that a booster of its COVID-19 vaccine may offer important protection against the new Omicron variant even though the initial two doses appear significantly less effective. Pfizer and its partner BioNTech said that while two doses may not be strong enough to prevent infection, lab tests showed a booster increased by 25-fold people's levels of antibodies...

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Researchers from the University of Oxford in the UK analysed the impact of the Omicron variant of concern on one of the immune responses generated by vaccination.

The yet-to-be peer-reviewed study, posted on the preprint repository MedRxiv on Monday, used blood samples from individuals who had previously received two doses of the AstraZeneca or Pfizer vaccines, and a live virus isolate.

The researchers demonstrate substantial decrease in neutralising titres -- a measure of the level of neutralising antibodies generated in responses to vaccination against, or infection from, Covid-19.

The results indicate that the Omicron variant has the potential to drive a further wave of infections, including among those already vaccinated, the researchers said.

They, however, noted that there is currently no evidence of increased potential to cause severe disease, hospitalisations or deaths in vaccinated populations.

These results align with recently published data from UK Health Security Agency, showing reduced effectiveness of two doses of these vaccines against symptomatic disease due to the Omicron variant compared to Delta.

This effectiveness was, however, improved by a third dose of vaccine, the researchers said.

"These data will help those developing vaccines, and vaccination strategies, to determine the routes to best protect their populations, and press home the message that those who are offered booster vaccination should take it," said Professor Gavin Screaton, Head of the Oxford's Medical Sciences Division, and lead author of the paper.

"Whilst there is no evidence for increased risk of severe disease, or death, from the virus amongst vaccinated populations, we must remain cautious, as greater case numbers will still place a considerable burden on healthcare systems," Screaton said.

The researchers noted that these data are important but are only one part of the picture.

They only look at neutralising antibodies after the second dose, but do not tell us about cellular immunity, and this will also be tested using stored samples once the assays are available, they said.

"Importantly, we have not yet assessed the impact of a 'third dose' booster, which we know significantly increases antibody concentrations, and it is likely that this will lead to improved potency against the Omicron variant," said Matthew Snape, a professor at the University of Oxford and co-author of the study.

"Vaccination induces many arms of our immune system, including neutralising antibodies and T-cells," said Teresa Lambe, a professor at the University of Oxford, and an author on the paper.

"Real-world effectiveness data has shown us that vaccines continue to protect against severe disease with previous variants of concern. The best way to protect us going forward in this pandemic is by getting vaccines in arms," Lambe added.

Covid-19: India logged 6,984 new coronavirus infections (The Times of India: 20211215)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/covid-19-india-logged-6984-new-coronavirus-infections-active-cases-in-country-decline-to-87562/articleshow/88291634.cms>

Covid-19: India logged 6,984 new coronavirus infections, active cases in country decline to 87,562

NEW DELHI: India On Wednesday reported 6,984 new coronavirus infections, with the fresh cases, the total tally of Covid-19 cases in the country rose to 3,47,10,628. A decline of 1,431 cases has been recorded in the active Covid-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The death toll, on the other hand, climbed to 4,76,135 with 247 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated on Union health ministry data at 8 am today. While the active cases declined to 87,562.

The daily rise in new coronavirus infections has been recorded below 15,000 for the last 48 days now.

The active cases comprise 0.25 per cent of the total infections, the lowest since March 2020, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.38 per cent, the highest since March 2020, the ministry said.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 0.59 per cent. It has been less than two per cent for the last 72 days. The weekly positivity rate was also recorded at 0.67 per cent. It has been below one per cent for the last 31 days, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,41,46,931, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.37 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 134.61 crore.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

The 247 new fatalities include 174 from Kerala and 24 from Maharashtra.

Of the 174 deaths in Kerala, 28 were recorded over the last few days and 146 were designated as Covid-19 deaths after receiving appeals based on the new guidelines of the Centre and the directions of the Supreme Court, a Kerala state government release said on Tuesday.

A total of 4,76,135 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,41,288 from Maharashtra, 43,344 from Kerala, 38,275 from Karnataka, 36,633 from Tamil Nadu, 25,100 from Delhi, 22,914 from Uttar Pradesh and 19,620 from West Bengal.

The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

Omicron spread (The Times of India: 20211215)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/who-sees-unprecedented-omicron-spread-probably-in-most-countries/articleshow/88290822.cms>

WHO sees unprecedented Omicron spread, 'probably' in most countries



GENEVA: The World Health Organization warned Tuesday Omicron was spreading at an unprecedented rate and urged countries to act, as drug maker Pfizer said its coronavirus pill was effective against the variant.

Dutch primary schools will close early as Europe battles a fresh wave of infections and

hospital admissions, while British Prime Minister Boris Johnson faced a major parliamentary test seeking to impose fresh Covid curbs.

Omicron, first detected by South Africa and reported to the WHO on November 24, has a large number of mutations, setting alarm bells ringing since its discovery.

Early data suggests it can be resistant to vaccines and is more transmissible than the Delta variant, which was first identified in India and accounts for the bulk of the world's coronavirus cases.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters the strain had been reported in 77 countries and "probably" spread to most nations undetected "at a rate we have not seen with any previous variant".

Omicron now accounts for around three percent of cases in the United States, a figure that is expected to rise rapidly as has been seen in other countries.

The United States is the nation hit hardest by the pandemic, and it crossed 800,000 known Covid-19 deaths on Tuesday, according to a Johns Hopkins University tracker.

Although Britain on Monday confirmed what is thought to be the world's first Omicron death, there is no proof yet that the variant causes more severe illness.

The WHO on Tuesday provided room for cautious optimism saying Africa had recorded a massive rise in cases over the past week but a lower number of deaths compared with previous waves.

But it urged countries to act swiftly to rein in transmission, protect their health systems and guard against complacency.

WHO expert Bruce Aylward strenuously warned against "jumping to a conclusion that this is a mild disease".

"We could be setting ourselves up for a very dangerous situation."

The warning came as Pfizer on Tuesday said clinical trials of its Covid pill reduced hospital admissions and deaths among at-risk people by almost 90 percent.

The American drug maker said its new treatment, Paxlovid, held up against Omicron in lab testing.

Chief executive Albert Bourla called the news a "game changer" and said he expected approval from the US medicines regulator as early as this month.

"This news provides another potentially powerful tool in our fight against the virus, including the Omicron variant," added US President Joe Biden.

A real-world study from South Africa has showed two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was 70 percent effective in stopping severe illness from Omicron.

Researchers called the results encouraging, though it represented a drop compared with earlier strains, underlining the threat of the coronavirus.

And the WHO added that low vaccination rates in regions including Africa -- where Omicron

was first detected -- would provide breeding grounds for new variants of the virus, which has known to have claimed more than 5.3 million lives around the world.

Europe is the global coronavirus hotspot, recording 62 percent of the world's total cases in the past seven days, while the five countries with the world's highest infection rates are all European.

The Netherlands followed other European nations in reintroducing restrictions on Tuesday as Prime Minister Mark Rutte announced primary schools will shut next week and a night-time lockdown will be extended over Omicron fears.

Schools will close from December 20 instead of on December 25 due to concerns that children, among whom infection rates are the highest, could pass it on to older relatives.

France on Tuesday registered 63,405 new coronavirus cases -- its highest daily total since April -- even with more than 77 percent of its population having had at least one shot.

In neighbouring Britain, the ruling Conservative government on Tuesday suffered a major parliamentary rebellion as almost 100 of its MPs rejected new restrictions as the country responds to Omicron.

Boris Johnson's administration will introduce new rules on mask-wearing, daily testing to avoid isolation and vaccine passes for certain settings in England.

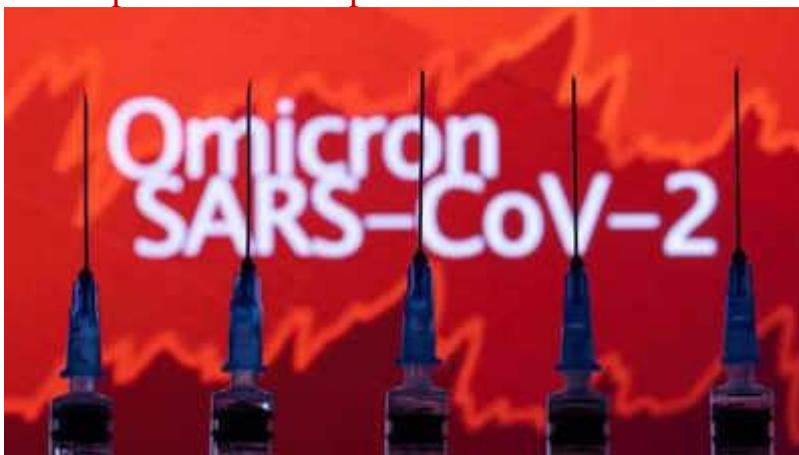
But many MPs from his own party believe the measures -- which only passed with opposition support -- are excessive and undermine basic freedoms.

Scientists have predicted the true number already infected with Omicron in Britain could be as high as 200,000 a day, while the English Premier League reported a record caseload that threatened further disruption to fixtures.

Six hospitalised for suspected Omicron (The Times of India: 20211215)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/six-hospitalised-for-suspected-omicron-in-tamil-nadu/articleshow/88288490.cms>

Six hospitalised for suspected Omicron in Tamil Nadu



CHENNAI: A 47-year-old man who arrived in Chennai from Nigeria via Doha tested positive for Covid-19 and has S-gene drop indicating Omicron, health minister Ma Subramanian said on Tuesday. Five of his relatives and contacts also tested positive on

Monday. All of them were admitted to the Covid-19 hospital on The King Institute of Preventive Medicine and Research campus in Guindy. "They are asymptomatic. There was S-gene drop in all of them. We have sent the samples for genome sequencing," the minister said.

1699 passengers from 'at risk' countries have tested positive

"We will be able to tag the virus as an Omicron variant only if the INSTEM lab in Bengaluru confirms it," Ma Subramanian said. If it turns positive, this will be the state's first Omicron cluster.

The passenger from Nigeria underwent a random test in the airport after landing. Two per cent of patients from non-high-risk countries are tested as part of routine surveillance. "While we test all passengers from countries listed as 'at risk' by WHO as per ICMR guidelines, we draw random samples from 2% of passengers travelling from other countries," he said. So far, the state has tested 11,459 passengers from 11 'at risk' countries and 1,699 passengers who have travelled from other countries over the past week. Of these, 37 passengers have tested positive for the viral infection.

While passengers from 'at risk' countries are not permitted to leave the airport till they get the RTPCR results, passengers from non-risk countries are allowed to go home after their samples are taken for tests. "The passenger from Nigeria went home. We brought him back to the hospital after his results turned positive. We also tested his relatives immediately. Initially, all of them were negative, but soon they developed mild symptoms. A second RTPCR test showed they were all positive," he said. Public health officials along with district health authorities and airport health team will now alert other passengers, close contacts and crew members about possible outbreak, officials said. "Passenger and crew have already been asked to contact the health department if they have flu-like symptoms. Our teams will also track them now," health secretary J Radhakrishnan said.

Director of Public Health Dr T S Selvavinayagam said the strongest weapons in the hands of the people were vaccines and Covid-appropriate behaviour. "We encourage all adults to take two doses of the vaccine. Everyone above five years should wear masks and maintain social distance," he said.

Omicron surge (The Times of India: 20211215)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/jan-feb-may-see-omicron-surge-but-cases-may-be-mild/articleshow/88288883.cms>

‘Jan-Feb may see Omicron surge, but cases may be mild’



NEW DELHI: India could see a major surge in Omicron cases during January-February as the variant is expected to outpace the speed at which the Delta strain spread, a senior official source told TOI. He said the infections, however, are likely to remain mild. The spike, predicted after conducting modelling studies, should be no cause for panic as the infectious disease appears to be approaching a stage of endemicity in which transmissibility will remain high, but the virus will not cause severe disease, he said.

Meanwhile, WHO says Omicron is spreading at an unprecedented rate and is likely already present in most countries, though only 77 have reported cases.

Govt banks on vax to protect against severe Omicron attack
The official said there was no reason to panic, adding, “We need to work on controlling Omicron’s transmissibility.”

The WHO’s latest brief on Omicron says it is likely that the new SARS-COV2 strain will outpace the Delta variant in spots where community transmission occurs. Delta variant, which caused the devastating second wave worldwide earlier this year, still continues to be the dominating variant in India and across the globe.

Health officials in India maintain that though an upsurge in Omicron cases is expected over next couple of months and it will gradually overtake Delta, the infections may not overwhelm the healthcare system. “Our efforts are focused at ramping up double dose vaccination so that the majority of the population is protected against severe disease and death. Data from other countries shows that Omicron is causing only mild disease. So in a situation where we are able to protect our high risk population with vaccine, there is no cause for worry,” the official said.

The Centre has asked states to focus on containment measures to limit transmission and ramp up coverage of double dose of vaccine.

Coronavirus (The Times of India: 20211215)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/noida/26-cases-already-this-month-in-gzb-highest-since-august/articleshow/88286271.cms>

26 cases already this month in Gzb, highest since August

Ghaziabad: Six persons tested positive in Ghaziabad on Tuesday. Four of them are from one family that recently returned from Goa.

The health department will initiate a testing drive in Nehru Nagar, where the family lives. In the first two weeks of this month, Ghaziabad has already reported 26 positive cases, the highest since August.

According to the health department's data, the district had reported 26 cases in whole of August, but the numbers came down to 18 the next month and further to 14 in October and just six in November. While the sample positivity rate was 0.02% in August, it stood at 0.01% for the next three months. In December, the positivity rate has risen marginally to 0.04%.

The Nehru Nagar family of four tested positive after they returned from a trip to Goa and then to Karnala. They reached home on December 11, after which everyone complained of fever. They got a Covid test done, and all of them were found positive. The family comprises a 48-year-old man, his 46-year-old wife and two sons (19 and 21). Everyone in the family has taken both doses of the vaccine and is in home isolation at present.

The other two persons who tested positive on Tuesday were a one-year-old child and his mother, residents of a highrise in Indirapuram. The 26-year-old mother had come in contact with an infected person, after which she got a test done. Both she and her son are asymptomatic.

Four patients were discharged from hospitals on Tuesday. There are 22 active cases in the district currently.

“All patients are being monitored and medical kits have been distributed among them. Their samples have been sent for genome sequencing too. People living nearby have been tested in camps we put up in Nehru Nagar and Indirapuram,” district surveillance officer RK Gupta said.

There were no fresh cases in Crossings Republik, where eight persons from two nearby housing societies had tested positive over the past few days. More than 500 people have been tested in the two societies of the township so far.

Covid admissions

Officials in Ghaziabad have clarified that Covid patients will be admitted to hospitals through the health department only. “A comprehensive system will be put in place. This time, patients will be admitted to hospitals only through the Covid control room. They will be sent to another hospital only when one facility is full. First, government hospitals will be filled. This way, we can ensure that those who urgently need hospitalisation get beds,” additional chief medical officer Sunil Tyagi said.

DIABETIC RETINOPATHY: (The IndianEXPRESS: 20211215)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/diabetes-diabetic-retinopathy-diabetic-macular-edema-symptoms-prevention-7615582/>

Diabetic retinopathy: All you need to know about this complication of diabetes

"It's important to know only a few diabetic retinopathy patients can actually reverse vision-threatening sequelae once they set in," said Dr Ajay Dudani

Diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of vision loss in working (20-65 years) adults, and globally, one out of every three diabetic patients tend to develop Diabetic Macular Edema (DME), as per diabetesjournal.org,

Estimates suggest that 17.6 to 28.9 per cent of diabetics in India suffer from diabetic retinopathy. This disease also has ramifications in terms of lower productivity among the country's working population, and the consequent economic loss.

"Hence, young diabetics must aggressively start controlling their sugar levels and go for retina check-ups once a year, even if they do not have any vision problems," said Dr Raja Narayanan, general secretary, Vitreoretinal Society of India.

DME, caused by diabetes, is a chronic and progressive condition that affects the back of the eye i.e., the retina. With DME, fluid accumulates in the macula – a part of the retina that controls the most detailed vision abilities – due to leaking blood vessels.

With diabetes patients being 25 times more at risk of losing their vision compared to the rest of the population, experts urge utmost importance be given to timely treatment.

Dr Chaitra Jayadev, senior vitreo-retinal consultant, Narayana Nethralaya Eye Institute, Bangalore said, "Roughly ¾ of patients walking into our clinic have diabetes. Across India, diabetic retinopathy affects 20-28 per cent of the population, out of which 10 per cent have sight-threatening conditions like macular edema or proliferative diabetic retinopathy. Although we've noticed a trend of low healthcare seeking behaviour, the younger population of 25-to-35-year-olds are coming to clinics earlier, with nearly five per cent of them presenting with active disease."

Symptoms to watch out for

Blurred, fuzzy, or distorted vision, impaired colour vision, decreased contrast or colour sensitivity, experiencing dark spots, straight lines that appear wavy or crooked, difficulty seeing at a distance or vision loss.

Keep diabetes, glucose, and cholesterol levels in check

Effectively controlling these parameters can prevent or delay the onset of diabetic retinopathy. There are smart wearables that one can use for continuous glucose monitoring. For DME patients, managing and monitoring diabetes is the most critical component of limiting further disease progression.

Lifestyle changes matter

Patients of DME should aim to quit smoking, switch to a healthy diet that includes vegetables and fruits, engage in meditation and regular physical activity. Since obesity is one of the leading risk factors of diabetic retinopathy, an active lifestyle goes a long way in helping patients manage this eye disease.

Adhere to medical treatment

For patients of DME, compliance or treatment adherence are necessary to enable good therapy outcomes. Given the progressive nature of retinal diseases, strict adherence to treatment, follow-ups are critical to avoid vision loss.

Dr Ajay Dudani, CEO Vitreoretinal Surgeon, Mumbai Retina Centre, said that while young diabetics today are more aware of the disease and the treatment, they are unable to control their blood glucose levels owing to their current lifestyle.

“It’s important to know that only a few diabetic retinopathy patients can actually reverse vision-threatening sequelae once they set in. The rest continue to progress even with strict glycaemic control, therefore, as doctors, we emphasise on regular screening, follow-ups, and adherence to treatment,” said Dr Dudani.

It is important for DME patients to learn to cope with their condition better, especially at the early stages of diagnosis. Experts mention that this disease can severely affect mental health, and addressing these effects are equally important along with medical treatment.

Coronavirus (Hindustan: 20211215)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/national/story-our-vaccines-covishield-covaxin-may-become-inefficient-in-emerging-situation-omicron-variant-says-vk-paul-niti-ayog-member-5331498.html>

कोरोना पर नहीं रह जाएगा वैक्सीन का असर? कोविड टास्क फोर्स चीफ के जवाब ने बढ़ाई टेंशन



ओमिक्रॉन के खतरे के बीच जहां एक तरफ ज्यादा से ज्यादा टीकाकरण पर फोकस है तो वहीं नीति आयोग के सदस्यो डॉक्टर वीके पॉल ने ऐसा बयान दिया है जिससे कोरोना को लेकर एक बार फिर से टेंशन बढ़ सकती है। वीके पॉल ने मंगलवार को कहा कि उभरती परिस्थितियों में हमारे कोरोना टीकों के अप्रभावी होने की आशंका है।

वीके पॉल ने कहा, 'ऐसी प्रबल संभावना है कि उभरची परिस्थितियों में हमारे टीके बेअसर हो जाएं। इसलिए एकजुट होकर कोरोना के नए वैरिएंट का सामना करने के लिए टीका बनाने की जरूरत है।' उन्होंने कहा कि दवाओं के विकास के लिए पहले से ठोस दृष्टिकोण की जरूरत है।

इंडिया टुडे की खबर के मुताबिक, पॉल ने कहा कि अभी प्राथमिकता यह सुनिश्चित करना है कि दुनियाभर में वैक्सीन पहुंचे और कोई भा पीछे न रहे। उन्होंने कहा कि महामारी से निपटने के लिए

विज्ञान में निवेश पर जोर दिए जाने की भी जरूरत है। पॉल सीआईआई पार्टनरशिप समिट में बोल रहे थे।

बता दें कि भारत में ओमिक्रॉन के केस अब बढ़कर 61 पर पहुंच गए हैं। वहीं, ब्रिटेन में भी यह तेजी से पैर पसार रहा है। ब्रिटेन में इस साल जनवरी के बाद से अब तक के सबसे ज्यादा नए कोविड केस दर्ज किए गए हैं। अकेले ब्रिटेन में ही ओमिक्रॉन वैरिएंट के 5 हजार मामले आ चुके हैं।

Omicron new cases (Hindustan: 20211215)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/national/story-india-reports-6984-new-covid-cases-active-caseload-declines-to-87-thousand-lowest-since-march-2020-5331359.html>

कोरोना के नए केसों में मामूली बढ़त, ऐक्टिव मामलों का घटना जारी; अब सिर्फ 87 हजार मरीजों का चल रहा इलाज



देश में एक बार फिर से कोरोना के नए मामलों में मामूली बढ़त देखने को मिली है। स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय की ओर से जारी ताजा आंकड़ों के मुताबिक, देशभर में पिछले 24 घंटे के अंदर कोरोना के 6 हजार 984 नए केस दर्ज किए गए हैं। हालांकि, राहत की बात यह है कि इस अवधि में ठीक होने वाले कोरोना मरीजों का आंकड़ा नए मामलों से ज्यादा रहा।

पिछले एक दिन में कोरोना के कुल 8 हजार 168 मरीज ठीक हुए हैं। इसी के साथ देश में अब तक कोरोना से कुल 3 करोड़ 41 लाख 46 हजार 931 लोग ठीक हो चुके हैं। रिकवरी दर भी लगातार 98.38 प्रतिशत से ज्यादा बना हुआ है।

वहीं, कोरोना के ऐक्टिव यानी इलाजरत मामले तेजी से घट रहे हैं। फिलहाल देश में 87 हजार 562 कोविड ऐक्टिव केस हैं, जो अब तक आए कुल मामलों का सिर्फ 0.25 प्रतिशत है। वहीं, एक दिन में कोरोना के 247 मरीजों की मौत भी हुई है।

Omicron cases (Hindustan: 20211215)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/national/story-covid-19-omicron-variant-scientist-said-about-future-mutation-of-virus-5330698.html>

ओमिक्रॉन से आगे क्या हो सकते हैं हालात, चार वैज्ञानिकों ने अभी ही बताया



कोरोना वायरस के नए वेरिएंट ओमिक्रॉन के 63 से अधिक देशों में फैलने के बीच वैज्ञानिक इससे उत्पन्न होने वाली भावी परिस्थितियों और चुनौतियों का अनुमान लगाने में जुट गए हैं। ओमीक्रोन से दुनियाभर में अभी केवल एक मौत ब्रिटेन में दर्ज की गई है। लेकिन इससे डर का आलम यह है कि दुनिया के कई देश बचाव के लिए बूस्टर टीका लगाने का अभियान चला रहे हैं।

दो जीव वैज्ञानिकों-केपटाउन यूनिवर्सिटी के असिस्टेंट प्रोफेसर डेरेन मार्टिन और टेंपल यूनिवर्सिटी के प्रोफेसर सर्जेई पॉड ने ऑनलाइन चर्चा के दौरान ओमिक्रॉन संक्रमण को लेकर एक अनुमानित खाका पेश किया। इसमें बताया गया कि नए वेरिएंट के कारण आगामी दिनों में किस तरह के हालात बन सकते हैं। इस अनुमान का आधार है- प्रतिरोधकता। वायरस में कितना म्यूटेशन या बदलाव होगा, यह इस बात पर निर्भर करता है कि उसकी चपेट में आने वालों में कितनी प्रतिरोधकता है या उसे किस तरह के अन्य प्रतिरोध का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। वैज्ञानिकों ने ओमिक्रॉन को लेकर चार तरह के परिदृश्य का अनुमान लगाया है।

1 शून्य प्रतिरोधकता

प्रतिरोधकता के अभाव में ओमिक्रॉन बिना किसी दबाव के फैलेगा जैसे कि शुरुआती दिनों में कोरोना वायरस फैल रहा था। लेकिन अब ऐसी परिस्थिति नहीं है, क्योंकि दुनियाभर में बड़ी संख्या में लोग संक्रमित हो चुके हैं या टीका लगवा चुके हैं। इस स्थिति में ओमिक्रॉन के दुनियाभर में ठीक उसी तरह फैलने की आशंका नहीं है, जैसे कि चीन के वुहान में सबसे पहले मिला कोरोना वायरस फैल रहा था।

1.1 कम प्रतिरोध

बाहरी या भीतरी प्रतिरोध का सामना करने पर ओमिक्रॉन और अधिक बलवान हो सकता है। ऐसी स्थिति में यह धीरे-धीरे खुद को और अधिक ताकतवर बनाता रहेगा। लेकिन इस दौरान लोगों को संक्रमित करने की इसकी गति, एंटीबॉडी को चकमा देने का गुण और मारक क्षमता में कमी नहीं आएगी। कुछ समय बाद वायरस में अतिरिक्त म्यूटेशन होने पर इसकी संक्रमण दर और मारक क्षमता बढ़ जाएगी।

1.1.1 भारी प्रतिरोध

अगर वायरस को लोगों की प्रतिरोधक क्षमता से भारी चुनौती मिलेगी तो यह अपना स्वरूप बदलने को बाध्य हो जाएगा। उदाहरण के तौर पर डेल्टा वेरिएंट या पशु प्रजाति के साथ मेल होने पर इसमें और अधिक बदलाव हो सकते हैं। जेनेटिक अवरोध के कमजोर होने से वायरस आसानी से म्यूटेट होते हैं। किसी पशु प्रजाति के साथ मेल होने पर इसमें और अधिक बदलाव हो सकते हैं, जो इनसानों के लिए ज्यादा घातक हो सकता है। वैज्ञानिकों ने कहा है कि इस स्थिति पर नजर रखने की जरूरत है, क्योंकि बहुत कम समय में ऐसे हालात बन सकते हैं।

1.1.1.1 दो वेरिएंट का मेल

एक ही व्यक्ति के कोरोना के दो वेरिएंट से संक्रमित होने पर दो वेरिएंट में मेल की स्थिति बनती है। ऐसी स्थिति में वायरस म्यूटेशन के लिहाज से बड़ी छलांग लगा सकता है। इस मेल से जो तीसरा वेरिएंट आएगा, उसमें पहले के दोनों वेरिएंट के ताकतवर जीन मौजूद रहेंगे। फिलहाल दो तरह के ओमिक्रॉन वेरिएंट मिल चुके हैं और भविष्य में इसके अन्य प्रकार भी सामने आ सकते हैं। तेज गति से फैलने वाले दोनों वेरिएंट-डेल्टा और ओमिक्रॉन मिश्रित रूप से किसी को संक्रमित करते हैं तो और अधिक घातक म्यूटेशन की संभावना बनेगी। इस तरह की संभावना निराश करती है, लेकिन अभी वैज्ञानिकों को नहीं मालूम कि ऐसा होना कहां तक संभव है। यह भी नहीं मालूम कि यदि यह आशंका सच हो गई तो क्या होगा।

1.1.1.1.1 ओमिक्रॉन का अनुमान लगाना कठिन

दोनों वैज्ञानिक मानते हैं कि ओमीक्रोन में होने वाले परिवर्तन के बारे में अनुमान लगाना कठिन है। समय तय करेगा कि यह आगे कौन-सा रूप अख्तियार करेगा। ऐसे में संभावित परिदृश्य हमें यह अनुमान लगाने में मदद कर सकते हैं कि भविष्य में किस तरह की परिस्थितियां सामने आ सकती हैं।

1.1.1.1.1.1 ओमिक्रॉन का उदय नई बात नहीं

नवंबर के अंत में नए वेरिएंट ओमीक्रोन का उदय नई बात नहीं है। वैज्ञानिक पहले ही अनुमान जता चुके थे कि कोरोना वायरस में म्यूटेशन के कारण इसके नए-नए वेरिएंट बीमारी फैलाते रहेंगे। वर्ष 2014-15 के सालाना फ्लू संक्रमण की तरह लोग समय-समय पर कोरोना के नए वेरिएंट की चपेट में आते रहेंगे। फिलहाल यह वेरिएंट चीन में भी पहुंच गया है, जहां कोरोना वायरस का पहला केस मिला था।