

CORONAVIRUS NEWS BRIEF

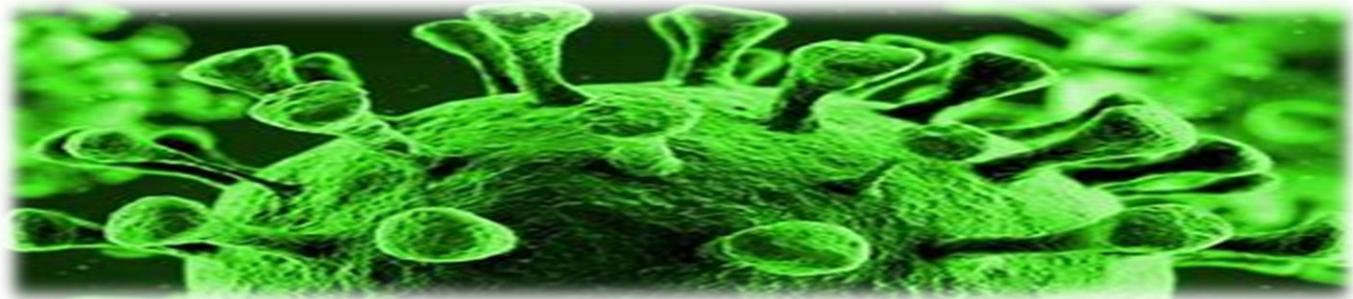
Compiled Periodically from various sources By:

Kaushik Amin, USA.

201-936-4927 * kaushikamin@hotmail.com

For South Asian Media Network INC, USA.

Issue# 35 * October 09, 2021- Saturday.



***White House announces \$1 billion purchase of rapid, at-home coronavirus tests
New investment is part of Biden initiative to quadruple the number of tests available to
Americans by December. (Report on Page # 2)***

White House announces \$1 billion purchase of rapid, at-home coronavirus tests

New investment is part of Biden initiative to quadruple the number of tests available to Americans by December.

The White House announced that it will buy \$1 billion worth of rapid, at-home coronavirus tests to address ongoing shortages, a plan hailed by public health experts who called the move long overdue. The actions will quadruple the number of tests available to Americans by December, according to Jeff Zients, the White House coronavirus response coordinator.

The news follows decision by the Food and Drug Administration to allow the sale of an antigen test from U.S.-based Acon Laboratories.

The White House expects that decision and the purchase of the additional tests will increase the number of at-home tests to 200 million per month by December.

“This is a big deal,” said Scott Becker, chief executive of the Association of Public Health Laboratories, who said the spotty availability of rapid tests had hampered efforts to track and combat the surge of coronavirus cases driven by the highly transmissible delta variant. “The White House is beginning to take testing as seriously as they’ve taken vaccinations.”

The administration is also aiming to increase free testing by doubling President Biden’s earlier commitment to expand the number of pharmacies in the federal government’s free testing program to 20,000.

Biden last month announced a coronavirus response plan that envisioned a significant expansion of testing capacity.

The US has lagged several European and Asian countries in testing for much of the pandemic, with many Americans reporting in recent months that they have struggled to get testing appointments or to be able to purchase at-home tests. While the FDA has authorized several at-home tests, public health experts criticized the agency for not moving faster to greenlight more of them to expedite the tests’ availability.

“These tests are cheap to make, and there’s a lot of demand for it out there,” said Ashish Jha, dean of the Brown University School of Public Health.

“The reason the market hasn’t worked is because the FDA has made it very difficult for these tests to get out into the marketplace.”

Jeff Shuren, director of the FDA’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health, disputed that characterization. He said the main difference between the US and countries with cheaper, more-available tests is that those governments heavily invested in the tests. Having large purchasing agreements, including the one announced, by the White House, drives production up and prices down, other countries began doing that earlier.

In the White House briefing, Zients said the testing companies Quidel and OraSure are also rapidly expanding the production of their at-home tests to get more on the market. When pressed on why the White House did not increase the availability of such tests sooner, Zients said the tests became available only earlier this year. By the end of the year, he said, the US should have about half a billion tests available per month, counting at-home tests and PCR tests that people can take at a pharmacy, clinic or doctor’s office. “Together, the steps we’re taking will ensure that every American, no matter their income level or Zip code, can access accurate, convenient and affordable testing,” Zients said.

One potential complication of the expansion of at-home testing is the impact on official counts of coronavirus infections. Some of the at-home tests have an app that helps people report positive cases so they get added to the official government tally. But the administration will also rely on people to self-report when at-home tests show they are infected, said Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Some experts said it will be important for the government to educate people about when the tests should be used, how to use them and what to do with the results.

“It’s a relief to have access to rapid testing, but it will be critical to understand how to broadly disseminate and give guidance about when best to use these tests,” said Kavita Patel, a primary care physician and nonresident fellow at the Brookings Institution who served in the Obama administration. “The last thing we want is for tests to go unused and sit on shelves, but you also need to give guidance to understand when these tests should be used.”

Covid Protection Wanes Months after Second Shot, Studies Show



Immunity provided by the Covid-19 vaccine from partners Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE weakens significantly within months, with men having less protection than women, according to research that supports the use of booster doses.

Protective antibodies decreased continuously during the six months after the administration of the second dose of the vaccine, according to a study of about 5,000 Israeli health workers, published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The levels fell first at a sharp pace and later at a more moderate one.

Researchers worldwide are trying to identify the critical threshold of antibodies needed to prevent coronavirus infection, severe illness and death, said Gili Regev-Yochay, one of the authors of the study. Such studies will help assess risk levels for various groups and the measures needed to protect them, the researcher said.

Antibody levels were found to be lower in older people than in younger, and in immunosuppressed individuals compared to the healthy population, according to the study from Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan. Men's antibody counts were lower than those of women both at their peak and at the end of the study. The research shows why there are breakthrough infections in individuals who have had two vaccine doses, Regev-Yochay said in an online press briefing. The U.S., which has restricted its booster recommendation to older people and other vulnerable groups, will likely follow Israel's decision to offer a third dose to the entire population, she said.

"I would be more than surprised if we are not going to start to see a lot of breakthrough infections in the United States," among those who have received just two doses, Regev-Yochay said.

The Israel findings were bolstered by a second real-world study from Qatar, published in the same journal, that found the efficacy of the Pfizer-BioNTech shot faded over a similar time period.

Protection fell from 77.5% during the first month after the second dose to 20% in months five to seven after the second dose.

Still, the research found, prevention of severe and fatal infections remained strong throughout the study period, reaching 96% in the first two months after the second dose and persisting at roughly this level for six months.

Consistent Data

"The data is consistent," said Laith Abu-Raddad, a coauthor of the paper who studies infectious disease epidemiology at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar. "Protection against hospitalization and death is really strong and more durable than protection against infection." Giving a third booster shot helps optimize the protection from the vaccine, he said.

Two other studies from Israel published in the journal also followed up on early reports of heart inflammation following vaccination. Cases of inflammation, called myocarditis, although rare, increased after the receipt of the vaccine, according to one study by the Israeli Health Ministry and Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center, particularly after the second dose among young male recipients. While cases were usually mild, one was fatal.

Another study by the Clalit Health Services, the largest health-care system in the country, found that the estimated incidence of myocarditis was 2.13 cases per 100,000 persons.

The highest incidence was among male patients between the ages of 16 and 29. Most of the cases were mild or moderate.

IF YOU GOT MODERNA OR J&J, DR. FAUCI SAYS HERE'S THE LATEST ON BOOSTERS



The coronavirus surge is slowing—but there could be a new one on the horizon if more people don't get vaccinated, and those eligible for boosters don't get them. With this in mind, many who got Moderna or J&J shots have no booster available—yet. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the chief medical advisor to the President and the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, spoke with ABC News Live about those boosters and more. Read on for five points that could save your life—and to ensure your health and the health of others.

Dr. Fauci Said Here's the Latest on Moderna and J&J Vaccines.

"The booster shots were approved for Pfizer," said Dr. Fauci, "namely," he said, for "those elderly and those with underlying conditions." The Pfizer vaccine has been fully authorized by the FDA; the Moderna and J&J shots still have emergency use approval. "Since there are three products that are being utilized—one under a full approval and two under emergency use authorization—it's important that if you're going to implement a booster program to get the optimal and durable response, you would want all three of the products to be authorized, to be given a boost. And that's the reason why we're looking, with some anticipation, to what the FDA's decision will be about the booster program that will be submitted. And it will be examined by the FDA from both J&J and Moderna," Fauci said.

Dr. Fauci Gave This Update About Mixing and Matching Vaccines

"We're doing those experiments right now," said Dr. Fauci about whether one should mix and match vaccine brands, "that are going to answer that question. It's sort of a nine part grid where you take the three products that are given as the initial vaccination, and

you mix as the booster either J&J, Moderna or Pfizer. And pretty soon we're going to have the data that will be examined by the FDA to determine whether or not it is safe and whether or not it induces an appropriate response if you mix one particular boost with one other particular product. So we'll have the answer to that question as soon as the FDA gives their approval and I can't guarantee they will, but I can certainly guarantee their look at those data very carefully, the way they always do."

Dr. Fauci Said Tests Would be More Widespread Soon

In some places, COVID tests are hard to come by. "That is going to change and is changing very rapidly," promised Dr. Fauci. "It is very important to have widespread available tests that are essentially point of care, where you can get the answer in a few minutes. There are going to be literally hundreds of millions of those tests be made available relatively soon. The Biden administration has made an investment of a couple of billion dollars to do that. So we are going to see a lot more availability and easy availability of rapid testing quite soon."

Dr. Fauci Said This is What He'd Tell Kyrie Irving

Brooklyn Nets star Kyrie Irving has not been vaccinated and is skeptical about vaccines. "If I had that opportunity," to sit down with Irving, "I'd like to, in a non-confrontational way, have him explain to me what the reasons are, why he doesn't want to get vaccinated. And to the best of my ability, I'd like to explain to him why they may not be valid reasons. I mean, is there a fact, as he thinks there's not enough information about the vaccine, does he think they're not safe? Does he think they're not effective? Does he believe any of these conspiracy theories about him? I don't know. I've never had a conversation, but I would try to respect, you know, his opinion, but try to convince him otherwise."

How to Stay Safe Out There

Follow the public health fundamentals and help end this pandemic, no matter where you live—get vaccinated ASAP; if you live in an area with low vaccination rates, wear an N95 face mask, don't travel, social distance, avoid large crowds, don't go indoors with people you're not sheltering with (especially in bars), practice good hand hygiene, and to protect your life and the lives of others.

US THANKS INDIA FOR RESUMING VAX EXPORTS; ASSURES NATIONAL SECURITY.

US Deputy Secretary of State, Wendy Sherman, thanked India on behalf of the US for resuming Covid-19 vaccine exports when she met India's Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla in New Delhi, according to State Department spokesperson Ned Price. She also assured Shringla of Washington's commitment to India's national security during their meeting when they reviewed security issues relating to Afghanistan and China, Price said in a readout.

Sherman, who was on a two-day visit to India, also met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who tweeted after their meeting, "A good conversation on our relationship, its significance and its growth. Appreciated the successful visit of PM Narendra Modi to the US and the Quad Leaders' Summit."

In the readout of the meeting with Shringla, Price said that Sherman "expressed the US' gratitude for Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi's announcement that India, which is the world's largest vaccine producer, would soon resume exports of Covid-19 vaccines to the US." Providing vaccines to countries in the Indo-Pacific region, is a major commitment by the Quad, the grouping of India, the US, Australia and Japan, and it was reiterated at the summit of their leaders in Washington last month.

The expression of thanks came while they "discussed the growing security, economic, and Indo-Pacific convergence between India and the United States, including around ending the Covid-19 pandemic, combating the climate crisis and accelerating clean energy deployment, deepening trade and investment

ties, and expanding cooperation on cybersecurity and emerging technologies", according to Price.

"The Deputy Secretary assured the Foreign Secretary of the US' ongoing commitment to India's national security and they reviewed pressing regional and global security issues, including Afghanistan, Iran, Russia, and the People's Republic of China," he said.

"The two expressed their mutual commitment to upholding democracy and human rights and agreed on the importance of continued close cooperation on shared global challenges," Price said.

In particular, they "discussed the ongoing efforts to return Myanmar to a path to democracy", he added. She also spoke at the US-India Business Council's India Ideas Summit on the theme 'Recovery to Resurgence', which looks at planning for the post-Covid future.

Her visit follows the meetings in Washington between President Joe Biden and Modi and their Quad summit with Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia and Yoshihide Suga, who was then the leader of Japan.

Sherman, the second-highest-ranking US diplomat, is visiting India after visits by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and CIA Director Bill Burns.

Sherman also met with US diplomatic staff in New Delhi and visited the Mahatma Gandhi memorial.

She tweeted, "It was humbling to visit the peaceful grounds of Gandhi Smriti, where Mahatma Gandhi spent the last days.

(Editor's note: For helping people and communities, voluntary institutions (NGO's) in India, Please donate generously specifically for Coronavirus Pandemic and other humanitarian causes. Please use your common sense to donate to the right organization.

If possible, give priority to your own family, neighbors and your village/Town or area healthcare systems directly.

There are fraudulent organizations be aware of them. Look into the need and response to those priorities. Get some advice from your Doctors or helping organizations. Many time Cash Donations are more effective than kind.

I would recommend donating to Red Cross of India, UNICEF, Oxfam India, and Care India.

In my personal opinion, do not send any contributions to India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's PM Care Fund as its not transparent and has no accountability, and is a private charity. -Kaushik Amin).

India's Covid-19 death toll may be near 5 million: World Bank.

India's Covid-19 death toll may be near 5 million: World Bank

A report by the World Bank on Thursday said that Covid-19 deaths in India may be 10 times higher than the official count, as per a worst case scenario. As against the official count of 4 lakh deaths when the second wave peaked, around end June, the actual number of lives lost due to the pandemic till that time may be 4.9 million. India's current Covid-19 fatality count is over 4.49 lakh.

The South Asia Economic Focus Fall 2021 report, titled 'Shifting Gears: Digitisation and Services Led Development', says that India's excess Covid-19 deaths grew more rapidly than any other South Asian country. The report calculates excess deaths on two types of estimates — the

model based estimate and data based estimates.

The model based estimate, which includes the estimates made by New York Times and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), "relies on official Covid reports and applies assumptions to generate estimates" whereas the data-based "counts excess mortality for all causes."

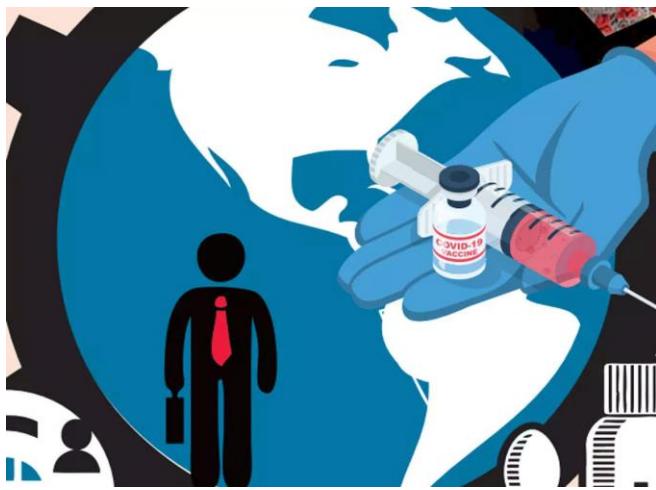
According to the report, the estimates from the Consumer Pyramid Household Survey (CPHS) may be closest to the actual death toll as it's conducted every four months and asks if any family member has died in the intervening period between the last and the current surveys and thus was able to cover both the Covid-19 waves.

What is India's Covid-19 death toll?

Data Source	1st wave (Apr '20-Mar '21)	2nd wave (Apr '21-Jun '21)	Total
Official	0.16	0.24	0.4
States' Civil Registration System	2	1.4	3.4
Age-specific infection fatality rates applied to India & seroprevalence	1.5	2.4	3.9
Consumer Pyramid Household Survey	3.4	1.5	4.9

All figures in million

India flags 'discriminatory' Covid passports at WTO



Covid passports that discriminate against certain vaccines are the new form of trade barrier, impacting the movement of people and services, India told the World Trade Organisation.

The WTO "should not only try to address the existing trade barriers like export restrictions but also address

new and emerging ones, like vaccine differentiations or Covid passports," New Delhi's representative said at an informal meeting held last week ahead of a key ministerial conference of the WTO, the Economic Times reports.

India has been pushing against countries that do not recognise Covishield and Covaxin shots, making travel to these places difficult even for fully vaccinated nationals.

Most recently, India had enforced tit-for-tat restrictions on travellers from the UK after it failed to recognise India's vaccine certificate, even when it reflected the full schedule of Covishield, a vaccine that the UK also uses. The UK has now eased the travel restrictions.

Indian students in foreign universities, including those in the US, also had to take shots by Pfizer or Moderna for attending in-person classes despite having taken two shots of Covishield or Covaxin in India. Note: While Covaxin has not yet been WHO approved, Covishield is.

Available on the App Store

Request Line: 732-800-1008

Every Saturday
12pm to 2pm East Coast USA time.

Chhel Chhabilo ગુજરાતી

ગુજરાતને સાંકળતી વિશ્વભરની ગતિવિધિઓ અને ગુજરાતી ગીતોનો રસથાળ કૌશિક અમીન સાથે...

Listen to Kaushik Amin's live Radio Gujarati Talk Show "Chhel Chhabilo Gujarati" on radiodil.com, also on telephone 408-418-5000

Know your immune response post vaccination.

Nirmal Kumar Ganguly

Antibodies are proteins produced by the immune system to fight a disease. On exposure to a foreign body like bacteria or a virus, the body develops what is called the IgM antibodies. These are the first antibodies the body makes when it fights a new infection, are short term and may not be detectable after a few weeks of an infection. It is then followed by IgG antibodies, which provide a longer lasting immune protection. IgA also plays a crucial role in the immune defence of mucosal surfaces such as nasopharynx, lower respiratory tracts, etc., the first point of entry of SARS-CoV-2.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), over 232 million Covid-19 cases have been reported, out of which India has officially reported 33 million cases (1). If we aim to bring the pandemic under control, we need to employ measures that go beyond social distancing and wearing a mask. These measures need to be supplemented by a strong vaccination program.

The Covid-19 vaccines help us develop immunity against the virus and its variants. They stimulate the immune system to create antibodies that fight the virus, thus preventing serious illness and death. According to WHO, the Covid-19 vaccine protects us from serious illness and death, but this protection from infection and transmission is not definite (2). How long the Covid-19 antibodies last after infection/ vaccination is yet to be determined.

One way to be sure of our immune response and to determine if one has developed antibodies, is through a reliable IgG quantitative antibody test. This test measures the level of IgG antibodies developed by the individual. As IgG antibodies last longer in the body, they are detectable for a longer duration of time and are more accurate.

IgG antibodies and what they say about immunity.

A positive IgG antibody test would mean that the person was either previously infected by or was vaccinated for Covid-19 (3). A higher number of antibodies indicate a greater number of neutralizing antibodies. Neutralizing Antibodies are a different class of antibodies that prevent the interaction of virus

and the host, thereby preventing the infection. Excellent correlation has been seen with IgG and neutralizing antibodies. Although developing antibodies does not guarantee we will not contract Covid-19, it does help us understand our individual vulnerabilities and subsequently helps us to be better prepared.

Choosing the right test is essential as some antibody tests will only detect antibodies from infection, not from Covid-19 vaccination. Consult your doctor to choose the right test. These tests could thus play a critical role in managing the pandemic by informing scientists and health authorities if sufficient individuals have developed a robust immune response against Covid-19.

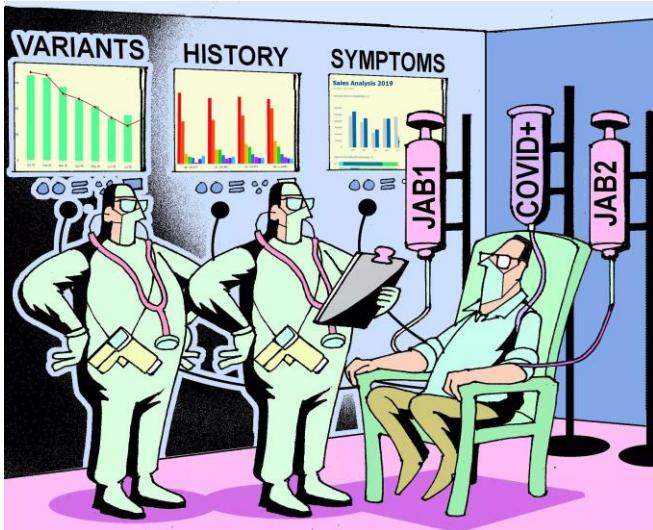
Timing of the Test.

Antibody tests should generally not be used to diagnose a current infection of Covid-19. An antibody test may not show if you have a current infection as it can take days to weeks after the infection for your body to make antibodies. For an accurate result post vaccination, the test should be performed at least 14 days after the second dose of vaccine. These tests are simple to take, they can be done through blood sample collection by an authorised pathology lab from the convenience of one's home. This makes testing for antibodies a safe way to determine if we have built up sufficient immune response against potentially serious or fatal Covid-19 infection (4).

References:

1. <https://covid19.who.int/>
2. [https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)-vaccines](https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-vaccines)
3. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jmv.27098>
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html>
5. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7245198>
6. <https://www.jacionline.org/action/showPdf?pii=S091-6749%2820%2931623-7>

Vaccinated people less likely to spread Covid, says new study



People who are vaccinated against Covid-19 are less likely to spread the virus even if they become infected with the Delta variant but the protection against transmission wanes over time, a new study finds.

The study, funded by the UK's National Health Service (NHS), focused on people infected after receiving both shots of either AstraZeneca or Pfizer.

It found both vaccines reduced "onward transmission" in such breakthrough infections, but this waned

significantly over time, especially in the case of AstraZeneca shot.

After three months, people who had breakthrough infections after being vaccinated with AstraZeneca were just as likely to spread the Delta variant of the virus as the unvaccinated.

While there was a reduction in protection against transmission in people who received the Pfizer vaccine, the drop wasn't as significant.

Delta erodes vaccine-associated protection against transmission by both making infection more common and increasing the likelihood of transmission from vaccinated individuals who become infected, the authors say.

The findings are yet to be peer-reviewed.

The study also found that the transmission of the Delta variant was higher than the Alpha variant as vaccine-induced protection declined.

Authors say their findings make a case for booster doses as they "may help control transmission together with preventing infections."

Bharat Biotech submits Covaxin data from trial in children



Bharat Biotech said it has submitted data on Covaxin from a trial in children aged 2 to 18 years to India's

drug regulator, taking a step closer to authorisation of the vaccine in young children.

The company is hoping its vaccine would be the first to be approved for young children in the country. India has approved a vaccine, Zydus Cadila's DNA-based vaccine, for those over 12 years of age. Besides the two, the Serum Institute of India is to test the Novavax vaccine in children aged 7 to 11 years.

This even as Bharat Biotech is awaiting approval by the World Health Organisation for use of its vaccine in adults.

A WHO approval would pave the way for Indians vaccinated with Covaxin to travel to other nations and also allow the company to export the vaccine.

The company presented the vaccine's safety and efficacy data before WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts this week. A decision could come as early as next week, reports say.

HOW STILLBIRTHS RATE WORSENER DURING SECOND WAVE



There was a significant rise in the proportion of stillbirths, where a baby dies in the womb after more than 20 weeks of pregnancy, during the second wave of the pandemic than the first one, a study by Nair Hospital and the Parel-based National Institute of Research in Reproductive Health found.

The findings were based on a retrospective analysis of 1,645 pregnant women with Covid who were treated and delivered at BYL Nair Hospital between April 2020 and July 2021. The stillbirth rate more than doubled during the second wave at 34.8 per 1,000 births than the 14.6 during the first wave, the analysis found. In absolute numbers, there were 12 stillbirths out of 807 deliveries in Nair hospital during the first wave, and again 12 stillbirths from 335 deliveries

during the second wave. Of the 24 women who had stillbirths, 41.7% had Covid symptoms.

Preeclampsia, a serious blood pressure condition in pregnant women, was higher in those with stillbirths during the second wave (25%) compared with the first wave (8.3%), and is suspected to have contributed to the higher stillbirths. "The higher percentage of preeclampsia indirectly supports the theory that the infection predisposes pregnant women to a greater risk of developing preeclampsia due to its pro-inflammatory state," the authors wrote.

They also hypothesised that the increased stillbirths could be associated with the Delta variant, but they couldn't say with certainty due to the lack of genome sequencing data.

The study attributed one-fourth of the stillbirths during the second wave to Covid as the patients had moderate to severe disease. During the first wave, none of the pregnant women in the hospital had serious symptoms. In the later wave, some had breathing difficulty by the time of admission, and a few were admitted with intrauterine foetal death. Overall, during both the waves combined, 21% of the 1,645 pregnant women had one or more symptoms, while the rest were asymptomatic.

AstraZeneca seeks approval for antibody to prevent Covid-19

AstraZeneca has sought the US FDA's emergency use authorisation for an antibody combination that it says significantly reduces the risk of developing symptomatic Covid-19. If approved, it will be the first long-acting antibody combination authorised for Covid-19 prevention, the company said. Other antibody treatments authorised in the US and elsewhere, such as the cocktail developed by Regeneron, are designed to treat people already infected with the coronavirus.

Called AZD7442 it is a laboratory-made clone of the antibodies that help fight off infections. It is a combination of tixagevimab and cilgavimab derived from B-cells of patients who recovered from Covid-19. It was discovered by Tennessee-based Vanderbilt University Medical Center and licensed to

AstraZeneca. A Phase-3 trial showed the treatment reduced the risk of developing symptomatic Covid-19 by 77%. Over 75% of the trial participants had comorbidities associated with an increased risk of severe disease or a reduced immune response to vaccination, the company said.

"Vulnerable populations such as the immunocompromised often aren't able to mount a protective response following vaccination and continue to be at risk of developing Covid-19. With this first global regulatory filing, we are one step closer to providing an additional option to help protect against Covid-19 alongside vaccines," said Mene Pangalos, executive vice president, biopharmaceuticals R&D, AstraZeneca.

CORONAVIRUS: NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD:

* **The world's first malaria vaccine.**



The firsts: The World Health Organization (WHO) this week endorsed the world's first malaria vaccine. The vaccine called Mosquirix and made by GlaxoSmithKline, is also the first vaccine developed for any parasitic disease.

Why it matters: Malaria kills about 500,000 people every year, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa with about two-thirds being children younger than 5. The quest for a malaria vaccine has been underway for 100 years. WHO's endorsement is the first step in a process that may lead to the wide distribution of the vaccine in poor countries.

The vaccine: The vaccine works by activating a child's immune system to thwart the deadliest of five malaria pathogens called Plasmodium falciparum, which is most prevalent in Africa. To be effective, four doses of the vaccine must be administered — three between ages 5 and 17 months, and a fourth dose 18 months later.

The tests: The WHO endorsement is based on the results of over 20.3 lakh doses administered since 2019 to about 8 lakh children in Kenya, Malawi and Ghana. The vaccine was incorporated into these countries' immunisation programmes after clinical trials.

The efficacy: In clinical trials, the vaccine had an efficacy of about 50% against severe malaria in the first year, but the figure dropped close to zero by the

fourth year. The trials did not directly measure the vaccine's impact on deaths. However, a recent trial of the vaccine in combination with preventive drugs found that the dual approach was much more effective at preventing severe disease, hospitalization and death.

The road ahead: The next step is for the board of Gavi, the global vaccine alliance, to determine if the vaccine is a worthwhile investment. If approved, the vaccine's initial funding will be secured.

India connection: Bharat Biotech is the global technology transfer recipient from GlaxoSmithKline. It is building a dedicated facility at Bhubaneswar for the manufacturing of the malaria vaccine.

***Over 120,000 kids in US lost a primary caregiver due to Covid-19.**



More than 120,000 children in the US have lost a primary caregiver — a parent or grandparent responsible for providing housing, basic needs and care — due to Covid-19, revealed a new study.

The study published in the medical journal Pediatrics on Thursday said that in addition to the 120,630 children who were estimated to have lost a primary caregiver, 22,007 lost a secondary caregiver, or a grandparent providing housing but not most basic needs between April 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, reports Xinhua news agency.

“Children facing orphanhood as a result of Covid is a hidden, global pandemic that has sadly not spared the United States,” said Susan Hillis, researcher of the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and lead author of the study.

"All of us, especially our children, will feel the serious immediate and long-term impact of this problem for generations to come. Addressing the loss that these children have experienced, and continue to experience, must be one of our top priorities, and it must be woven into all aspects of our emergency response, both now and in the post-pandemic future," Hillis said. The study was collaboration between the CDC, Imperial College London, Harvard University, Oxford University, and the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

"The magnitude of young people affected is a sobering reminder of the devastating impact of the past 18 months," said Alexandra Blenkinsop, co-lead researcher of the Imperial College London.

"These findings really highlight those children who have been left most vulnerable by the pandemic, and where additional resources should be directed."

****Cancer patients are avoiding Covid vaccine. And that's a worry.***



The fear of side effects are keeping cancer patients from taking their Covid-19 shot, two studies conducted at the Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai have found. Cancer patients are among the most vulnerable to Covid-19.

A survey conducted in June among 435 patients aged 45 or more at the Tata Memorial found that 80% of

them had not taken the first shot. The findings, published in the medical journal Cancer Research, Statistics, and Treatment said reasons for not taking the Covid-19 vaccine could be considered as vaccine hesitancy in 259 (77%) patients. Nearly 38% of patients feared the side-effects and the impact of the vaccine on cancer and the therapy. A little over 26% did not take the shot due to the lack of information.

"Vaccine hesitancy is common in our patient population. It is due to misplaced notions about side effects and effects on cancer. We have started work on educating patients on this issue," said Prof Kumar Prabash, one of the authors of the study.

The need to take shots

Dr S. Banavali, academic dean at the Tata Memorial Centre, said cancer patients are vulnerable to Covid as their immune system is weakened.

Some countries have even approved booster shots for cancer patients as early studies say the immune response triggered by the two doses of the vaccine may not be strong in patients taking immunosuppressants or undergoing cancer treatment.

Another study from Tata Memorial Hospital, published in the same journal, found vaccine hesitance was heightened in remote regions with restricted connectivity.

"This is where vaccination teams were unable to obtain 100% coverage after several visits, even when vaccine doses were available," said Dr Pankaj Chaturvedi, one of the authors of the study.

Distrust in the safety of vaccines, fear of adverse effects and rumours that shots could cause infertility and death are the major factors, the study found.

**** India's going to miss the vaccination deadline unless...***

If the regulations on a 12-16 week gap between the first and second shots of Covishield remain unchanged, at least around a quarter of India's adult population will not be able to get fully vaccinated by the end of this year, shows a TOI analysis.

As of now, over 26 crore of the 94 crore adults or about 28% had not got even their first shot. Almost 90% of vaccination has been through Covishield, and there are only 12 weeks left in the year.



With Bharat Biotech repeatedly failing to scale up the production of Covaxin to promised levels, its share in vaccination remains about 11.6%. Since the bulk of the vaccination would presumably be doses of Covishield, most of the population getting its first dose after Friday would be eligible for the next dose only sometime next year.

The proportion of population which has not been vaccinated at all varies from as high as 43% in Jharkhand and 39% in Uttar Pradesh to nil in Himachal Pradesh, which could even fully vaccinate its entire adult population before year-end.

Worryingly, the most populous states such as UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu would end up having the largest proportion, well over a third of the adult population, who have not been fully vaccinated by year end.

This is only based on those who haven't got any shots at all. In addition to these, there could well be those who have got their first shots but do not get the second by the end of the year.

***Trials for two drugs set to begin.**

The next phase of the World Health Organization's Solidarity trial - Solidarity PLUS - will begin in India this month, reports Economic Times. The trial aims to assess the effectiveness of new drugs in treating hospitalised Covid-19 patients.



The India trial will study two drugs - Imatinib and Infliximab - which are already in use for other conditions. Imatinib is used for treating certain cancers while infliximab is used for diseases of the immune system, including Crohn's disease and rheumatoid arthritis.

India is among the 52 countries taking part in WHO's trial. This collaboration for Covid-19 research is also studying the effectiveness of another drug - Artesunate, which is used for treatment of severe malaria. The trials in some other countries will include this third drug.

While Novartis' Imatinib will be administered orally, once daily, for 14 days, Infliximab, produced by Johnson and Johnson, will be administered intravenously as a single dose.

In India, the trial is expected to be done on some 750 adult patients who are in hospital with definite moderate or severe form of Covid-19. The duration of the study will be 18 months.

The WHO initiated the Solidarity trial in 2020 to estimate the impact of repurposed drugs on reducing deaths in hospitalised Covid-19 patients compared with the existing standard of care.

***Festive season is risky season.**

Cautioning states that they "cannot take the current stable situation for granted", Union health ministry joint secretary Lav Agarwal asked them to "watch" their "October, November, December."

This, even as more than 93 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been administered so far — indicating

that being vaccinated is no guarantee against getting infected.

According to Niti Aayog Member (Health) V K Paul, the country needs to be prepared to handle a surge of upto "4.5 to 5 lakh cases per day" though he added that "it does not mean that it will happen, should happen or may happen."

The possibility of a resurgence of Covid-19 may be imminent as per Agarwal, given that the festive season is currently underway, with festivals like Durga Puja, Dussehra, Diwali, Milan-un-Id, Christmas and the wedding season falling in the coming weeks and months. Even the second wave, he said, is not yet over given that daily fresh case count is still over 20,000, which is why he added, people need to be cautious and avoid crowded places in the festive season.

Listing the preparations, he claimed that there were 8.36 lakh hospital beds available for Covid-19 patients, including 4.86 oxygen-supported beds and 1.35 lakh ICU beds plus 10 lakh isolation beds in dedicated care centers.

He added that five states — Mizoram, Kerala, Sikkim, Manipur and Meghalaya — have a weekly positivity rate in excess of five per cent. In addition, there are 34 districts across nine states and union territories (UTs) which are reporting a positivity rate of 10% while 28 districts across 12 states and UTs have a weekly positivity rate ranging between 5% and 10%.

****70% patients missed cancer surgery globally during Covid lockdowns.***



One in seven cancer patients around the world have missed out on potentially life-saving operations during Covid-19 lockdowns, a new study reveals.

Led by experts at the UK's University of Birmingham, almost 5,000 surgeons and anaesthetists from around

the world worked together to analyse data from the 15 most common solid cancer types in 20,000 patients across 466 hospitals in 61 countries.

The team published its findings in *The Lancet Oncology*.

Researchers analyzed data from adult patients suffering from cancer types including colorectal, esophageal, gastric, head and neck, thoracic, liver, pancreatic, prostate, bladder, renal, gynecological, breast, soft-tissue sarcoma, bony sarcoma, and intracranial malignancies.

They found planned cancer surgery was affected by lockdowns regardless of the local Covid-19 rates at that time, with patients in lower income countries at highest risk of missing their surgery.

During full lockdowns, one in seven patients (15 per cent) did not receive their planned operation after a median of 5.3 months from diagnosis — all with a Covid-19 related reason for non-operation. However, during light restriction periods, the non-operation rate was very low (0.6 per cent).

"Our research reveals the collateral impact of lockdowns on patients awaiting cancer surgery during the pandemic. Whilst lockdowns are critical to saving lives and reducing the spread of the virus, ensuring capacity for safe elective cancer surgery should be part of every country's plan to ensure continued health across the whole population," said James Glasbey, from the University of Birmingham.

"In order to prevent further harm during future lockdowns, we must make the systems around elective surgery more resilient — protecting elective surgery beds and operating theatre space, and properly resourcing 'surge' capacity for periods of high demand on the hospital, whether that is Covid, the flu or other public health emergencies," he added.

While the study only followed patients that underwent a delay for a short period of time, evidence from other research suggests that these patients may be at higher risk of recurrence.

"To help mitigate against this, surgeons and cancer doctors should consider closer follow-up for patients that were subject to delays before surgery," Aneel Bhangu, from the University of Birmingham, said.

COVID19: Weekly Update.

The numbers below are from
Saturday 10-09-2021 * 12pm US East coast Time...

Compiled Periodically By:

Kaushik Amin.

201-936-4927/Kaushikamin@hotmail.com

South Asian Media Network Inc., USA.

*There are likely false data & variations in data most of the time, so,
Please use the data wisely. Details are compiled from various sources.
Marked "*" are not reliable data.*

World:

238,189,057. Cases. / 4,860,490. Deaths.

Recovered till today:

215,325,968.

01. U.S. A.:

45,136,887. Cases. / 732,477. Deaths.

02. India(???)**

33,946,250. Cases. / 450,526. Deaths.

03. Brazil:

21,550,730. Cases. / 600,493. Deaths.

05. UK:

8,120,713. Cases. / 137,697. Deaths.

28. Canada.

1,655,380. Cases. / 28,186. Deaths.

00 (India): Gujarat* :(???)

826,118. (???) Cases. / 10,085. (???) Deaths.

USA States:

01. California:

4,680,659. Cases. / 70,144. Deaths

02. Texas*:

4,131,336. Cases. / 67,750. Deaths.

03. Florida:

3,647,747. Cases / 56,410. Deaths.

04. New York:*

2,543,588. Cases / 56,204. Deaths.

05. Illinois:

1,650,108. Cases. / 27,965. Deaths.

06. Georgia:

1,602,667 Cases. / 27,142. Deaths.

07: Pennsylvania:

1,469,847. Cases / 29,962. Deaths.

08. Ohio

1,458,747 Cases / 22,819. Deaths.

12. New Jersey*:

1,168,312. Cases. / 27,570. Deaths.

19. Massachusetts:

823,485. Cases. / 18,746. Deaths.

34. Connecticut:

394,008. Cases / 8,667. Deaths.



COVID19: DOS AND DON'TS.

***More than 4** Covid19 vaccines are available now nationwide in the US. Find out how to get yours.

The third booster dose(for Pfizer and Moderna, and also a second booster for Jhonsons'.) More serious Delta and Delta Plus (Indian), Lambda, now Kappa, Mu and now a Japanies verients are around & can create an another pendamic, so be careful & follow religeously the Guidelines given by the Medical Authorities of your country.

* Finally Vaccine is available all time in the US; India and many parts of world, many of us got both the doses, or single dose in case of Jhonson & Jhonson's vaccine. Yet post vaccination results/effects are not known to the research/medico community fully. We are still in a Pandemic Period, of Phase 2 and 3, also possible invasion of new 4 or more strains of UK, Brazil, South Africa, and now India Coronavirus.

* Entering the new wave of Delta and Delta Plus and three other virus varients, the number of cases are still on a higher side, yet to achive the flat curve, world over most of us are just ignoring the pandemic do's & don'ts, particularly when we are with festivity mode in Summer days of 2021, so please take Extreme Care, Stay Safe & Stay Home. Yet not an easy time for every one! * Corona is still around, & may remain lifelong! It's not as simple as viral flu. It's as dangerous as like a contest of survival of the fittest.

* Vaccine third does is available now, first to the frontline medico fraternity, patients in need, & nursing home/long term care facilities residents on a priority, so be careful & protect yourself & your loved ones for

good. Mask, frequent hand wash with soap & social distancing only is the option for now

* **Now Mask is not needed in the USA, if you are vaccinated.** But it is advised one must use Mask, even if you have taken Covid shots, Vaccine is just protection, it's not a cure! Also wear Gloves, Sunglasses & the most important: keep safe distance, keep washing your hands frequently with soap or use reliable sanitizer either one at least for 30 seconds.

* *In India nasal steam (Naas) is recommended by the Government authorities, Ayurvedic practitioners, & also is a traditional remedy, but the US CDC and other Western Health Authorities doesn't recommend it due to a probable risk to the brain.*

* *If you can, use Mouth Rinse, twice a day, will help to boost your oral health.*

* *If you have young kids/minors attending the school or college, it's advised to put on the mask for everyone inside the home.*

* We are passing through a tough time of Life & Death. Follow Social Distancing, but stay in for Social Contacts. If you know any one suffering with Corona, your nearer or dearer, call and talk to them frequently, we don't know whether they will return safely with us. Call other relatives/friends, at least ten persons a week. We are social & want to take care of those who are cut off due to Corona self-imposed lockdowns. Also keep busy yourself & family members with plenty of daily activities like yog, exercise & Stay Physically Fit, Pursue Your Hobby, Get Adequate, at least 6 to 8 hrs. of Sleep, & Eat Healthy Balance Diet.

* **Yet it's a long march to finish, no one knows when we will...!!!!**

Take care, & Stay Safe.