



Round Table Report

4 January 2021

For restricted use

This report summarizes the ECDC daily roundtable discussion and provides update on threats detected and monitored by Epidemic Intelligence.

Active threat

COVID-19 associated with SARS-CoV-2 – multi-country (world) – 2020

Detection of new COVID-19 variants:

As of 4 January 2021, in the EU/EEA, according to media quoting health authorities, 16 countries have reported the new COVID-19 variant **VOC 202012/01**: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

In the rest of the world, 20 additional countries reported the same variant: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America and Vietnam.

After the announcement by the South African authorities on the detection of a new variant **501Y.V2** on 18 December and as of 4 January, in the EU/EEA, according to media quoting health authorities, three countries have reported the new COVID-19 variant 501.V2: Finland, France and Sweden. Outside of the EU/EEA, seven countries have reported cases: Australia, Japan, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Zambia.

Assessment: ECDC assesses that the probability of SARS-CoV-2 VOC 202012/01 and 501.V2 being introduced and further spread in the EU/EEA is currently **high**. Although there is no information that infections with these strains are more severe, due to increased transmissibility the impact of COVID-19 disease in terms of hospitalisations and deaths is assessed as **high**, particularly for those in older age groups or with co-morbidities. The overall risk associated with the introduction and further spread of SARS-CoV-2 VOC 202012/01 and 501.V2 is therefore assessed as **high**.

The probability of increased circulation of any SARS-CoV-2 strains and this placing greater pressure on health systems in the coming weeks is considered to be **high** due to the festive season and, higher still, in countries where the new variants are established. The impact of this increased pressure on health systems is considered to be **high** even if current public health measures are maintained. Therefore, the overall risk of an increased impact on health systems in the coming weeks is assessed as **high**.

Actions: On 29 December, ECDC published a [Rapid Risk Assessment](#) on the 'risk related to the spread of new SARS-CoV-2 variants in the EU/EEA'.

A [dashboard](#) with the latest updates is available on ECDC's website. ECDC [rapid risk assessment](#) on the risk of increase of COVID-19 infection related to end-of-year festive season was published on 4 December 2020.

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Risk assessment under production

Joint ECDC and EFSA rapid outbreak assessment to be produced on *Salmonella* Enteritidis contamination in poultry products from Poland to be published in week 03-2021.

The Round Table Report contains information that could be considered sensitive or is still under verification. Its distribution is restricted to intended users only.

Participants

Senior Management: -

EI and Response Head of Section: -

Duty Officers:

24/7: -

Threat Detection: -

Rapid Assessment and Outbreaks: -

Communication: -

Representative of:

Epidemic Intelligence: -

Response: -

Vaccine Preventable Diseases: -

Emerging and Vector-borne Diseases: -

Food and Water-borne Diseases: -

Influenza: -

Microbiology Coordination: -