



Round Table Report

31 March 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) – 2019-2021

Update: Since the previous RT report published on 30 March 2021 and as of 31 March 2021, 144 205 new cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) and 3 127 new deaths have been reported in the EU/EEA.

New cases have been reported from EU/EEA. The five countries reporting most new cases are: France (30 702), Poland (20 862), Germany (17 051), Italy (16 055) and Hungary (11 309).

New deaths have been reported from EU/EEA. The five countries reporting most new deaths are: Hungary (576), Italy (529), Poland (460), France (381) and Germany (249).

Summary: Since 31 December 2019 and as of 31 March 2021, 26 593 696 cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) have been reported in the EU/EEA, including 615 013 deaths.

EU/EEA cases:

As of 31 March 2021, 26 593 696 cases have been reported in the EU/EEA: France (4 585 385), Italy (3 561 012), Spain (3 275 819), Germany (2 808 873), Poland (2 288 826), Czechia (1 532 332), Netherlands (1 263 381), Romania (946 647), Belgium (876 748), Portugal (821 104), Sweden (796 445), Hungary (652 433), Austria (539 561), Slovakia (359 330), Bulgaria (338 426), Croatia (269 009), Greece (260 077), Ireland (235 444), Denmark (229 902), Lithuania (215 216), Slovenia (214 044), Estonia (106 424), Latvia (101 733), Norway (94 138), Finland (76 845), Luxembourg (61 255), Cyprus (45 430), Malta (28 993), Iceland (6 194) and Liechtenstein (2 670).

EU/EEA deaths:

As of 31 March 2021, 615 013 deaths have been reported in the EU/EEA: Italy (108 879), France (95 364), Germany (76 342), Spain (75 305), Poland (52 392), Czechia (26 421), Romania (23 409), Belgium (22 966), Hungary (20 737), Portugal (16 845), Netherlands (16 489), Sweden (13 430), Bulgaria (13 068), Slovakia (9 624), Austria (9 058), Greece (8 017), Croatia (5 928), Ireland (4 681), Slovenia (4 319), Lithuania (3 566), Denmark (2 417), Latvia (1 893), Estonia (902), Finland (826), Luxembourg (743), Norway (661), Malta (390), Cyprus (256), Liechtenstein (56) and Iceland (29).

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Weekly worldwide update:

Update: Since week 2021-11 and as of week 2021-12, 3 992 117 new cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) and 69 090 new deaths have been reported.

New cases have been reported from Europe (1 713 993), America (1 424 841), Asia (773 618), Africa (77 860) and Oceania (1 805). The five countries reporting most new cases are: Brazil (526 089), United States (512 686), India (393 563), France (262 986) and Turkey (227 455).

New deaths have been reported from America (35 296), Europe (25 596), Asia (6 185), Africa (2 001) and Oceania (12). The five countries reporting most new deaths are: Brazil (18 441), United States (7 677), Mexico (3 587), Italy (2 991) and Russia (2 642).

Summary: Since 31 December 2019 and as of week 2021-12, 127 628 928 cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) have been reported, including 2 791 055 deaths.

Cases have been reported from:

Africa: 4 186 456 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are South Africa (1 545 431), Morocco (494 659), Tunisia (251 169), Ethiopia (200 563) and Egypt (200 050).

Asia: 24 072 463 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are India (12 039 644), Iran (1 846 923), Indonesia (1 496 085), Iraq (832 428) and Israel (832 012).

America: 56 084 701 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are United States (30 331 794), Brazil (12 573 615), Colombia (2 389 779), Argentina (2 322 557) and Mexico (2 227 842).

Europe: 43 220 869 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are France (4 545 589), Russia (4 528 543), United Kingdom (4 333 042), Italy (3 532 057) and Spain (3 270 825).

Oceania: 63 734 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are Australia (29 260), French Polynesia (18 607), Guam (7 800), Papua New Guinea (5 184) and New Zealand (2 137).

Other: 705 cases have been reported from an international conveyance in Japan.

Deaths have been reported from:

Africa: 111 945 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are South Africa (52 663), Egypt (11 882), Morocco (8 798), Tunisia (8 760) and Algeria (3 084).

Asia: 383 005 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are India (161 843), Iran (62 308), Indonesia (40 449), Pakistan (14 256) and Iraq (14 212).

America: 1 348 214 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are United States (550 036), Brazil (313 866), Mexico (201 826), Colombia (63 079) and Argentina (55 611).

Europe: 946 622 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are United Kingdom (126 592), Italy (107 933), Russia (98 033), France (94 623) and Germany (75 913).

Oceania: 1 263 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are Australia (909), French Polynesia (141), Guam (134), Papua New Guinea (45) and New Zealand (26).

Other: 6 deaths have been reported from an international conveyance in Japan.

EU/EEA:

As of week 2021-12, 26 393 414 cases have been reported in the EU/EEA: France (4 545 589), Italy (3 532 057), Spain (3 270 825), Germany (2 782 273), Poland (2 267 964), Czechia (1 516 772), Netherlands (1 257 561), Romania (940 443), Belgium (874 123), Portugal (820 716), Sweden (793 477), Hungary (641 124), Austria (533 511), Slovakia (358 115), Bulgaria (328 753), Croatia (267 522), Greece (254 031), Ireland (234 541), Denmark (228 692), Lithuania (214 365), Slovenia (212 965), Estonia (104 214), Latvia (101 040), Norway (93 145), Finland (76 425), Luxembourg (60 755), Cyprus (44 631), Malta (28 938), Iceland (6 183) and Liechtenstein (2 664).

As of week 2021-12, 610 455 deaths have been reported in the EU/EEA: Italy (107 933), France (94 623), Germany (75 913), Spain (75 199), Poland (51 932), Czechia (26 137), Romania (23 234), Belgium (22 929), Hungary (20 161), Portugal (16 843), Netherlands (16 455), Sweden (13 398), Bulgaria (12 710), Slovakia (9 542), Austria (9 006), Greece (7 880), Croatia (5 911), Ireland (4 666), Slovenia (4 311), Lithuania (3 560), Denmark (2 415), Latvia (1 878), Estonia (879), Finland (817), Luxembourg (738), Norway (660), Malta (388), Cyprus (252), Liechtenstein (56) and Iceland (29).

EU:

As of week 2021-12, 26 291 422 cases and 609 710 deaths have been reported in the EU.

Other news:

The [final report of the joint WHO-China study](#) on the origins of COVID-19 is now available on the WHO website.

On 30 March 2021, the [German Standing Committee on Vaccination \(STIKO\)](#) decided to recommend the COVID-19 vaccine from AstraZeneca for people aged 60 years and over based on the currently available data on the occurrence of rare but very severe thromboembolic side effects, predominantly in people below the age of 60.

Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC):

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization declared that the outbreak of COVID-19 constitutes a PHEIC. On 11 March 2020, the Director-General of the [WHO](#) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The [third](#), [fourth](#), [fifth](#) and [sixth](#) International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee meeting for COVID-19 were held in Geneva on 30 April 2020, 31 July 2020, 29 October 2020, and 14 January 2021, respectively. The committee concluded during these meetings that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to constitute a PHEIC.

Assessment: For the last available risk assessment, please visit [ECDC's dedicated webpage](#).

Actions: ECDC has published the 14th update of its [rapid risk assessment](#). A [dashboard](#) with the latest updates is available on ECDC's website. ECDC's [rapid risk assessment](#) on the risk related to the spread of new SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern in the EU/EEA was published on 29 December 2020, and a [first update](#) published on 21 January 2021.

Other news

***Burkholderia cepacia* complex HAI infections - UK - 2018-2021 [RESTRICTED]**

Source: Public Health England (Health protection Teleconference Report).

Update: As of 30 March, 2 additional cases have been confirmed in the *B. contaminans* cluster, and 2 additional cases have been identified in the *B. cepacia* "sensu stricto" (i.e. genomovar I) cluster. In addition, according to Public Health England the third *Burkholderia cepacia* complex cluster is identifying closely with *B. stabilis* and has involved 10 cases since 2018.

Summary: PHE is investigating three clusters of *Burkholderia cepacia* complex infections from 2018 to 2021. Since August 2020 and as of 30 March 2021, 58 confirmed and 25 probable cases of *B. contaminans* have been identified, the majority of these diagnosed from mid-October 2020 to date. Confirmed cases include hospitalised patients aged 0-90 years and with co-morbidities, many of whom were hospitalised in ICU. Cases have been identified from 31 hospitals in England and Wales. Preliminary results indicate that exposure to ultrasound procedures was significantly associated with *B. contaminans*.

A concurrent cluster of *B. cepacia* "sensu stricto" (i.e. genomovar I) with similar outbreak characteristics has also been investigated. Since January 2020 and as of 30 March 2021, 35 confirmed cases have been identified. Identical *B. cepacia* "sensu stricto" (i.e. genomovar I) isolates have been identified in samples of Skintact ultrasound gel manufactured by Turkuaz Ltd. This product is supplied in many EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden), as well as widely internationally (including the following countries: Albania, Algeria, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, British Indian Ocean Territory, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Georgia, Ghana, India, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Lebanon, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Morocco, Panama, Peru, Qatar, North Macedonia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Yemen).

In addition, a third cluster of *Burkholderia cepacia* complex infections (identifying closely with *B. stabilis*) has been identified since 2018, and as of 30 March 2021 it involves 10 cases under investigation.

Assessment: Bacteria belonging to the *Burkholderia cepacia* complex are well-known opportunistic pathogens responsible for healthcare-associated infections and include the species *B. stabilis*, *B. contaminans* and *B. cepacia* "sensu stricto". In healthy individuals, these bacteria rarely cause disease. Cases related to the outbreak and the cluster identified by PHE, have so far not been reported from any EU/EEA country. PHE identified

ultrasound-guided procedures as a common exposure, and also identified *B. cepacia* in bottles with ultrasound gel. It has, however, neither been possible to ascertain whether these bottles were new/unopened, nor with any degree of certainty, if the bottles were from specific batches. Further testing is being carried out. Three ultrasound gel products, all manufactured by Turkuaz Ltd, have been suspended in the UK. The UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has engaged with the manufacturer and posed questions as part of its investigation. PHE is not appraised of investigations of the manufacturer. PHE will work with WHO and the European Commission to disseminate information related to this event and is carrying out awareness raising with clinicians in the UK-NHS. Given the limited information, it cannot be excluded that cases will be detected in the EU/EEA. Appropriate infection prevention measures such as those presented in the [PHE interim guidance](#) should limit the risk of new infections.

Action: ECDC is monitoring this event.

Expert deployment

One EPIET fellow has been deployed in Georgia from 24 March 2021 until 1 May 2021 as part of the WHO team providing support to the Georgian NCDC for the implementation of the COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness study in health workers.

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: -