

# COVID-19 media surveillance

18 February 2021; 22:30 weekly brief

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) remains a mayor news topic, with 75 thousand articles per day (in 70 languages, as detected by [EMM/MEDISYS](#)).

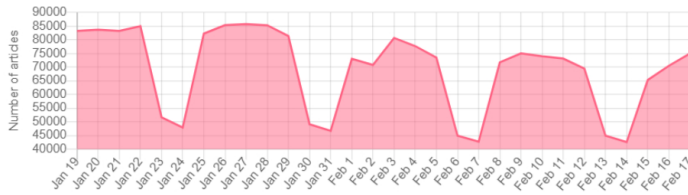


Figure 1 Media reports on Covid-19 (source: EMM/MEDISYS)



Figure 2 Geolocations mentioned in coronavirus media reports showing clusters of media reports (source: EMM/MEDISYS)



## Headlines

- US: About [57.7 million Covid-19 vaccine doses administered](#) in the US; [Pfizer-BioNTech started vaccine trial for pregnant women](#); [Life expectancy in the US dropped a full year](#) in the first half of 2020 according to the US CDC
- UK: [Scientists have identified another new variant B.1.525 of coronavirus in the UK with some potentially troubling mutations](#); Calls for [compensation scheme for UK frontline workers with long Covid](#)
- Brazil [hits 10 million Covid cases with new strain taking hold](#)
- Spain: [incidence rate falling at different speeds in each region](#) may be connected to the more contagious UK variant
- Portugal: The numbers of infections are [improving but Portugal is still dark red](#) on the European Covid-19 map
- Italian new PM [Draghi said the coronavirus crisis is an opportunity to rebuild just as after World War II as part of a more integrated EU](#)
- France to [donate 5% of its vaccine doses to poorer countries](#)
- Germany [closed its borders with the Czech Rep and Austria's Tyrol on Sunday](#)
- Belgium: [first cases of Brazilian strain detected in Belgium](#)
- Irish [tourists book overseas dental appointments to circumvent ban on non-essential travel](#)
- Hungary: The first [550,000 doses of China's Sinopharm vaccine](#) have arrived in Budapest
- Serbia [donated 4,680 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine to North Macedonia](#) on Sunday
- Israel: vaccine [effectiveness of 95% reported](#) after fully vaccinating 602,000 persons; [two-thirds of eligible Israelis have received at least 1 dose](#)
- India: [daily new cases decreased to 11,000 leaving experts perplexed](#)
- South Africa [launched its vaccine drive, first country to administer Johnson & Johnson vaccine](#)
- Australia will [launch its vaccination programme on Monday](#)
- New Zealand [reported no new cases after easing restrictions](#)
- South Korea: COVID-19 cases are [on the rise again and experts warn that the country may be heading towards its fourth wave](#)
- China reported [seven new COVID-19 cases on 16 February, all imported infections](#)
- Japan began its [vaccination campaign with just months to go before Olympics](#)



## Twitter

The following news were found among the most mentioned/retweeted items:

- "Two variants have merged into heavily mutated coronavirus. The UK and California variants of coronavirus appear to have combined into a heavily mutated hybrid, sparking concern that we may be entering a new phase of the covid-19 pandemic" ([news scientist](#))
- "The coronavirus is here to stay — here's what that means. A Nature survey shows many scientists expect the virus that causes COVID-19 to become endemic, but it could pose less danger over time." ([nature](#))
- "Chile vaccinated two million people against the coronavirus in less than two weeks" ([elespectador](#))
- "One-third of troops offered coronavirus vaccine have refused, DOD official tells Congress" ([stripes](#))
- "Israeli study finds 94% drop in symptomatic COVID-19 cases with Pfizer vaccine" ([reuters](#))

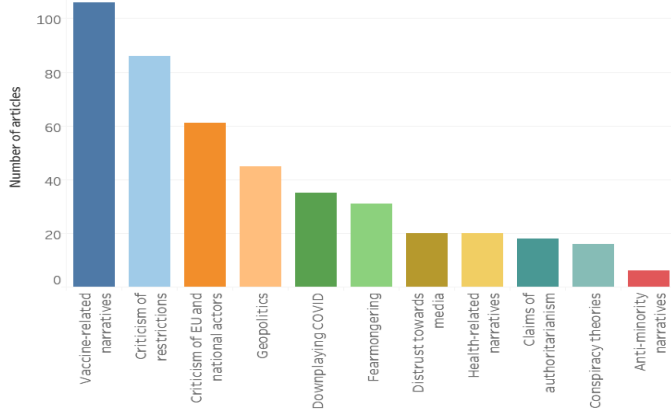
The most mentioned English sources were the New York Times, Reuters, the Washington Post, AP and CNN.

El Diario, El Comercio, El País and Latinus, and Ouest France and Le Monde were among the most mentioned Spanish and French sources, respectively.

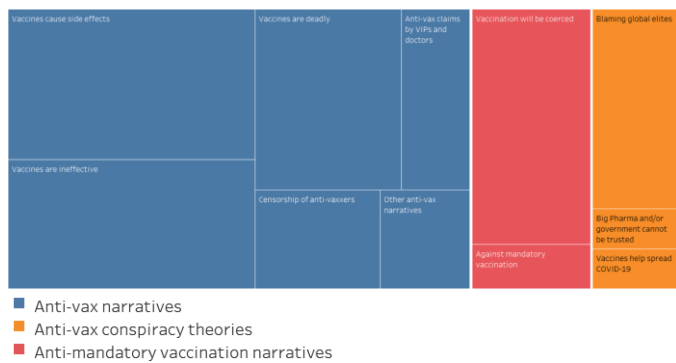


# Misinformation

444 articles from unverified sources were selected forming 11 supernarratives over the last week:



The treemap shows the narratives and subnarratives associated with anti-vax articles. The colours represent the narratives, while the text indicates each subnarrative. The bigger the size of the box, the higher the number of articles tagged as that narrative and subnarrative



# Fact Check

- US fact checkers debunk claims that the CDC inflated COVID-19 deaths by more than 1,600 per cent, noting that these rely on previously debunked claims that the way the CDC requires comorbidity to be reported on death certificates means that many deaths are incorrectly attributed to the virus ([usatoday](#)).
- Fact checkers debunk claims that the flu and other respiratory diseases have “disappeared” as they are all counted as COVID-19 ([newtral](#)).
- Fact checkers debunk a viral social media post claiming that according to a French virologist, vaccinations are responsible for the creation of new coronavirus variants. Fact checkers note that the virologist in question does not make such claims in the original video and she herself cautions against the misinterpretation of her words ([afp](#)).
- Fact checkers debunk Tanzanian President John Magufuli’s claims that “vaccines are dangerous” ([polygraph](#)).

\*