

# COVID-19 media surveillance

4 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 over 85 thousand articles per day (in 70 languages, as detected by [EMM/MEDISYS](#)).



## Headlines

- US: [B.1.1.7 variant on track to become dominant in Florida and California hot spots](#)
- COVAX initiative announces plan to [distribute more than 330 million Covid-19 vaccine doses to developing nations](#) in the first half of 2021
- The EU [reversed course on a plan to use emergency Brexit measures to restrict exports of vaccines](#) through the Irish border to the UK
- A quarter of people in [France, Germany and the US may refuse Covid vaccine](#)
- UK finds [more cases with 'concerning' mutations](#)
- Spain: [Third wave continues to ease](#), with incidence only rising in Aragón, Asturias, Ceuta and Basque Country
- Portugal: Third wave puts [Portugal's hospitals in a state of emergency](#)
- France remains 'fragile' but [no new Covid-19 lockdown for now according to PM Jean Castex](#)
- German health minister [Spahn hints at lockdown easing](#)
- Belgium's coronavirus [infections rise while hospital admissions drop](#)
- Italy: one case of [South African variant detected at Varese hospital](#)
- Luxembourg reported [47 cases of B.1.1.7 variant in total](#)
- Sweden and Denmark plan [digital Covid vaccine certificates for travel](#)
- Israel: [vaccine has almost halved cases among over-60s in the last two weeks](#)
- Iran receives [first batch of foreign vaccines with arrival of Sputnik V](#)
- Brazil rushes [Covid-19 vaccines to Amazon region as cases continue to surge](#)
- India's [coronavirus puzzle: Why case numbers are plummeting](#)
- Australia: Western Australia recorded a [fourth day with zero new local cases, end of lockdown in sight](#)
- New Zealand reported [7 new cases, of which 6 in managed isolation](#).
- South Korea is now one of only [nine countries with confirmed cases of the three variants discovered](#)
- China reported [30 new Covid-19 cases on Wednesday, of which 17 are local transmissions](#); China to [donate 100,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses to Congo Republic](#)
- Japan extends [travel restrictions and tightens quarantine measures until 7 March](#)



Figure 1 Geolocations mentioned in coronavirus media reports showing clusters of media reports (source: EMM/MEDISYS)



## Twitter

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

- "AstraZeneca vaccine shows 76% sustained protection during 3-month interval until dose 2." ([oxford](#))
- "U.S. pharmacies will start to get a big infusion of vaccines" ([nytimes](#))
- "Coronavirus is in the air — there's too much focus on surfaces" ([nature](#), see also from JRC: [randfonline](#))
- "Biden coronavirus relief proposal would restore economy by summer" ([thehill](#))
- "'National inspiration' Captain Sir Tom Moore dies with Covid-19" ([bbc](#))

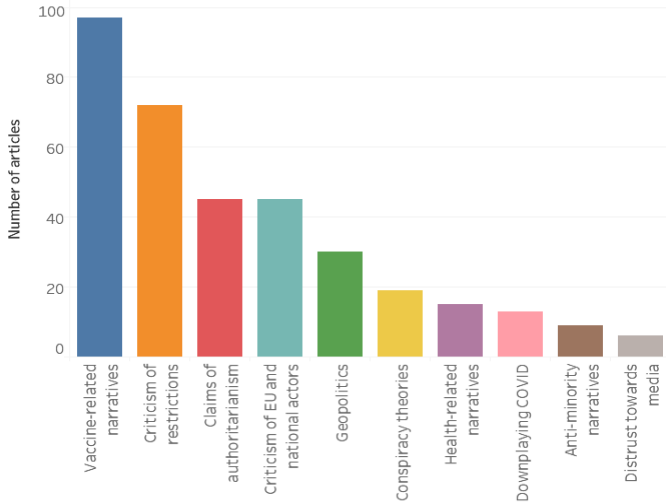
The most mentioned English sources were the New York Times, the Washington Post and Reuters.

El País, El Diario, and Infobae, and Le Monde and Le Parisien were among the most mentioned Spanish and French sources, respectively.



# Misinformation

351 articles from unverified sources were selected forming 10 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.



**Narrative**

- Anti-vax narratives
- Anti-vax conspiracy theories
- Anti-mandatory vaccination narratives



# Fact Check

- Fact checkers address a viral video claiming that COVID-19 vaccines are "experimental biological agents" that the US government is pushing "heavily on blacks and browns". They debunk the false claims and note that public health experts have recommended prioritising those communities because they have suffered higher rates of infection and death during the pandemic ([factcheck](#)).
- Fact checkers address claims that "53 people have died in Gibraltar in 10 days after vaccinations with the Pfizer vaccine started", reporting that out of more than 11,000 vaccinated, six have died after receiving the vaccine, but there is no evidence these deaths were related to the vaccine ([fullfact](#)).
- Fact checkers debunk claims that COVID-19 vaccines have a 10 to 15 per cent reaction rate, give you an increased HIV risk and cause Bell's Palsy ([theferret](#)).