

# COVID-19 media surveillance

17 December 2020; 20:30 weekly brief

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) remains a mayor news topic, with 80 thousand articles per day (in 70 languages, as detected by [EMM/MEDISYS](#)).

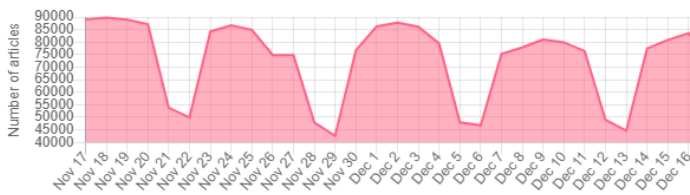


Figure 1 Media reports on Covid-19 (source: EMM/MEDISYS)



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



## Headlines

- EU countries will start [vaccinating their citizens on 27 December](#)
- US surpassed [17 million cases](#)
- India: [some experts claim that numbers are falling as majority of population already infected](#)
- Brazil: [Political infighting, haphazard planning and a rising anti-vaccine movement have turned the country into a cautionary tale](#)
- Spain: coronavirus incidence in Spain exceeds [threshold of 200 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, above the level of "extreme risk" in the Balearic Islands and Basque Country](#)
- France: President [Macron tested positive](#)
- Italy: Premier Conte is considering [possible further restrictions over the Christmas holidays](#)
- Germany introduces [new restrictions amid surge in cases](#)
- Belgium's [new daily coronavirus infections continue their rise](#)
- Luxembourg reported [434 new cases and seven new deaths](#)
- Swedish [King Carl XVI described Swedish approach as failed](#)
- Poland to enter [national quarantine starting December 28](#)
- Portugal imposes [overnight curfew on New Year's Eve](#)
- Swiss doctors [are demanding immediate lockdown from the federal government](#)
- UK [extended its tier three restrictions to two thirds of the country](#) while [140,000 vaccine shorts were administered in first week](#)
- Russia's [Sputnik V rushed rollout raises doubts](#)
- New Zealand reported [four new cases in managed isolation](#)
- South Korea's daily new cases surpassed the [1,000 mark for the second day in a row amid calls for further lockdown restrictions](#)
- Japan: Tokyo raises [healthcare alert to highest level after virus cases soar to 822](#)



## Twitter

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

- "Waste, Negligence and Cronyism: Inside Britain's Pandemic Spending. In the desperate scramble for protective gear and other equipment, politically connected companies reaped billions." ([nytimes](#))
- "Boris Johnson's father caught getting on tube without mask in fourth breach of Covid rules. Stanley Johnson was said to have walked through corridor at Victoria station without mask" ([independent](#))
- "'New variant' of coronavirus identified in England" ([bbc](#), [newsweekjapan](#))

#EuNaoVouTomarVacina (I won't take the vaccine) trended worldwide and in Brazil after an announcement by President Bolsonaro that he wouldn't take the Coronavirus vaccine.

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

El Diario, El Pais, Infobae and RT (Spanish Version), and Le Monde and Le Parisien were among the most mentioned Spanish and French sources, respectively.



## Fact Check

- Fact checkers debunk claims that the COVID-19 vaccine has a microchip that “tracks the location of the patient” ([factcheck.org](https://factcheck.org)).
- Fact checkers debunk claims that the presence of SARS-CoV-2 proteins in the COVID-19 vaccine makes females infertile, arguing that these claims are illogical as we would then see a peak of infertility among COVID-19 patients ([healthfeedback](https://healthfeedback.org)).
- Fact checkers debunk claims that Bill Gates was caught on video saying that the COVID-19 vaccine “will change our DNA forever” ([reuters](https://reuters.com)).
- Fact checkers debunk a series of social media posts claiming that there is a connection between the Wuhan Institute of Virology, pharmaceutical companies and Bill Gates and George Soros, reporting that many of the connections alleged in the post are simply not true ([aap](https://aap.org)).
- Fact checkers debunk claims that a video featuring the first UK patient to get a dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is “a lie” as it was allegedly featured in a news report two months earlier. Fact checkers report that the misunderstanding or disinformation attempt stems from the new video being played on an old CNN webpage ([snopes](https://snopes.com)).
- Fact checkers address claims that after decades of research there are no vaccines against HIV, cancer and the common cold, but in less than a year several COVID-19 vaccines were developed, implying some sort of conspiracy theory. Fact checkers highlight the complications behind developing vaccines for the aforementioned illnesses ([politifact](https://politifact.com)).