

COVID-19 media surveillance

11 February 2021; 22:30 weekly brief

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) remains a major news topic, with over 70 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: South African variant B.1.351 was found in [California](#) and [Washington DC](#); [Facebook bans misinformation about all vaccines](#) after years of controversy
- UK: [Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine found to give strong immune response to new Covid-19 variants](#)
- Brazil: [vaccinate entire population for COVID-19 in 2021 according to health minister](#)
- Spain: [WHO advises Spain not to relax coronavirus restrictions too soon](#)
- Portugal detects [first cases of Brazilian COVID-19 variant](#)
- France: [British variant accounts for a quarter of infections, the situation in Moselle is worrying due to South African and Brazilian variants](#)
- Germany: Angela Merkel has defended her [government's decision to extend Germany's lockdown until 7 March](#)
- Belgium's [ban on non-essential travel extended until 1 April](#)
- Luxembourg: [British variant found in 114 people - 14 cases of the South African variant](#)
- Ireland: [Full level 5 restrictions in place until after Easter but schools and construction likely to reopen](#)
- Serbia has [highest vaccination rate in continental Europe](#)
- Israel's [swift vaccination rollout has made it the largest real-world study](#) of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine
- India: [new cases and deaths have fallen sharply in India in the past few weeks](#), which has led some officials to suggest that the country has achieved herd immunity
- Malaysia offers [COVID-19 vaccinations to foreign residents and undocumented migrants](#)
- The Philippines is set to receive [600.000 doses this month of Sinovac Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine donated by China](#)
- Australia: [cluster of 13 cases at hotel in Melbourne](#)
- New Zealand: [one case in managed isolation](#) after travel from US
- South Korea: new cases at [15-day high as extended lunar new year holiday kicks off](#)
- China reports [two new cases, fewest in over five months](#); WHO says ['extremely unlikely' virus leaked from lab in China](#)
- Japan will [discard millions of BioNTech doses due to a shortage of syringes](#)



Twitter

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

- "Biden admin on track to meet goal of 100M coronavirus shots in first 100 days. The administration is averaging 1.5 million shots a day, according to coronavirus coordinator Jeffrey Zients" ([nbcnews](#))
- "White House looks at domestic travel restrictions as COVID mutation surges in Florida" ([charlotteobserver](#))
- "A lone infection may have changed the course of the pandemic. The number of mutations in the UK variant took scientists by surprise. Now they think its origins may lie in one person, chronically infected with the virus" ([wired](#))
- "The CDC says tight-fit masks or double masking increases protection" ([nytimes](#))
- "The price of the Tories' outsourcing obsession? Cronyism and waste" ([theguardian](#))

[#lockdownverlaengerung](#) trended in Germany following an announcement by Angela Merkel to extend Germany's lockdown ([dw](#))

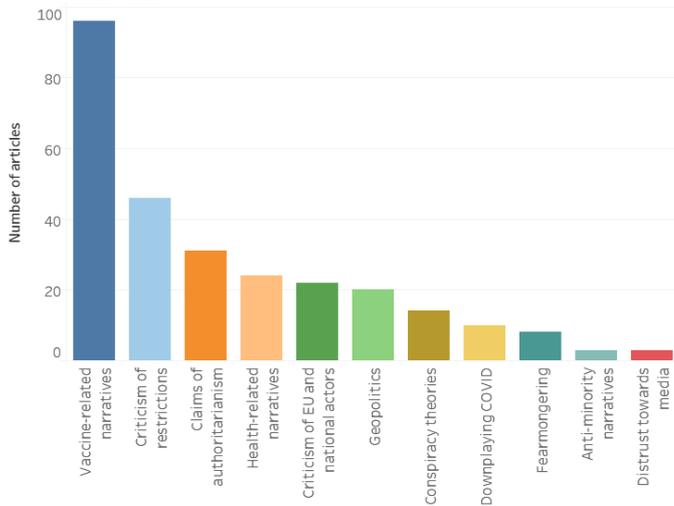
The most mentioned English sources were the New York Times, the Washington Post, AP, the Guardian and Reuters.

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

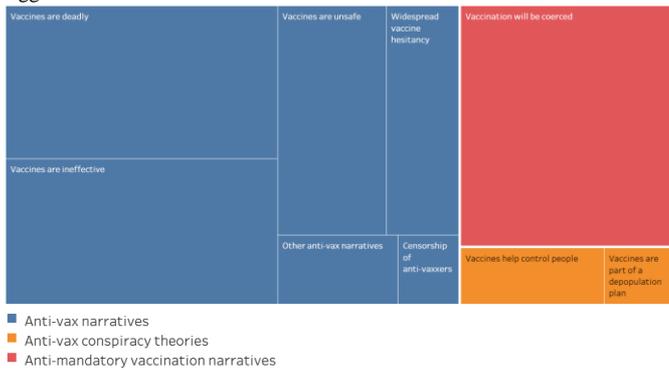


Misinformation

277 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

- Fact checkers address misleading claims that US pharmaceutical company Merck discontinued COVID-19 vaccine research because recovering from the virus would be more effective. Fact checkers clarify that the company scrapped its vaccine candidates because they did not offer the same level of protection as other shots and produced an immune response “inferior” to that of natural infection ([afp](#)).
- Fact checkers address claims that “seniors around the world who died from COVID vaccine are being improperly listed as natural causes”, reporting that these claims suggest that elderly people in Gibraltar and Norway who died about two weeks after being vaccinated were killed by the vaccines, but there is no evidence the vaccines caused their deaths ([fullfact](#)).
- Fact checkers debunk an Iranian religious leader’s claim that COVID-19 vaccines turn people into homosexuals ([polygraph](#)).