

# COVID-19 media surveillance

25 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 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: As new cases continue to decline, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky and other top U.S. [health officials worry that the new variants could undermine that progress; nursing homes, once hotspots, far outpace U.S. in Covid declines](#)
- UK [lowers COVID-19 alert status as pressure on hospitals eases](#)
- Spain reports [9,387 Covid-19 deaths in February, the highest monthly figure since the first wave](#)
- Portugal extended [nationwide lockdown until at least mid-March](#)
- Italy's [Lombardy again in virus crisis as Brescia sees surge](#)
- France: ['about half' of France's Covid-19 cases are due to UK variant](#) according to French PM Jean Castex; [new border checks at French-German border](#) to tighten controls in Moselle region
- Belgium could be at the [start of third coronavirus wave, UZ Ghent says](#)
- Finland to [tighten COVID-19 restrictions from March 8](#)
- Serbia will receive [additional 500,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine from China in March](#)
- Ukraine faces [almost 40% jump in new daily COVID-19 cases](#)
- Israeli study of more than 1 million people indicated [Pfizer and BioNTech's coronavirus vaccine is highly effective](#); Israel's COVID vaccine data released for first-time in peer-reviewed journal
- Chile [vaccinated 16% of its population in just 21 days](#)
- India: daily new cases have [decreased from a peak of over 90,000 infections in September down to just over 10,000 a day in February](#)
- Australia: incidents of [excessive dosing of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine occurred during vaccine roll out](#)
- New Zealand reported [no new community cases](#)
- South Korea: [1 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine](#) are distributed across South Korea to begin vaccination on Friday
- China reported [12 new cases on Feb. 23, all imported infections](#); China [approves two more domestic COVID-19 vaccines for public use](#)
- Japan will [begin vaccinating 36 million senior citizens on April 12](#); one month until [Olympic torch relay](#)



## Twitter

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

- "California's coronavirus strain looks increasingly dangerous: 'The devil is already here'" ([latimes](#))
- "A new coronavirus variant is spreading in New York, researchers report. The variant contains a mutation thought to help the virus dodge the immune system, scientists said." ([nytimes](#))
- "First person vaccinated with CoronaVac in Bahia is hospitalized with Covid before taking the second dose" ([gazetabrasil](#))
- "Vip vaccination: [President of the Argentinian Chamber of Deputies] Sergio Massa's father and in-laws were vaccinated against the coronavirus in January" ([lanacion](#))
- "U.S. reaches 500,000 deaths from the coronavirus. The number of dead rivals the populations of Atlanta or Sacramento, California." ([nbcnews](#))

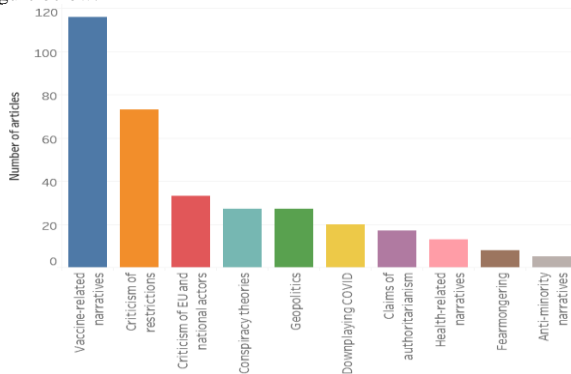
The most mentioned English sources were the New York Times, the LA Times, Forbes, Reuters, and CNN.

La Nación, El Diario and El País, and 20minutes and Ouest France were among the most mentioned Spanish and French sources, respectively.

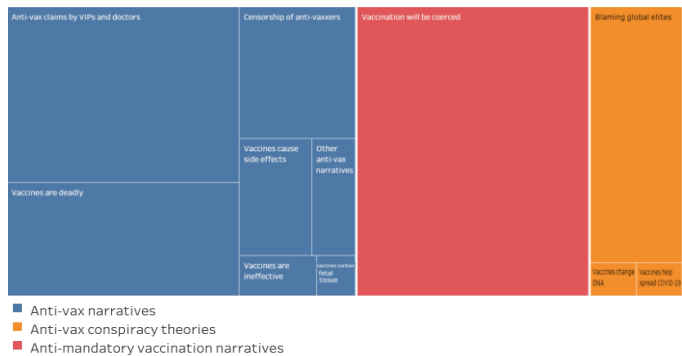


# Misinformation

Over the past week, 339 articles were selected as relevant following the manual annotation of a larger set of COVID-related articles from unverified sources. In total, 10 supernarratives were identified, distributed as presented in the figure below:



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 debunk claims that South African President Cyril Ramaphosa only pretended to receive a COVID-19 shot as the syringe used on him had a capped needle ([afp](#)).
- Fact checkers debunk claims that COVID-19 vaccines contain “toxic” ingredients, reporting that these give inaccurate information about what is included in the vaccines and the dangers of substances found in some vaccines in small quantities ([theferret](#)).
- UK fact checkers debunk claims that COVID-19 vaccines are experimental and the manufacturers do not have liability, reporting that all the COVID-19 vaccines being used in the UK have been tested and approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and that manufacturers are immune to some - but not all - civil liability ([fullfact](#)).