

COVID-19 media surveillance

3 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 85 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: reported a [record number of 3,157 deaths in one day, more than the number of 9/11 victims](#); [Obama, Clinton and Bush pledge to take Covid vaccine on TV to show its safety](#)
- India: 5 Covid vaccines undergoing trials in India [logistically feasible for distribution in both urban and rural areas](#) according to AIIMS director
- Brazil: [Butantan Institute received one million doses of Chinese vaccine](#) as [death toll surpassed 175,000](#) with almost 6.5 million cases
- Spain: New plan allows [inter-regional travel between December 23 and January 6 only to see family and close friends](#)
- France [guarantees free access to vaccine with one million priority people treated from January](#)
- Italy restricts [movement between regions from 21 December until 6 January](#); Rome's [Fiumicino airport to offer COVID-tested flights to U.S. with Delta and Alitalia](#)
- Germany prolonged its [partial lockdown until 10 January](#)
- Belgium will [start vaccinating population from 5 January if vaccine approved](#)
- Luxembourg announced [five more deaths and 625 new Covid-19 infections on Thursday](#)
- Greece extends [lockdown again to December 14](#)
- Sweden: [support for anti-lockdown stance slips amid rising Covid deaths](#)
- Switzerland: [ski resorts face tougher restrictions as EU pressure grows to ban skiing](#)
- UK: [emergency approval of Pfizer vaccine generated criticism and questions](#)
- Russia to start a ["large-scale" COVID-19 immunization campaign by late next week](#)
- New Zealand reported [nine new cases in managed isolation](#)
- South Korea: Half a million South Korean students sit a [college entrance exam despite rising Covid cases](#)
- Japan study finds [98% of COVID-19 patients had immunity six months later](#)



Twitter

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

- "Coronavirus vaccine: Pfizer given protection from legal action by UK government. Pfizer's UK boss refuses to explain why the business needs protection from legal action." ([independent](#))
- "Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine judged safe for use in UK" ([bbc](#))
- "Hungarian MEP admits he was at lockdown 'orgy'. József Szájer says he was at party broken up by police for breaking coronavirus rules." ([politico](#))
- "In nine [US] states, at least 1 in 1,000 people have died of coronavirus-linked causes." ([washingtonpost](#))
- "Pompeo invites hundreds to indoor holiday parties after subordinates are warned against hosting 'non-mission critical events'" ([washingtonpost](#))

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

El Diario, RT (Spanish Version), Libertad Digital, CNN (Spanish Version) and El Universal, and Le Monde and Le Parisien were among the most mentioned Spanish and French sources, respectively.

**Fact checked: downplaying COVID-19**

- Fact checkers address a meme claiming that the coronavirus “is so deadly the #1 treatment is to go home for 14 days until it goes away on its own (99.6% survivable with no treatment whatsoever)”. Fact checkers report that while it is true that many COVID-19 cases do not result in serious symptoms, others require hospital care and it is deceptive to say the top treatment is to “go home for 14 days” ([aapfactcheck](#)).
- German fact checkers address claims that the number of COVID-19 cases is increasing only because more tests are being carried out, noting that while the claim is not entirely false, it is missing context as the current increase in cases cannot be explained by more tests alone ([correctiv](#)).

Fact checked: anti-mask claims

- Fact checkers debunk claims that a recent Danish study shows that face masks are useless for COVID-19, reporting that the study found that face masks did not have a large protective effect for wearers, not that masks provide no protection at all or do not offer benefits to others ([factcheckorg](#)).

Fact checked: conspiracy theories

- Fact checkers address a social media post claiming that an image of two people in protective equipment carrying a body bag is proof that the pandemic is a hoax as the body bag does not seem to be heavy to carry ([afpfactual](#)).
- Fact checkers address Canadian pathologist Roger Hodkinson’s claims that COVID-19 is “the greatest hoax ever perpetrated”, reporting that Canadian authorities and medical experts do not agree with his theories about the pandemic and point out that his claims are not supported by scientific evidence ([afpsprawdzam](#)).