

COVID-19 media surveillance

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

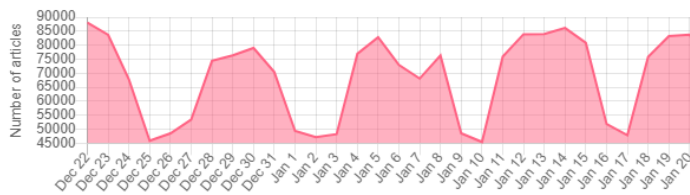


Figure 1 Media reports on Covid-19 (source: EMM/MEDISYS)



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



Headlines

- US: President Biden says [US Covid-19 death toll will probably top 500,000 next month](#); US to deliver [100 million vaccine doses in first 100 days of presidency](#)
- South Africa: [Covid-19 variant 501Y.V2 discovered in South Africa](#) carries mutations that [may weaken the effect of vaccines](#) according to [South African study](#)
- UK: [third lockdown shows 'no evidence of decline' in Covid rates](#) according to [REACT study findings](#)
- Spain: hundreds have [received the vaccine even though they are not part of the first priority group](#)
- France [aims to vaccinate entire population by end of August](#)
- Germany mandates [medical-grade masks in the workplace, on public transportation, and in shops](#)
- Belgium [could ban non-essential travel even if no EU-wide solution is found](#)
- Luxembourg: [just one in three Luxembourg residents invited to receive a coronavirus shot has shown up for the vaccination so far](#)
- Hungary becomes [first in EU to approve Russian Sputnik V vaccine](#)
- Portugal [bans all UK flights to tackle rapid spread of new variant](#)
- Ireland's COVID-19 [death rate is at its highest level since the start of the pandemic](#)
- Israel: [lockdown extended amid estimates B.1.1.7 variant will account for most new infections by March](#)
- Brazil is waiting for a [shipment of AstraZeneca vaccines from India and a shipment of Sinovac vaccines from China](#)
- India is giving away [millions of vaccine doses as a tool of diplomacy](#)
- Australia recorded a [fourth day of zero cases on Thursday](#)
- New Zealand reported [11 cases with UK variant and 6 cases with South Africa variant in managed isolation](#)
- South Korea: Health minister [expects herd immunity to be achieved by November](#)
- China is building a [quarantine camp with more than 4,000 isolation suites in Hebei Province](#)
- Japan expects to secure [310 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines according to PM Suga](#); IOC chief Bach declares 'there is no plan B' and that [Tokyo Olympics will go ahead](#)



Twitter

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

- "UK now has highest Covid death rate in the world. Nearly 1,000 people are dying each day on average in the UK. Meanwhile, New Zealand has not recorded a single death since September" ([theindependent](#))
- "Vaccinators could lose their licences for giving second doses prematurely. 'There is a complete refusal at the highest levels to grant permission for second doses before 12 weeks'" ([theindependent](#))
- "Devi Sridhar: Independent Scotland could have handled coronavirus better" ([heraldscotland](#))
- "[Spanish] Ministry of Health sells 30,000 doses of the coronavirus vaccine to Andorra" ([abc](#))
- "Germany makes medical face masks use mandatory in public transportation" ([asahi_jp](#))
- "The lockdown is extended - with no perspective. Again politics only reacts. A group of experts relies on a zero-case plan. 'No Covid' could be a way out." ([zeit_de](#))

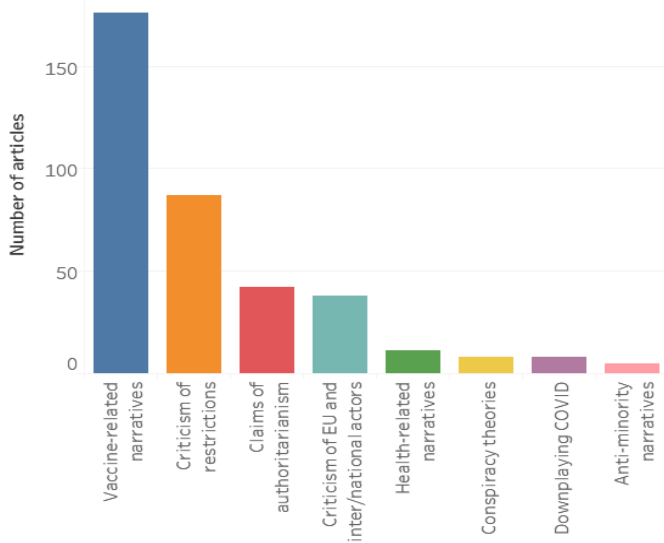
The most mentioned English sources were the New York Times, the Independent, CNN and Reuters.

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

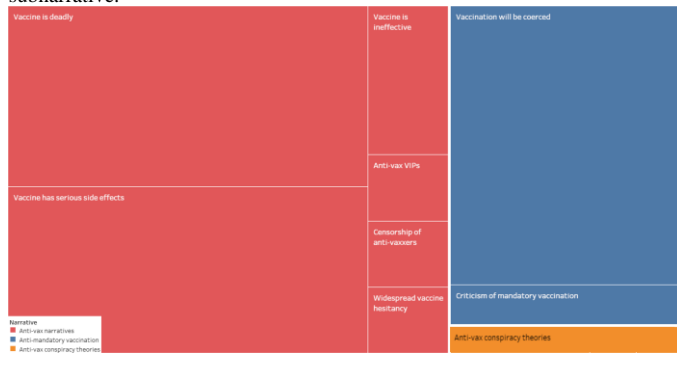


Misinformation

Over the past week, 375 articles were selected forming 8 supernarratives:



The treemap shows the narratives and subnarratives associated with anti-vax articles. The colours represent the narratives, while the text indicates each subnarrative.



Fact Check

Fact checkers debunked:

- claims linking the death of 23 people in Norway to the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, reporting that while it is true that 23 elderly people died after getting the vaccine, it is still being investigated whether getting the vaccine was what caused these people's deaths ([fullfact](#));
- Putin's claim that the Sputnik V vaccine "is the best one worldwide" as no other vaccine "demonstrates such level of protection and safety", reporting that there is no evidence substantiating Putin's claims ([polygraph](#));
- conspiracy theories alleging that mRNA vaccines are designed to stimulate human cells to become creators of pathogens ([factanews](#)).