

Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

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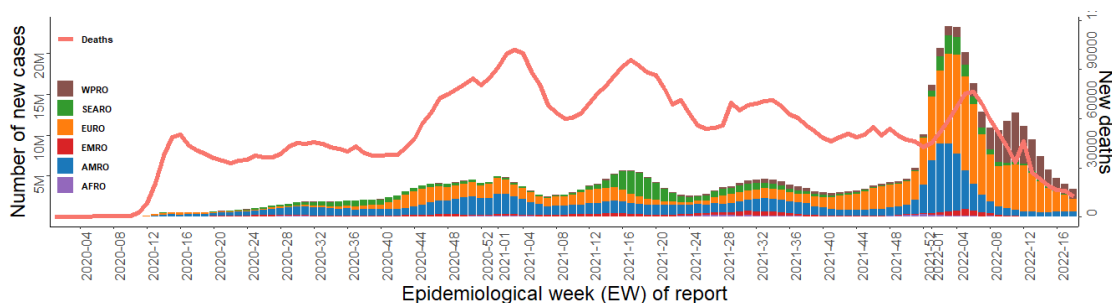
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- Executive summary including global overview
- Regional and sub-regional trends
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Executive Summary

- **Since the onset of the pandemic** in 2020 and up to May 09, 2022, a cumulative total of about 515 million COVID-19 cases including 6.2 deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. While the global number of new cases and deaths has continued to decline, weekly cases increased in the African Region (12.9%), the region of the Americas (15.3%), and the Western Pacific region (1.1%) during epidemiological week (EW) 18. Similarly, COVID-19 weekly deaths increased in the African Region and the region of the Americas by 87.8% and 3.4%, respectively.
- **Globally**, approximately 3,639,510 new COVID-19 cases were reported in epidemiological week (EW) 18 (May 01, 2022-May 07, 2022) – 9.3% decrease compared to EW 17 (April 24, 2022-April 30, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 12,239 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a 24.5% relative decrease compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 719,811 cases and 4,385 deaths were reported in EW 18 - a 15.3% and a 3.4% increase, respectively, compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, **COVID-19 cases increased in all four subregions** (range: 12.7 – 26.2%) during EW 18. In the same period, while South America reported a decline in weekly deaths, the remaining three subregions reported an increase in deaths (range: 4.1 – 49%).
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 69.5 cases per 100,000 population during EW 18 (61 the previous week). Between EW 18 and 17, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 8.4 deaths per 1 million population (8.3 the previous two weeks).
- Among 32 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 10 countries and territories (range: 4.9% - 100%) during EW 18 compared to the previous week. Among 25 countries/territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in 5 countries and territories (range: 7.9% - 100%).

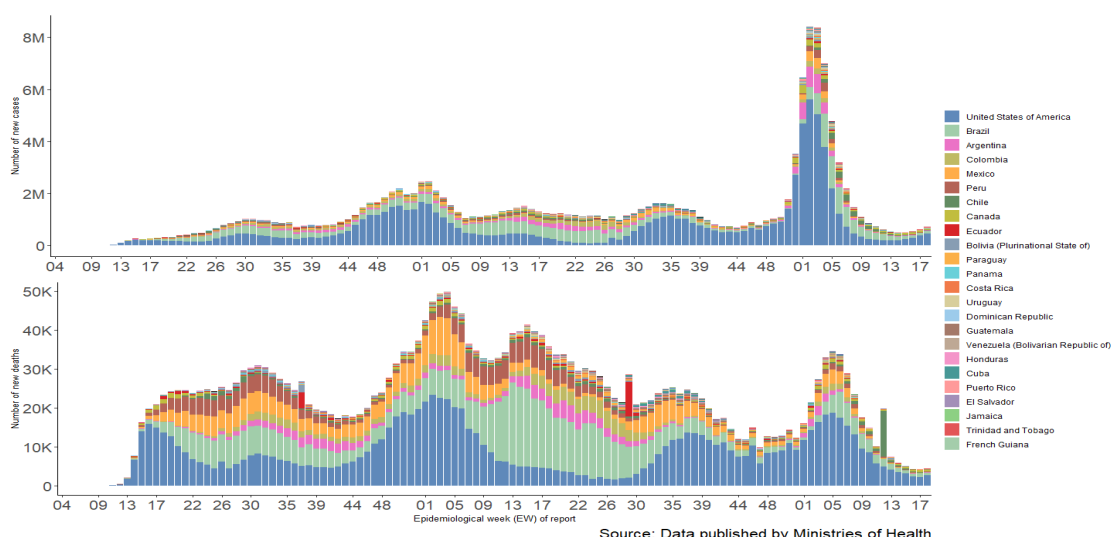
Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. As of EW 18, 2022.



Source: Data from WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

Region of the Americas - An overview

Figure 2: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and country/territory. Region of the Americas. As of EW 18, 2022.



During EW 18, 719,811 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative increase of 13.9% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). This increase has been observed for the last four consecutive weeks. The subregion reporting the largest percent increase was observed in Central America (17,699 cases, 26.2% increase) (**Table 1**). During EW 18, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported by United States of America (451,414 new cases, 18.9% increase), Brazil (110,866 new cases, 17.5% increase), Canada (41,069 new cases, 24.7% decrease).

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 17 and EW 18 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 17	Deaths EW 17	Cases EW 18	Deaths EW 18	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	3,503,585	32,812	41,266	74	48,453	77	17.4%	4.1%
Central America	3,153,369	50,252	14,030	96	17,699	143	26.2%	49.0%
North America	90,560,241	1,356,950	437,551	2,737	495,770	3,161	13.3%	15.5%
South America	56,776,036	1,292,584	131,332	1,332	157,889	1,004	20.2%	-24.6%

For the same period, 4,385 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative increase of 3.4% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The subregion reporting the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in the last week was North America (3,161 deaths, 15% increase) (**Table 1**).

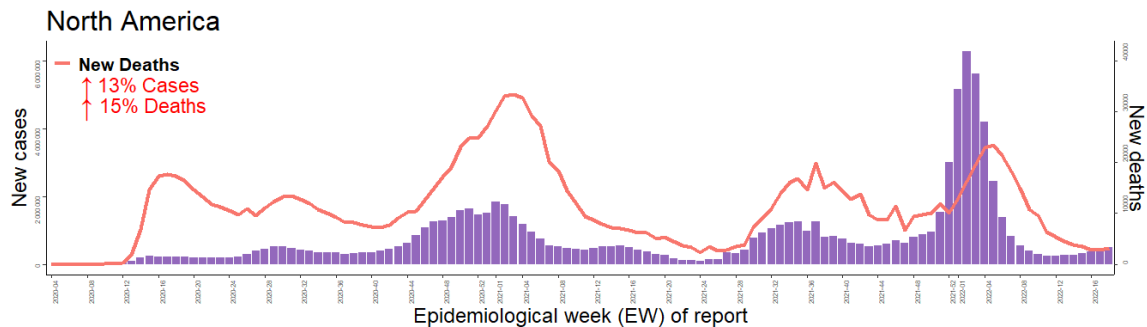
The countries and territories with the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were United States of America (2,652 new deaths, 19.1% increase), Brazil (681 new deaths, -20.2% decrease), and Canada (486 new deaths, 1.9% increase).

A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 18 by subregion is presented below.

North America

The overall trends for **COVID-19 cases** have been increasing in North America for the last six consecutive weeks as of EW 18 (**Figure 3**). This increase was primarily driven by the surge in cases in the United States of America (451,414 cases, 18.9% increase), which also observed the largest proportion of reported cases in the subregion. The remaining two countries reported a decline in cases - Canada (41,069 cases, -24.7 % decrease), and Mexico (3,287 cases, -4.1 % decrease).

Figure 3: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **North America.** Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 18, 2022.



Weekly COVID-19 deaths in North America increased by 15.5% during EW 18 relative to the previous week. Similar to the cases, the main contributor to the increase in deaths in the subregion is due to a large increase in the United States of America (2,652 new deaths, 19.1% increase). While Canada reported an increase in deaths for the last five consecutive weeks (486 new deaths, 1.9% increase), Mexico reported a 30.3% decrease in its weekly deaths (23 deaths) during EW 18.

Weekly data for COVID-19 hospitalizations and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) admissions are available for Canada and the United States of America. While Canada observed a decline in both weekly hospitalizations (6,822 hospitalizations, 1% decline) and ICU admissions (461 ICU admissions, 2.1% decline) during EW 18 relative to the previous week, the United States of America reported an increase in both COVID-19 hospitalizations (18,787 hospitalizations, 8% increase) and ICU admissions (2,148 ICU admissions, 7.9% increase).

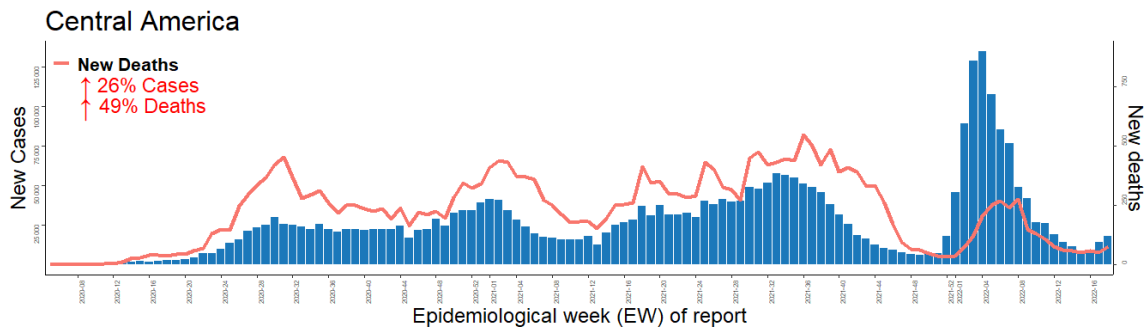
Important increases in severity trends for the subregion for EW 18 were observed in the United States of America, where observed a 19.1% increase in deaths as well as an increase in hospitalizations (8%) and ICU admissions (7.9%). According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the percent positivity for SARS-CoV-2 in the United States of America has been increasing – with a 7.4% average percent positivity between April 22 to 28, 2022 – which is 1.62%-point increase compared to the previous week, along with an 22.3% increase of 7-day average number of tests reported from the previous 7 days ¹.

¹ United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review - Testing. Interpretive Summary. Accessed 10 May 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3s2MKi3>

Central America

In Central America, **the overall COVID-19 incidence** for the sub-region has been on an rising trend for the last three weeks with 17,699 new cases reported during EW 18 – a 26.2% increase compared to the previous week (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Central America. Region of the Americas.** EW 6, 2020 - EW 18, 2022.



Out of the seven countries and territories in the subregion, five countries reported an increase in **weekly new COVID-19 cases**. While Guatemala is the only country reporting a decline in the subregion (2,939 cases, -35.1% decrease), the biggest relative increase was observed in Panama (8,696 new cases, 94% increase), followed by Belize (121 cases, 68.1% increase) and Costa Rica (5216 new cases, 21.6% increase) during EW 18 compared to the previous week.

During EW 18, **weekly deaths** increased by approximately 49.0% relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**). The major contributor to this increase in deaths was Guatemala, where reported over 81% of the new deaths in the subregion during EW 18. Three countries/territories reported an increase – Panama (7deaths, 250% increase), Honduras (2deaths, 100% increase), and Guatemala (117 deaths, 67.1% increase). The remaining four countries either did not report any change in deaths (Belize and Nicaragua) or had a decrease in deaths - Costa Rica (16 deaths, 27.3% decrease) and El Salvador (0 death, -100% decrease). Please note that data for El Salvador is preliminary and subject to change.

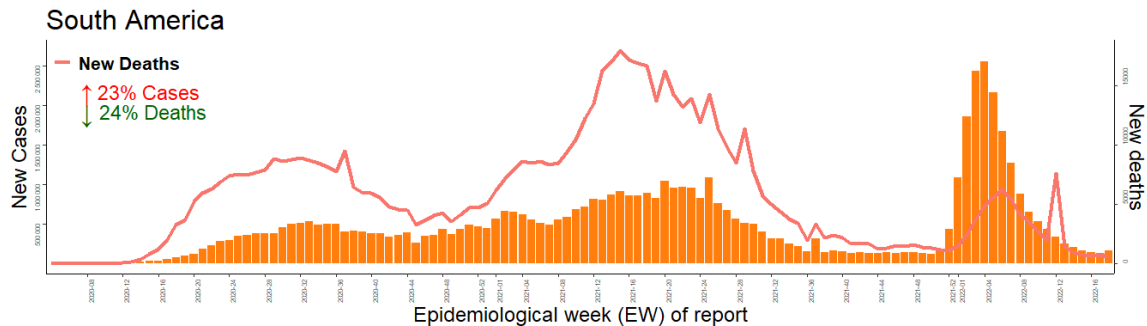
Among four countries and territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations and weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions**, while Panama observed a sharp increase in hospitalizations (136 hospitalizations, 43.2% increase), the remaining three countries/territories saw a decline (range: -36.7%- -9.2% decrease). Similarly, in terms of **weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions**, Panama reported 60% increase in weekly ICU admissions (16 ICU admissions) relative to EW 17, while the remaining three countries either remained the same (Belize and Costa Rica) or reported no ICU admission (Honduras) in EW 18.

Important increases in severity trends for the subregion was continued to be observed in Panama where there was an increase in weekly deaths (7deaths, 250% increase) as well as in hospitalizations (136 hospitalizations; 43.2% increase & 16 ICU admissions; 60% increase).

South America

In South America, a total of 157,889 new COVID-19 cases were reported during EW 18 – a 20.2% increase compared to the previous week (**Figure 5**), which is the first time increase since the beginning of January 2022.

Figure 5: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **South America. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 18, 2022.**



Out of the 10 countries and territories the sub-region, six experienced an increase in weekly COVID-19 cases during EW 18 (range: 17.5% - 63.8% increase). Although the largest proportion of reported cases was reported by Brazil (110,866 new cases, 17.5% increase), the highest relative increases were observed in followed by Argentina (17,646 new cases, 54.2% increase), Uruguay (2,817 cases, 51.8% increase), and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (320 cases, 47.5% increase). The countries of Peru, Colombia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, and Paraguay reported a decline in cases (range: -37.5 - -4%).

During EW 18, a total of 1,004 COVID-19 deaths was reported in South America – a -24.6% decrease compared to the previous week. Most countries reported a decline in new deaths in EW 18 (range: -100% - -20.2% decrease) to the exception of Bolivia (the Plurinational State of) and Peru where had a 278% (15 deaths) and 19.8% increase (103 deaths) in deaths, respectively. The largest decline in deaths were reported by Paraguay (2 new deaths, -97.3% decrease), followed by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (1 new deaths, -66.7% decrease), and Ecuador (5 new deaths, -61.5% decrease). However, the decrease in deaths for Paraguay is due to the 72 historical deaths that were included in the total deaths of 75 in EW 17, resulting in a data artifact in weekly change in deaths in EW 18.

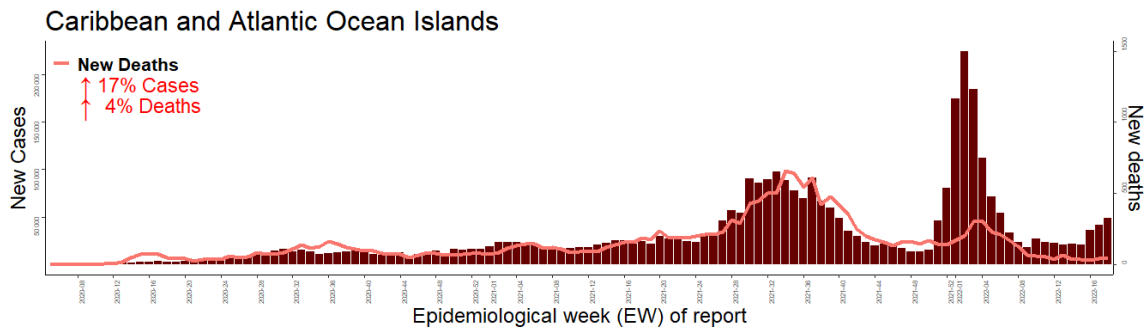
Among five countries and territories with available data for **COVID-19 hospitalizations**, all countries/territories continued to report a decline in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (range: -73% - 7.2%). Similarly, all six countries/territories with available data **COVID-19 ICU admissions** observed a decline in their ICU admissions (range: -42.6% - -0.6% decrease).

Important increases in severity trends for the subregion in EW 18 was continued to be observed in Bolivia (the Plurinational State of) where a 275% increase in deaths (15 deaths) despite the declined cases (472 cases, -29.7% decrease) compared to the previous week.

Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands sub-region, **weekly cases have been increasing** for the last four consecutive weeks by 17.4%, while weekly deaths have slightly decreased by 4.1% compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in 19 out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 6.7% - 1900% increase), while 15 countries and territories observed either a decline (n=14) (range: -100% - -11.1%) or remained the same (n=1) during EW 18.

Figure 6: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands.** Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 18, 2022.



In the same period, there was a slight increase (77 new deaths, 4.1% increase) in the **overall weekly deaths** in the subregion compared to the previous week. Five countries/territories in the subregion observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths in EW 18 (range: 41.2% - 175% increase). The remaining countries/territories in the subregion reported a decline (range: -100 – -47.6% decrease) or remained the same (Antigua and Barbuda).

Among the countries and territories with available data, eight countries and territories out of 21 reported an increase in their **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations** (range: 4.9% - 100% increase), eight reported a decline (range: -100% - -10.2%), and five remained the same. In terms of COVID-19 ICU admissions, three countries/territories among 13 with data available reported an increase – Guyana (1 ICU admission, 100% increase), Saint Lucia (1 ICU admission, 100% increase) and Puerto Rico (26 ICU admissions, 30% increase).

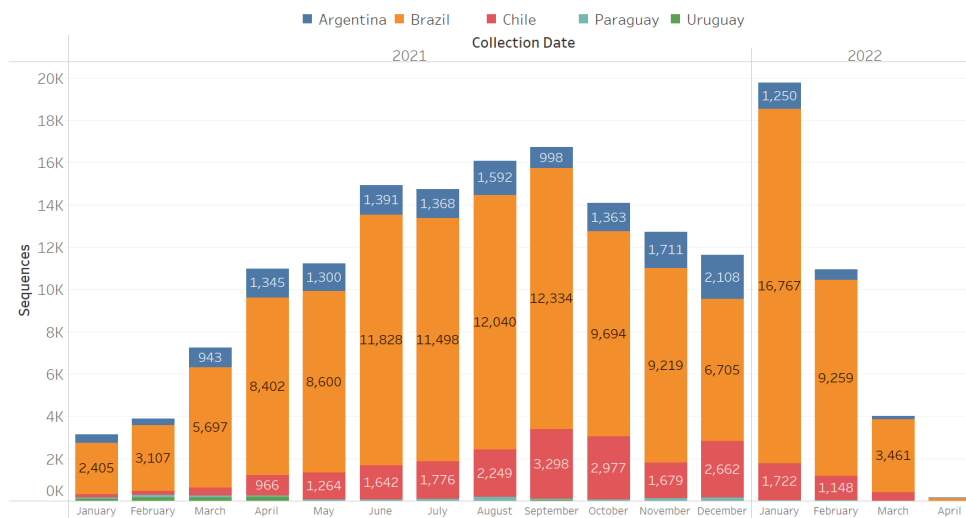
During EW18, **significant increases in new cases this week for the subregion** were observed in Saint Kitts and Nevis (20 cases, 1900% increase), Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (211 cases, 627.6% increase), Montserrat (236 cases, 505.1% increase), United States Virgin Island (818 cases, 217.1% increase), Dominica (332 cases, 159.4% increase), and Grenada (740 cases, 134.9% increase).

Significant increases in severity trends continued to be observed in Puerto Rico where observed an increase in deaths and hospitalizations (24 deaths; 41.2% increase, 292 hospitalizations; 26.4% increase, 26 ICU admissions; 30% increase). Increases in severity trends were also observed in Barbados where had a 175% increase in weekly deaths (11 deaths), Trinidad and Tobago where there was a 61.5% increase in deaths (21 deaths), and United States Virgin Island where had a 62.5% increase in hospitalizations (13 hospitalizations) and a 100% increase in deaths (2 deaths).

Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Southern Cone

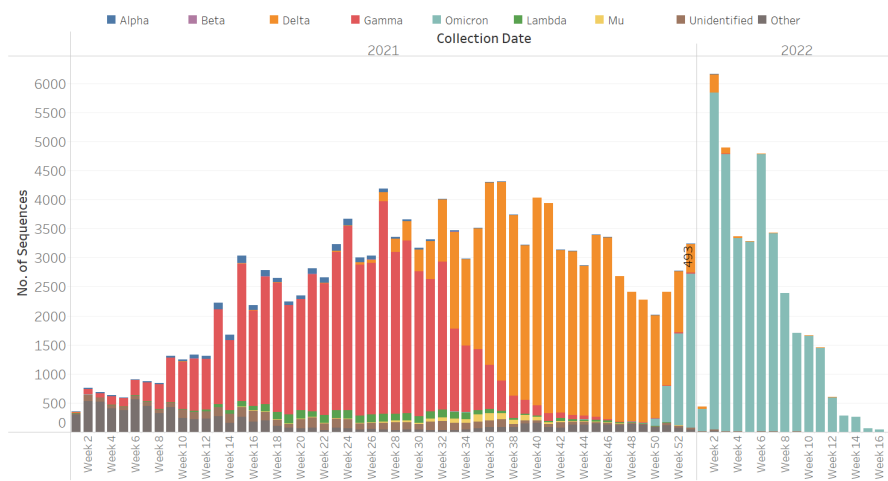
During the last 16 months (January 2021 through April 2022), 172,232 whole genome sequences from the Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems (**Figure 8**). The “previously circulating” VOCs (**Alpha** - last detected 3 October 2021; **Beta** - last detected 15 October 2021; **Gamma** - last detected 23 December 2021) and the “currently circulating” VOCs (**Delta** - last detected 26 March 2022; and **Omicron**) have been detected in the subregion, in addition to “previously circulating” VOIs (**Lambda** - last detected 12 January 2022 and **Mu** - last detected 17 December 2021) and other lineages/variants (**Figure 9**).

Figure 8. Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Southern Cone (January 2021-April 2022)



Source: GISAID

Figure 9. Variants detected and reported by the Countries in the Southern Cone (January 2021-April 2022)

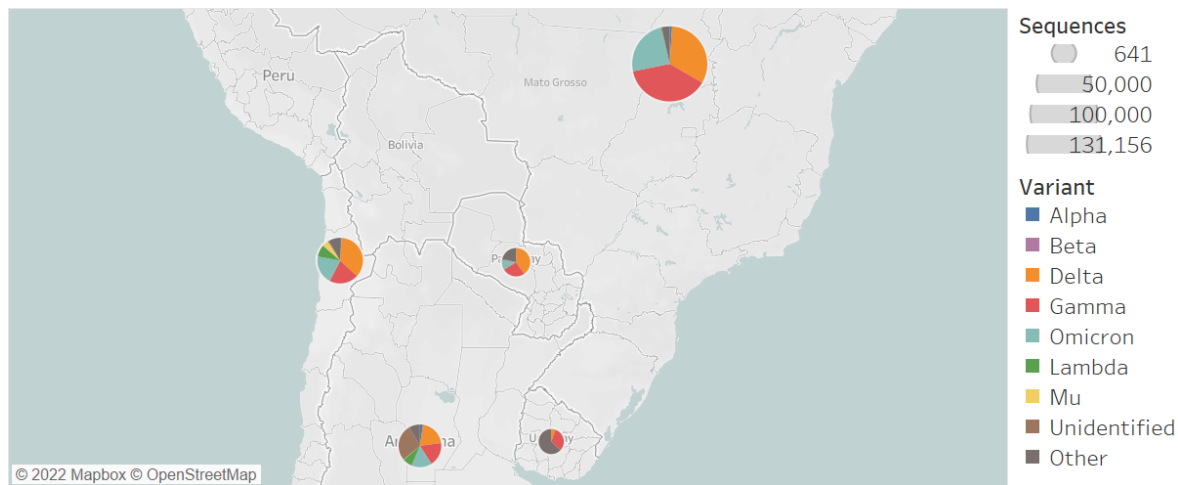


Source: GISAID

Country-specific data is available at: https://ais.paho.org/hip/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp

In the Southern Cone subregion, Delta VOC was first detected by Peru in May 2021, and rapidly expanded to become predominant by mid-July in all countries (Figure 10). VOC Omicron was first detected in the subregion on 22 November 2021 in Colombia. After replacing Delta, Omicron has been predominant in the subregion, being detected in 4,371 samples (99.82%) sequenced and reported to GISAID during the last 8 weeks of available data (27 February to 23 April). Since Omicron's first detection, BA.1 and BA.1 sublineages represent the majority (97.8%) of sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 2.3% of the sequences with 3 samples of BA.3 detected while BA.4 and BA.5 have not been detected. However, the proportion of sequences identified as BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages) has been decreasing for the past 8 weeks where data is available (27 February to 23 April) while BA.2 (and BA.2 sublineages) has been increasing during the same time period. In addition, four sequences of the XE recombinant (a BA.1 / BA.2 recombinant) have been detected in Brazil. Nevertheless, no additional impact on public health or further spread have been demonstrated.

Figure 10. Distribution of VOC and VOI identified by the Countries in the Southern Cone (January 2021-April 2022)



Country	Variant						
	Alpha	Beta	Delta	Gamma	Omicron	Lambda	Mu
Argentina	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Brazil	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Chile	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Paraguay	+		+	+	+		
Uruguay			+	+		+	

****Uruguay has also officially reported Alpha and Beta detection and circulation. Nevertheless, up to May 10, sequences were not yet available at GISAID.***

Source: GISAID



Annex1. COVID-19 Cumulative Incidence Rate per 100,000 populations by national/subnational level. The region of the Americas. As of EW 18, 2022.

