

Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

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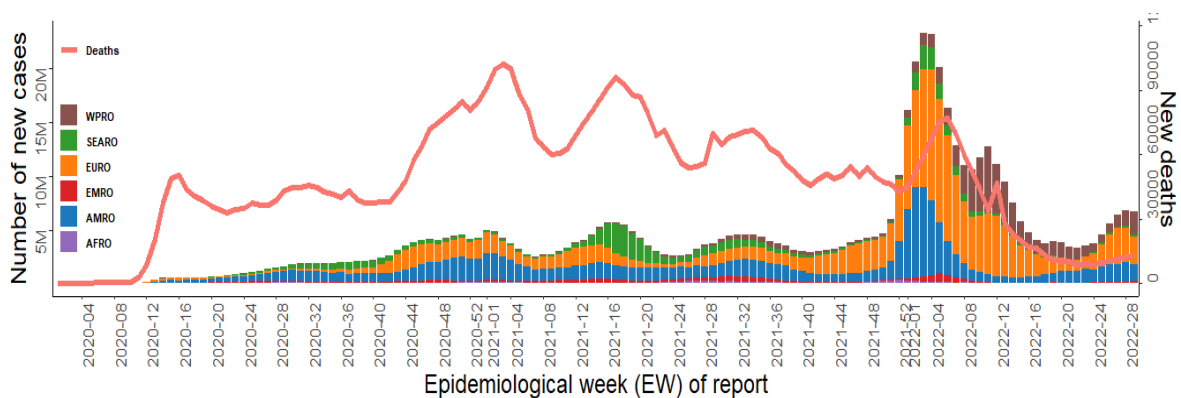
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- Executive summary including global overview
- Regional and sub-regional trends
- Immunisation
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Executive Summary

- **Since the onset of the pandemic** in 2020 and up to July 26, 2022, a cumulative total of 568,711,025 COVID-19 cases including 6,715,904 deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During epidemiological week (EW) 29 (July 17, 2022-July 23, 2022), weekly cases and deaths decreased in 3 regions while it increased in WPRO, SEARO, and EMRO. The largest variation in cases and deaths compared to the previous week was reported by WPRO – 52% increase in cases – and EMRO – 88% increase in deaths – respectively.
- **Globally**, approximately 6,715,904 new COVID-19 cases were reported in EW 29 – a 1.1% decrease compared to EW 28 (July 10, 2022-July 16, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 12,875 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a 1.4 % relative increase compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 1,633,813 cases and 5,780 deaths were reported in EW 29 – an 11.6% decrease in cases and 1.5% decrease in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, COVID-19 cases increased in one subregion – Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands – and decreased in the remaining three. Weekly deaths declined in the South American and the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregions while it increased in Central America and plateaued in North America.
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 159.7 cases per 100,000 population during EW 29 (180.7 the previous week). Between EW 29 and 28, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 11.4 deaths per 1 million population (10.8 the previous two weeks).
- Among 31 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 8 countries and territories (range: 5.2% - 58.2%) during EW 29 compared to the previous week. Among 25 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in 8 countries and territories (range: 2.9% - 250%).

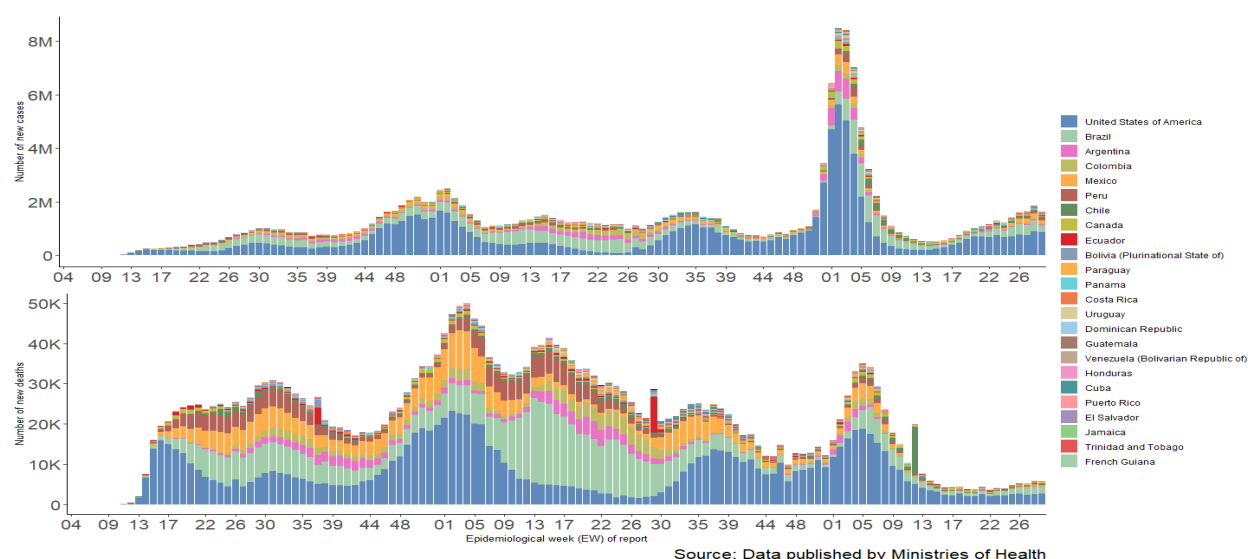
Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 - EW 29, 2022.



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. EW 3, 2020 - 29, 2022.



During EW 29, a total of 1,633,813 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of 11.6% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 cases during EW 29 was reported from the North American subregion (1,011,730 cases, 7% decrease compared to the previous week). (**Table 1**), and the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported by United States of America (860,097 new cases, 3% decrease), Brazil (255,610 new cases, 39% decrease), Mexico (119,613 new cases, 34.1% decrease).

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 28 and EW 29 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 28	Deaths EW 28	Cases EW 29	Deaths EW 29	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	4,009,557	34,101	34,492	100	36,709	88	6.4%	-12.0%
Central America	3,687,870	52,077	68,799	163	55,510	181	-19.3%	11.0%
North America	99,866,922	1,389,047	1,094,960	3,166	1,011,730	3,210	-7.6%	1.4%
South America	61,540,826	1,310,337	650,453	2,440	529,864	2,301	-18.5%	-5.7%

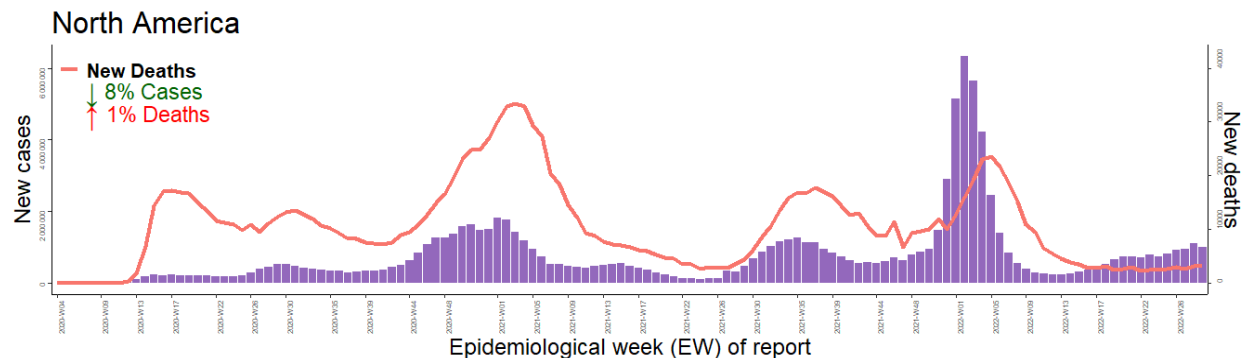
For the same period, 5,780 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of 1.5% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 deaths in the last week was reported from the North American subregion as well (3,210 deaths, 1% increase) (**Table 1**). At the national level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were reported from United States of America (2,637 deaths, 2.9% increase), Brazil (1,396 deaths, 20.3% decrease), and Mexico (376 deaths, 13% decrease).

A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 29 by subregion is presented below.

North America

After four consecutive weeks of increasing trends, **COVID-19 cases** declined during EW 29 in the North American subregion by nearly 8% compared to the previous week. The largest decline was reported by Mexico (119,613 cases, 34% decrease), followed by the United States of America (860,097 cases, 3 % decrease). **Figure 3**

Figure 3: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). North America. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 29, 2022.



In Canada, a total of 32,020 new weekly cases were reported during EW 29, representing a 20% increase relative to EW 28. During the same period, **weekly COVID-19 deaths** increased by 1.4% in the North American subregion with the largest proportion of weekly deaths being reported by United States of America (2,637 new deaths, 2.9% increase), followed by Mexico (376 new deaths, 13% decrease), and Canada (197 new deaths, 14.5% increase).

Among two countries with data available for **COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions**, Canada continued to observe increases in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (5,341 hospitalizations; 16.5% increase) and ICU admissions (276 ICU admissions; 10% increase) for the fourth consecutive week since EW 26. Both severity trends had been previously declining in Canada since EW 18 and up to EW 25. On the other hand, COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions have been steadily rising in the United States since EW 17 with a steeper increase observed in the last two weeks. During EW 29, a total of 43,272 COVID-19 hospitalizations including 4,863 ICU admissions were reported in the United States representing an increase of 5.2% and 6.9% respectively compared to the previous week.

After observing an increase in COVID-19 deaths for the past four weeks, Mexico reported 376 deaths during EW 29 – a 13% decline compared to the previous week. However, the weekly death toll is still elevated relative to the trends observed in the past three months. The national COVID-19 hospital occupancy of Mexico increased from 4% on mid-June 2022 to 18% on 25 July 2022.¹ In Mexico, the proportion of Omicron VOC – BA.4 and BA.5 lineages made up 8.9% and 41% of the weekly sequenced samples respectively as of EW 26.

In the United States of America, the proportion of Omicron variant of concern (VOC) lineages BA.4 and BA.5 was estimated to make up about 95% of the total weekly sequenced samples during EW 29 – 13% and 82% of the total variant proportion respectively.²

Similarly in Canada, the proportion of BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants of Omicron have been increasing for the past seven weeks, making up about 14% and 60.5% of the weekly sequenced samples respectively.³

¹ Secretaría de Salud de México. COVID-19 Technical Statement. 25 July 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3BI5PKw>

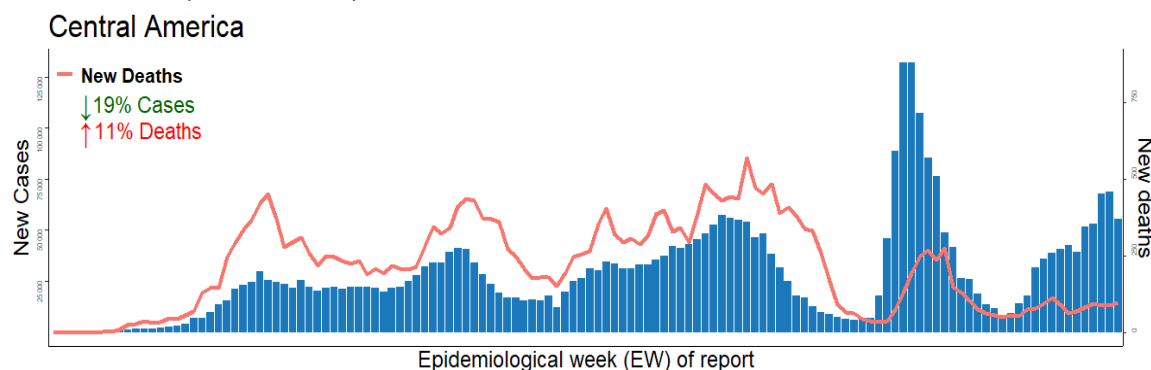
² The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Variant Proportions. Accessed 26 July 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Obz8cT>

³ Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). COVID-19 Epidemiological Update. Accessed 26 July 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3bbFRFr>

Central America

In Central America, the overall COVID-19 incidence for the sub-region is on a downward trend with 55,510 new cases reported during EW 29 – a 19% decrease 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 29, 2022.



During EW 29, two countries/territories in the subregion reported an increase in weekly cases – Costa Rica (19,038 new cases, 10.6% increase) and Honduras (2,657 new cases, 16% increase) – one did not report any substantial changes (El Salvador, 0%), and the remaining four reported a decrease (range: -13.3% to -40.1%). The largest relative decline in weekly cases was reported by Belize (627 new cases, 40.1% decrease), followed by Panama (6,390 new cases, 35.9% decrease), and Guatemala (26,772 new cases, 30% decrease). **Table 2**

Table 2: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 28 and EW 29 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Country	New Cases EW 29	New Deaths EW 29	% Variation Cases	% Variation Deaths
Belize	627	0	-40.1	
Panama	6,390	17	-35.9	54.5
Guatemala	26,772	99	-30.0	-4.8
Nicaragua	26	0	-13.3	-100.0
Costa Rica	19,038	37	10.6	27.6
Honduras	2,657	11	16.0	57.1
El Salvador	0	17		54.5

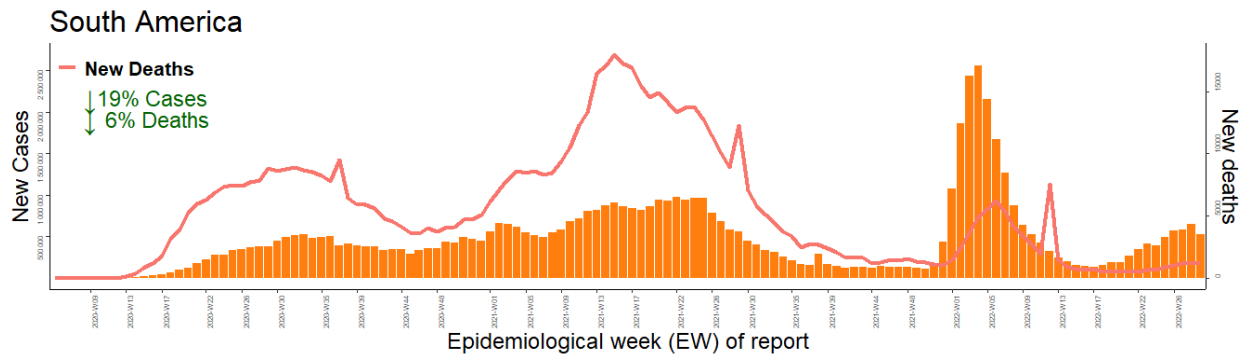
For the same period, weekly deaths increased by 11% relative to the previous week (Figure 4) with four out of the seven countries and territories reporting an increase – Honduras (11 new deaths, 57.1% increase), Panama (17 new deaths, 54.5% increase), El Salvador (17 new deaths, 54.5% increase), and Costa Rica (37 new deaths, 27.6% increase). Weekly deaths declined in Guatemala (99 new deaths, 4.8% decrease) and Nicaragua (0 new deaths, 100% decrease) while Belize enters the third week with no reported COVID-19 death since EW 26.

There were no substantial changes in the weekly number of COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions this past week among those with available data. To date, the Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from four and three out of seven countries/territories in the subregion – Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador (BA.4 only) and Guatemala.

South America

In South America, COVID-19 cases declined for the first time after five consecutive weeks of increasing trends. A total of 529,864 new COVID-19 cases were reported during EW 29 – an 18.5% decrease compared to the previous week (**Figure 5**). However, overall trends for COVID-19 incidence have been increasing in the subregion since late April 2022 with the most recent weekly case burdens reaching levels last observed at the end of February 2022.

Figure 5: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). South America. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 29, 2022.



Out of the 10 countries in the subregion, five reported a decrease in cases during EW 29 (range: -2.1% to -39%) with the largest decreases being reported by Brazil (255,610 new cases, 39% decrease), Paraguay (12,240 new cases, 18.4% decrease), and Uruguay (1,995 new cases, 18.2% decrease). Cases increased in the remaining five countries (range: 5.2% to 186.2%) with the largest relative increase observed in Bolivia (40,986 new cases, 186% increase), Venezuela (2,579 new cases, 61.7% increase) and Ecuador (16,372 new cases, 40.7% increase).

For the same period, a total of 2,301 COVID-19 deaths was reported in the South American subregion – a 5.7% decrease compared to the previous week. Similar to the previous week, COVID-19 deaths increased in eight out of the ten countries (range: 4.8% to 177%) relative to the previous week with only Brazil (1,396 new deaths, 20.3% decrease) and Ecuador (17 new deaths, 15% decrease) reporting a decrease. The largest proportion of reported deaths during EW 29 were reported by Brazil (1,396 new deaths, 20.3% decrease), followed by Chile (264 new deaths, 4.8% increase), and Colombia (238 new deaths, 46% increase).

Among the five countries in South America with available data for COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations, two reported an increase in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations – Venezuela (852 hospitalizations, 30.7% increase) and Peru (1,220 hospitalizations, 10.8% increase) – and the remaining three did not report any substantial difference compared to the previous week. Among the seven countries with available data for COVID-19 ICU admissions in this subregion, one reported an increase – Colombia (418 ICU admissions, 10.6% increase) – four reported a decrease (range: -5.5% to -100%), and the remaining two did not report any substantial change compared to the previous week.

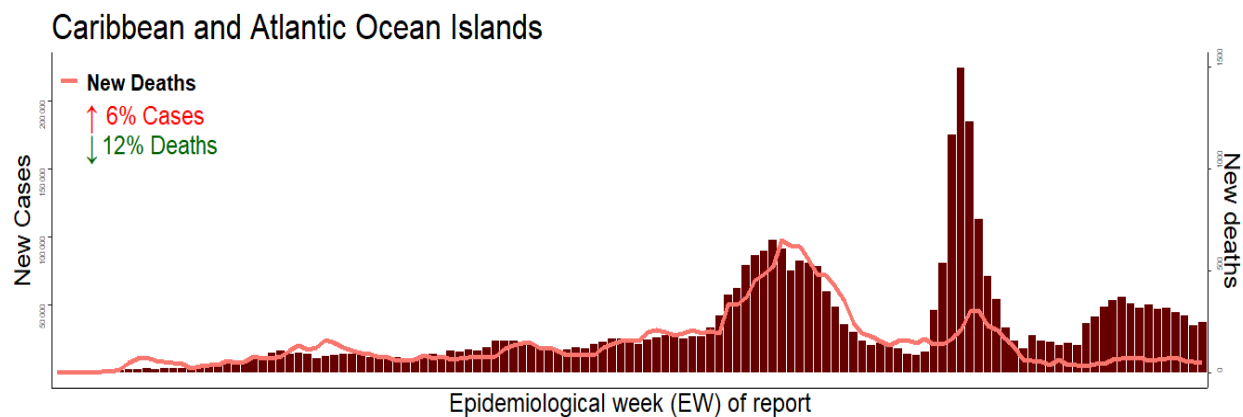
Severity trends continue to increase in Peru with sustained increases in weekly COVID-19 cases (29% increase), hospitalizations (10.8% increase), and deaths (57.3% increase) being reported during EW 29 relative to the previous week. Important increases in severity trends were also observed in Bolivia where incidence has been increasing since EW 21 and more than 40,000 cases were reported during EW 29 – 186% relative increase – the highest weekly number reported since the peak in EW 3, 2022. In addition, deaths also increased by more than 176% (36 new deaths) during EW 29 in Bolivia – the highest weekly toll since EW 12 of 2022.

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from at least eight out of the 10 countries in the subregion – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

After four consecutive weeks of declining trends in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands sub-region, weekly cases increased slightly during EW 29 – by 6.4% – compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in 13 out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 3.4% - 250%) while it declined in the remaining 20 countries and territories (range: -100% - -4.4%).

Figure 6: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands. Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 29, 2022.



For the same period, COVID-19 deaths declined for the fourth consecutive week during EW 29 in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion by 12% relative to the previous week. Out of 33 countries and territories with reported COVID-19 deaths, five observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths (range: 20% - 400% increase), nine reported decreasing trends (range: -8.2% to -100%), two did not observe any significant changes (0%), and the remaining 20 countries and territories did not report any COVID-19 deaths in the past two weeks. The largest relative increase in deaths during EW 29 were reported by Barbados (5 new deaths, 400% increase) and Guadeloupe (5 new deaths, 150% increase) while the highest proportion of new weekly deaths were reported by Puerto Rico (45 new deaths, 8.2% decrease) and Jamaica (11 new deaths, 26.7% decrease).

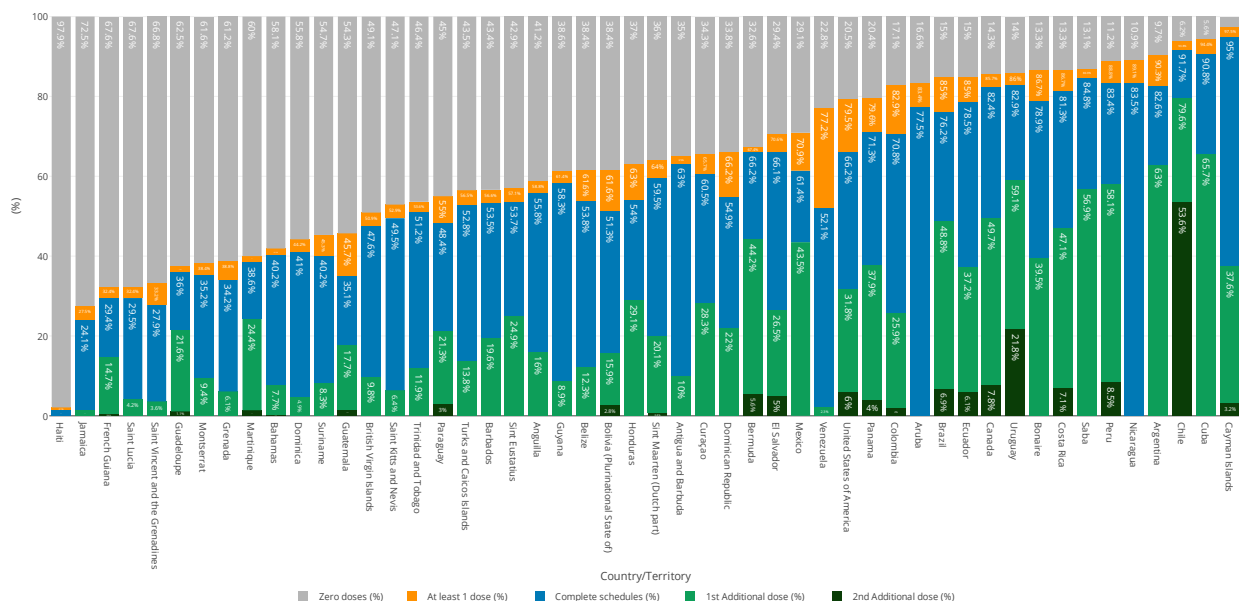
Among the countries and territories with available data, 4 countries and territories each out of 35 reported an increase in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (range: 7.4% to 58.2%) and ICU admissions (range: 12.5% to 250%). The largest relative increase in weekly hospitalizations (424 new hospitalizations, 58.2% increase) and ICU admissions (7 new admissions, 250% increase) were both observed in Cuba during EW 29, continuing with their increasing trends in some of the severity indicators for the sixth consecutive week. Fortunately, there has been no COVID-19 deaths reported in Cuba since early May 2022. Lastly, significant relative increases in weekly ICU admissions this week were also observed in Trinidad and Tobago (6 new admissions, 50% increase) and the French overseas territory of Martinique (12 new admissions, 33.3% increase).

Significant increases in weekly cases in the subregion during EW 29 was observed in Dominica (7 new cases, 250% increase), Montserrat (133 new cases, 129% increase), Bonaire (133 new cases, 100% increase), and Anguilla (39 new cases, 95% increase).

To date, the Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from eight and 13 out of 34 countries/territories in the subregion, respectively, including the territories of France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. However, these trends should be interpreted with caution due to presence in differences in sequencing capacity and sampling strategies between countries/territories.

Immunization

Figure 7: COVID-19 vaccination coverage by vaccine schedule and country/territory. Region of the Americas. As of EW 29, 2022.



According to the latest COVID-19 vaccination data from the region of the Americas, 19 countries/territories have vaccinated more than a quarter of their population* with a 1st additional/booster dose and nine countries/territories still report more than 60% of their population with zero doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. All of these are countries or territories of the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion. Lastly, vaccination dropout rates are still significant in several countries and territories in the region with five of them reporting a drop-out rate of 10% or more between 1st and 2nd dose. Targeting those individuals who report an incomplete primary series can significantly increase coverage rates throughout the region.

* Based on the United Nations (UN) Population Prospects for 2021 and projections from the United States (US) Census Bureau for countries with 100,000 or fewer inhabitants

Genomic Surveillance

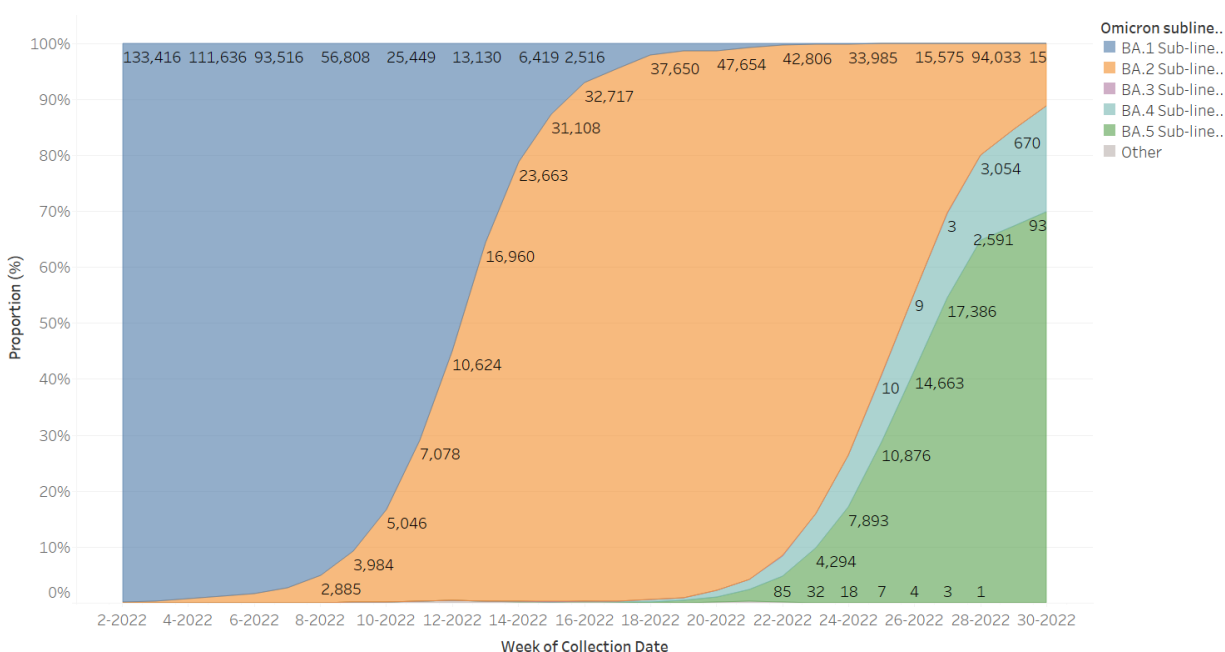
Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 395,597 full genome sequences of SARS-CoV-2 from Latin America and the Caribbean have been uploaded to the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) platform up to 26 July 2022.

After the introduction of the Omicron VOC in the Americas at the end of 2021, it has rapidly increased in prevalence and has been officially reported by 54 countries or territories. Omicron is now predominant in all PAHO countries, and few other lineages are currently detected in the Region. Omicron comprises the BA.1 to BA.5 sublineages, which are also subdivided into additional sublineages. The cumulative proportion of sequences collected in the Americas from November 2021 to date are: 62.63% of BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages), 31.2% of BA.2 (and sublineages), 0.01% of BA.3 (and sublineages), 1.72% of BA.4 (and BA.4 sublineages), and 4.52% BA.5 (and BA.5 sublineages). Although BA.1 accounts for the majority of cumulative sequences, BA.2 became predominant in all subregions between weeks 12 and 15 of 2022, and few BA.1 sequences have been identified since week 22 (**Figure 8**). At the same time, the proportion of BA.4 and in

particular BA.5 have been increasing throughout the Region. Notably, in the past four weeks, the BA.4 and BA.5 combined represent 67.2%, 71.7%, 30.3%, and 61.3% of the characterized samples in North America, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, respectively.

On the other hand, sporadic cases of the new BA.2.75 sublineages (first detected in India in May 2022) have been identified in the Region: 25 cases in Canada, 24 in the USA, one in Martinique and one in Peru. Although the mutation profile of BA.2.75 is associated with increased capacity to evade immune response and transmission (as most of the sublineages of the Omicron VOC), no significant changes have been demonstrated regarding severity or virulence.

Figure 8: Distribution of VOC Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Region of the Americas (January-July 2022)

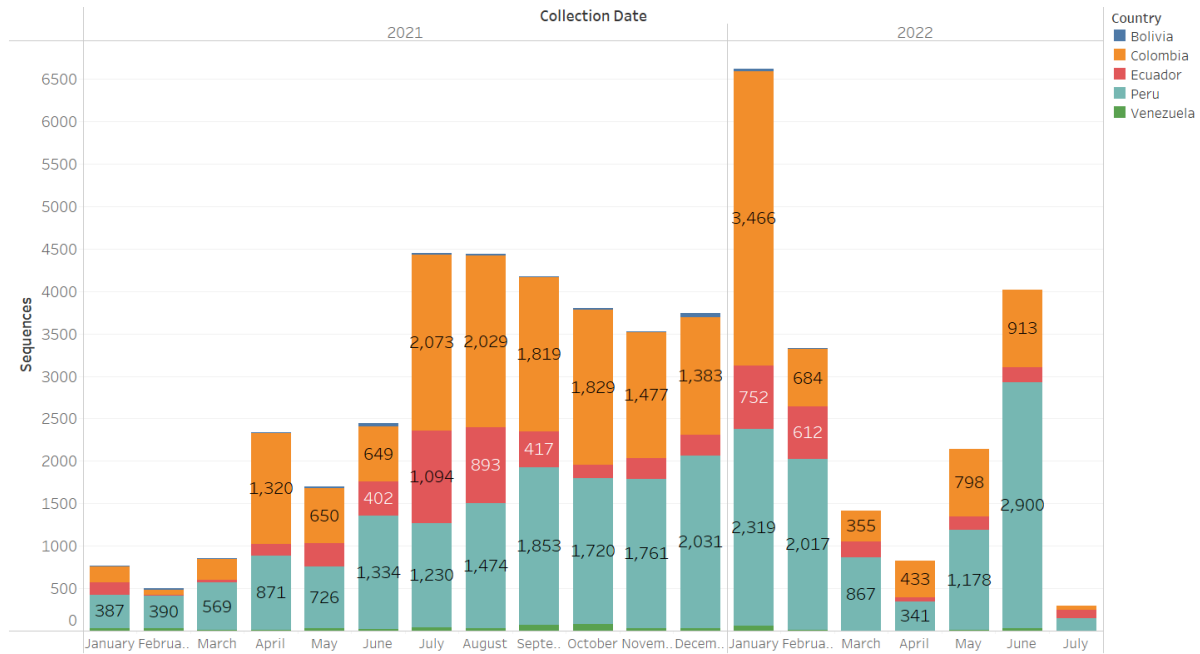


Source: GISAID

Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Andean subregion

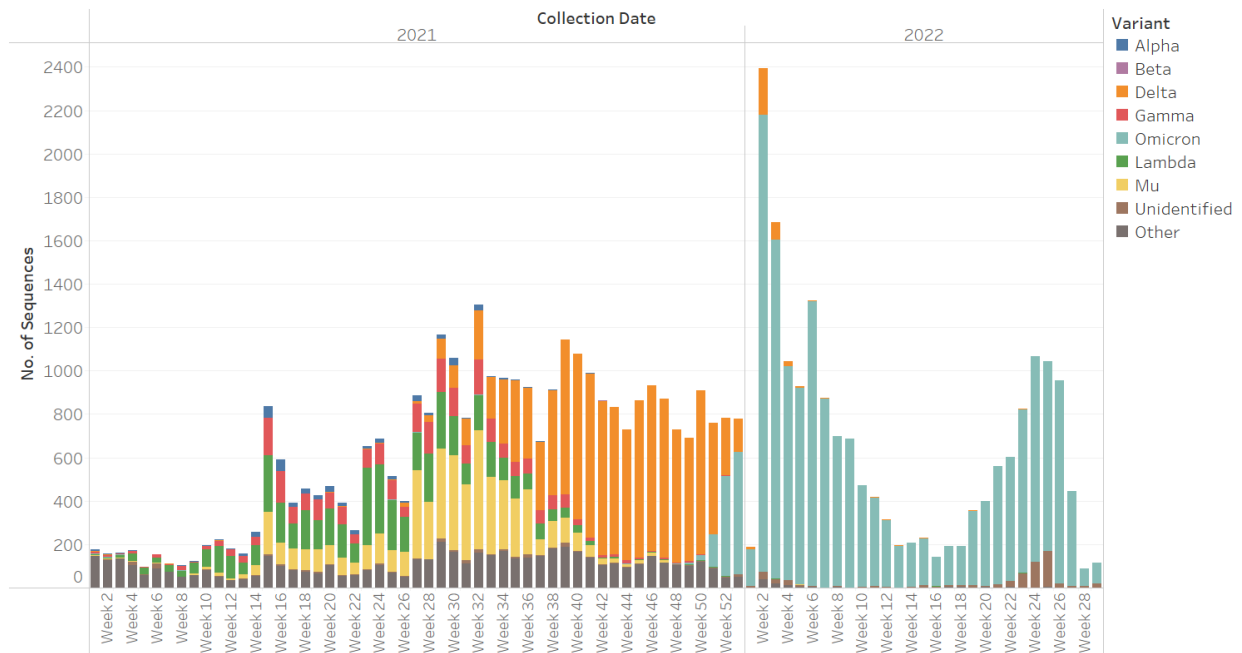
During the last 19 months (January 2021 to 25 July 2022), 51,357 whole genome sequences from Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela) have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems (**Figure 9**). As in other subregions, Omicron is vastly predominant with no other “previously circulating” VOC/VOI detected in the past 13 weeks (**Figure 10**). Since Omicron’s first detection, BA.1 and BA.1 sublineages represent the majority (64.75%) of cumulative sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 27.01% of the cumulative sequences, and BA.3, BA.4, and BA.5 (with their respective sublineages) represent 0.11%, 3.4%, and 4.73% of cumulative sequences, respectively (**Figure 12**). However, BA.1 was progressively replaced by BA.2 in weeks 10 to 19, and the proportion of BA.4 and BA.5 have been increasing since week 19 (**Figure 12**). When focusing on the past four weeks (29 June to 20 July), BA.5 is the predominant sublineage (50%) while BA.4 and BA.2 account for 34.69% and 15.31% of the sequences, respectively. It is important to note that the majority of sequences (76.7%) for the 4-week period was contributed by Peru. **It is important that all countries at PAHO region continue the collection of representative samples for sequencing and to maintain COVID-19 appropriate genomic surveillance.**

Figure 9. Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Andean subregion (January 2021-July 2022)



Source: GISAID

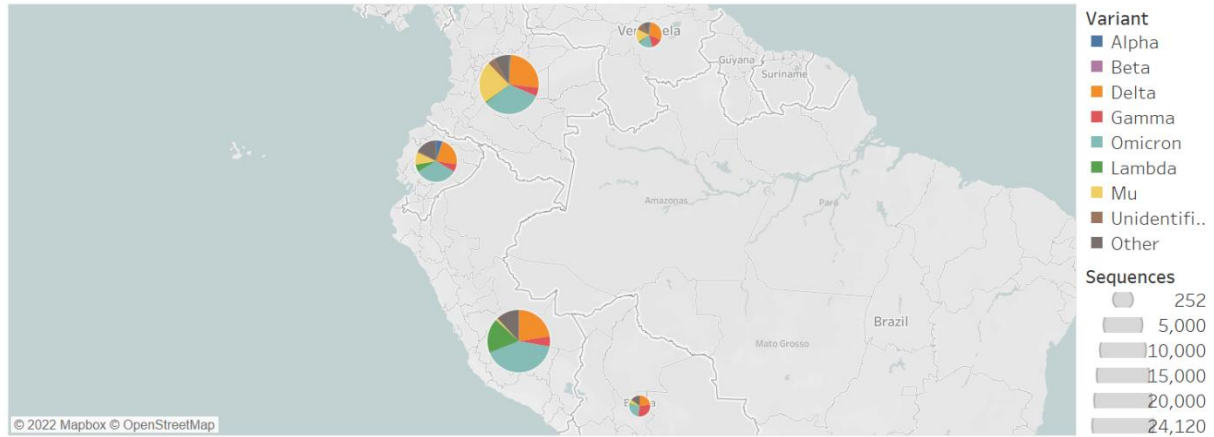
Figure 10. Variants detected and reported by countries in the Andean subregion (January 2021-July 2022)



Source: GISAID

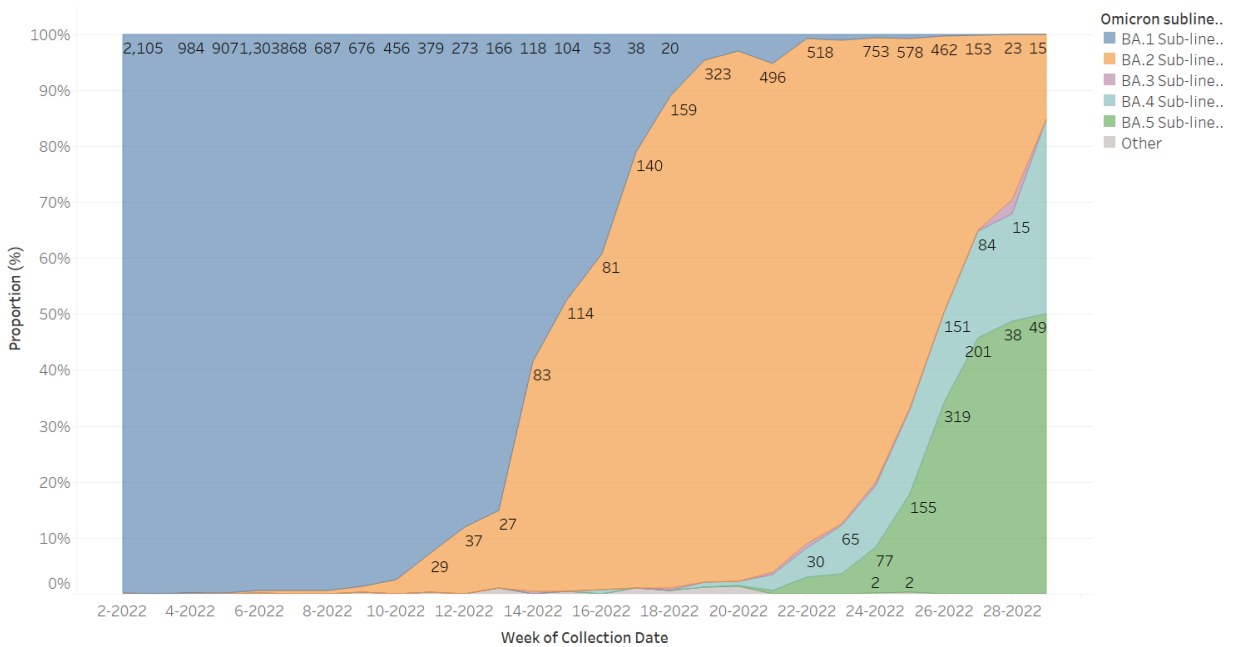
Country-specific data is available at: https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp

Figure 11. Distribution of VOC and VOI identified by countries in the Andean subregion (January 2021- July 2022)



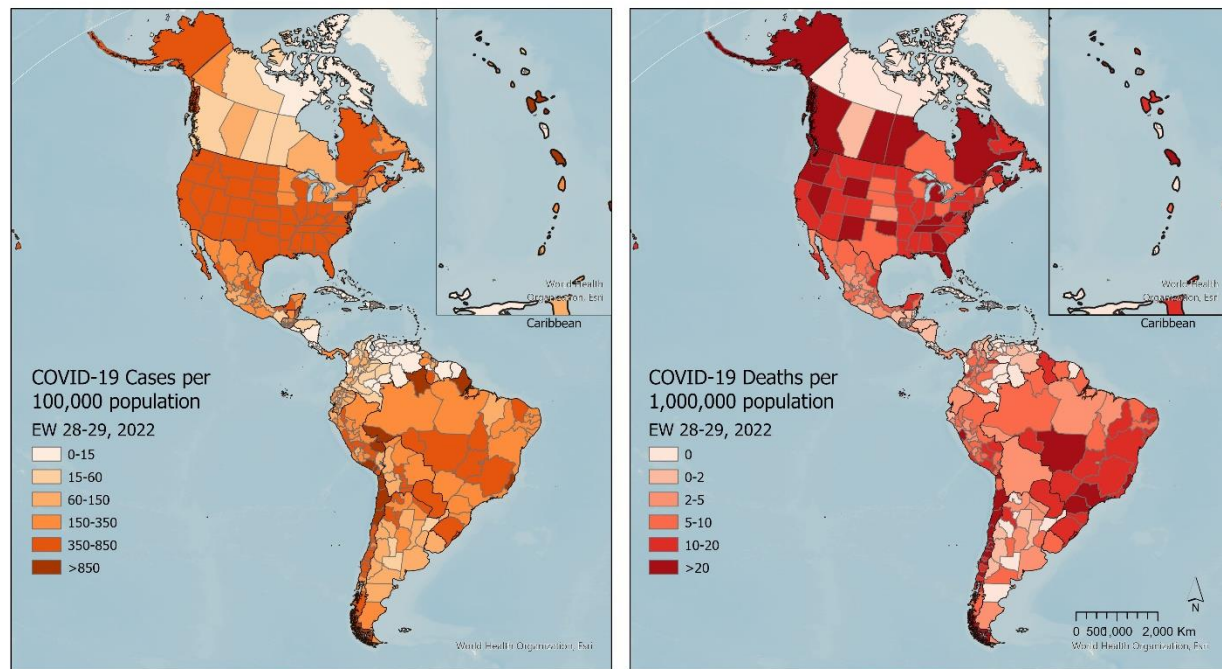
Source: GISAID

Figure 12. Distribution of VOC Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Andean subregion (January-July 2022)



Source: GISAID

Annex 1. COVID-19 incidence rate per 100,000 population and COVID-19 mortality rate from per 1 million population. Region of the Americas. Between EW 28 and 29, 2022.



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 The designations employed and the presentation of the material in these maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the Pan American Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted and dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

The maps represent the COVID-19 incidence rate per 100,000 population and the mortality rate from COVID-19 per 1 million population in the Region of the Americas reported in EW 28 and 29, 2022. At the regional level, overall incidence was relatively stable compared to the previous two weeks while a slight increase in mortality rates was observed during that period.

At the sub regional level, while most regions report a slight decline in incidence compared to the previous two weeks, an increase was observed in North America, especially in Canada and the United States. Higher rates were observed in the provinces of Quebec, Alberta, and Saskatchewan and in midwestern and northeastern states including Minnesota, Indiana, and Vermont. In South America and the Caribbean, while overall decreases were noted at the subregional level, at the national level, relatively high increases (>40% increase) were observed in Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, Cuba, Anguilla, Montserrat, Sint Maarten, and Bonaire.

Regarding mortality, both North and South America reported a slight increase in number of new deaths compared to the previous 2 weeks. Countries reporting highest increases in each of the subregions were: Canada, Argentina, Venezuela, and Bolivia. In Canada, increases were observed in the provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Quebec (all reporting > 20 deaths per million population). In Argentina, the increases were observed in provinces throughout the country, most of them now reporting more than 2 deaths per million population. Highest mortality rates (>20 deaths per million people in South America were reported in Chile, Brazil, and Peru). In the Caribbean region, while overall a decline in number of new deaths was observed compared to the previous two weeks, a few countries reported relative increases including Guadeloupe, Bermuda, Curacao, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis as well as Puerto Rico.