

Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

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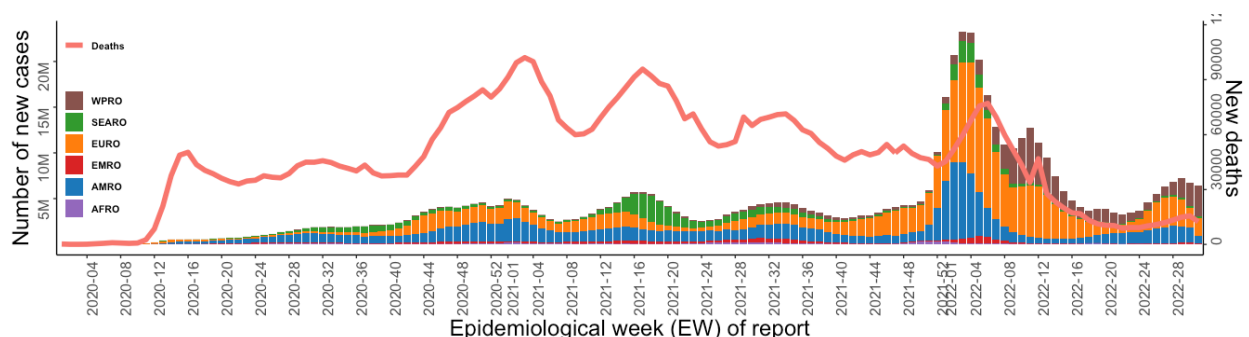
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- Executive summary including global overview
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Executive Summary

- **Since the onset of the pandemic** in 2020 and up to August 09, 2022, a cumulative total of approximately 528 million COVID-19 cases including about 6.4 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During epidemiological week (EW) 31, cases decreased in all WHO regions (range: -45.7 - -3%) except for the region of Western Pacific (28.8% increase). COVID-19 deaths decreased in four regions while they increased in EMRO (19%) and WPRO (4.1%).
- **Globally**, approximately 6,978,083 new COVID-19 cases were reported in EW 31 (July 31, 2022-August 06, 2022) - a 2.5% increase compared to EW 30 (July 24, 2022-July 30, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 14,571 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a 8.5% relative decrease compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 1,346,886 cases and 6,048 deaths were reported in EW 31 - a -22.1% decrease in cases and -9.6% decrease in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, COVID-19 cases and deaths decreased in all four subregions (cases; range: -41.7 - -6.8%, deaths; range: -14.6 - -6.7%).
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 131.7 cases per 100,000 population during EW 31 (169 the previous week). Between EW 31 and 30, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 12.4 deaths per 1 million population (12.7 the previous two weeks).
- Among 34 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 7 countries and territories (range: 0.3% - 23.6%) during EW 31 compared to the previous week. Among 26 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in 8 countries and territories (range: 1.8% - 100%).

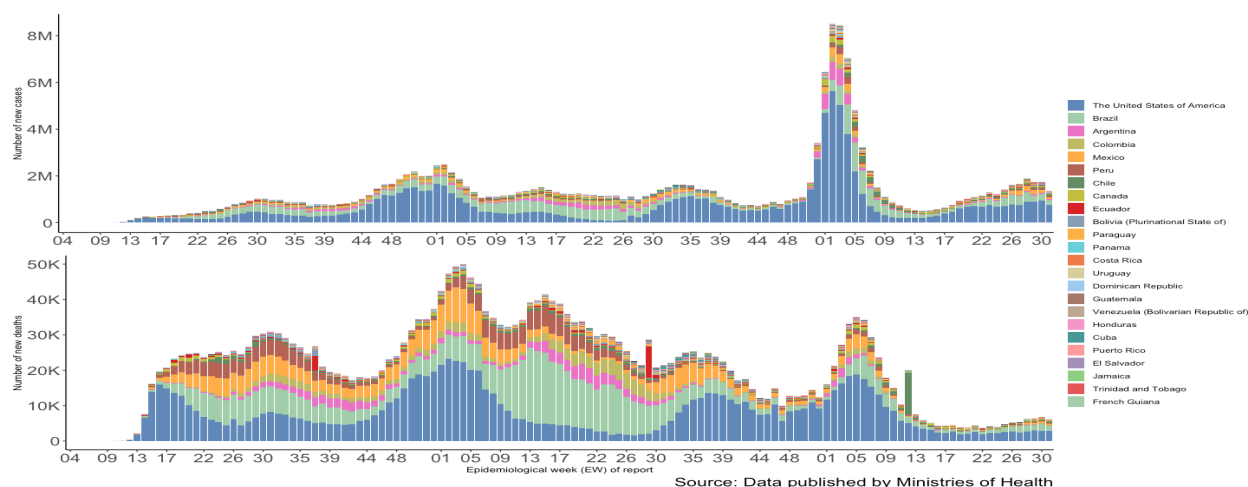
Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 - EW 31, 2022.



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 - 31, 2022.



During EW 31, 1,346,886 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of -22.1% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 cases during EW 31 was reported from North American subregion (847,147 cases, -20% decrease) compared to the previous week. (**Table 1**). During EW 31, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported by the United States of America (759,806 new cases, -18.7% decrease), Brazil (203,772 new cases, -28.5% decrease), Chile (63,595 new cases, 13.5% increase).

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 30 and EW 31 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 30	Deaths EW 30	Cases EW 31	Deaths EW 31	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	4,073,773	34,283	33,488	96	31,210	82	-6.8%	-14.6%
Central America	3,789,382	52,412	70,819	199	41,300	161	-41.7%	-19.1%
North America	101,863,692	1,396,997	1,070,674	3,599	847,147	3,358	-20.9%	-6.7%
South America	62,446,462	1,315,330	553,110	2,797	427,229	2,447	-22.8%	-12.5%

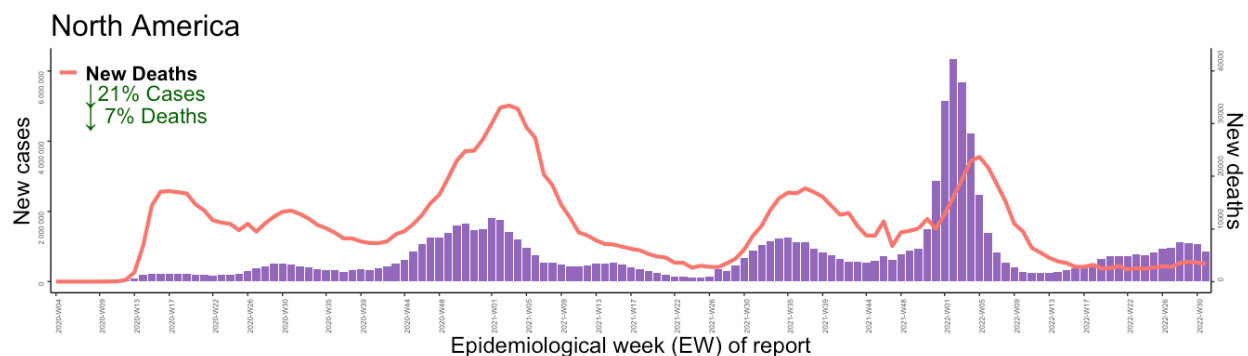
For the same period, 6,048 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of -9.6% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The subregion reporting the the highest number of COVID-19 deaths during EW 31 was North America (3,358 deaths, -6% decrease) (**Table 1**). At the national level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were the United States of America (2,764 new deaths, -2.4% decrease), Brazil (1,445 new deaths, -20.9% decrease), and Mexico (374 new deaths, -27.1% decrease).

A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 31 by subregion is presented below.

North America

The overall trends for **COVID-19 cases** have decreased in North America for the third consecutive week, with a decrease of 20% (n=847,147 cases) in cases observed during EW 31 compared to the previous week. All three countries in the subregion reported a decline in COVID-19 cases, the largest decline in cases being reported by Mexico (58,746 cases, -43.3% decrease), followed by the United States of America (759,806 cases, -18.7% decrease), and Canada (28,595 cases, -13.1% decrease).

Figure 3: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **North America.** Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 31, 2022.



During the same period, **weekly COVID-19 deaths** decreased by -6.7% in North America during EW 31 relative to the previous week. The largest decline in deaths was reported by Mexico (374 new deaths, -27.1% decrease), followed by Canada (220 new deaths, -13% decrease), and the United States of America (2,764 new deaths, -2.4% decrease).

For the same period, among the two countries in North America with available data for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions**, both countries – the United States of America and Canada – did not report any substantial difference in weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions. The United States reported a total of 43,523 COVID-19 hospitalizations including 4,980 ICU admissions – representing a decline of 2.2% and 4%, respectively – during EW 31 compared to the previous week. Similarly in Canada, COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions have slightly decreased for the first time after EW 24 – a decrease of 6% (n=5,018 hospitalizations) and 2% (n=305 ICU admissions) observed during EW 31 as compared to the previous week.

The Omicron variant of concern (VOC) lineages BA.4 and BA.5 are predominant in the United States of America and Canada, making up about 93.7% for EW 31¹ and 89% for the week of 17 July 2022² of the total weekly sequenced samples, respectively. Similarly in Mexico, the BA.4 and BA.5 sub-lineages made up about 8.6% and 86% of the sequenced sampled between EW 30 and 31.

1 The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Variant Proportions. Accessed 9 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/30bz8cT>

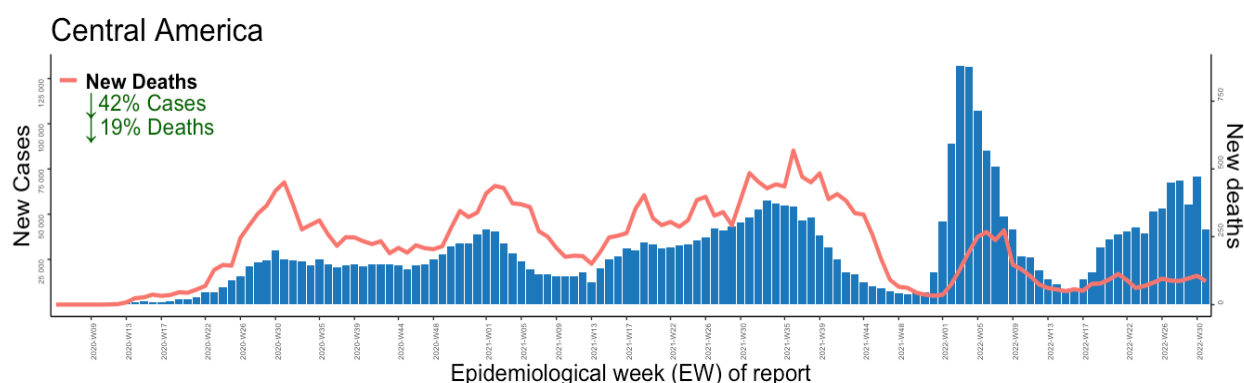
2 Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). COVID-19 Epidemiological Update. Accessed 9 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3bbFRFR>

The percentage of eligible population in each of the three countries received completed primary schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations³ are as follows: Canada – 82%; the United States of America – 66.3% and Mexico – 61.4%.

Central America

In Central America, COVID-19 cases have decreased by 41.7% during EW 31 compared to the previous week - a total of 41,300 new cases reported (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Central America. Region of the Americas.** EW 6, 2020 - EW 31, 2022.



During EW 31, two countries in the subregion reported an increase in **weekly cases** – Honduras (5,370 new cases, 5.2% increase) and Panama (5,931 new cases, 0.6% increase), while three countries reported a decline - Guatemala (16,376 new cases, -51% decrease), Belize (313 new cases, -36.1% decrease), and Costa Rica (13,310 new cases, - 16.9% decrease) relative to the previous week. No cases have been reported from El Salvador and Nicaragua during EW 31, resulting in a data artifact in percent changes of weekly cases for the subregion.

For the same period, **weekly deaths** decreased by approximately -19.1% relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**) with two countries/territories reporting an increase – Honduras (13 new deaths, 550% increase) and El Salvador (14 new deaths, 40% increase) compared to the previous week. Weekly deaths declined in three countries/territories – Guatemala (91 new deaths, 26.6% decrease), Costa Rica (34 new deaths, 32% decrease), and Panama (9 new deaths, 30.8% decrease).

Among four countries/territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations** in this subregion, one country – Panama – reported an increase in weekly hospitalizations (145 hospitalizations, 9.8% increase), while the remaining three countries/territories reported a decline during EW 31 compared to the previous week (range: -50 - -9.6% decrease). Among three countries with available data for **weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions**, Honduras reported an

³ Completed schedule is calculated using the last dose of the primary schedule, which means the first dose for 1 dose schedules, second dose or third dose in accordance with each country's established schedule.

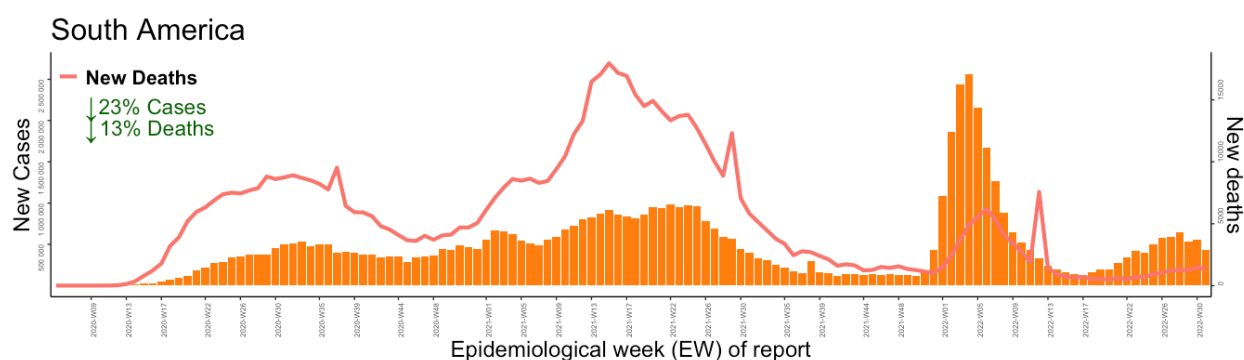
increase of 40% in ICU admissions (n=14 ICU admissions) while two countries reported a decline during EW 31 – Panama (20 ICU admissions, -35% decrease) and Costa Rica (61 ICU admissions, -2% decrease).

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from three and four of the seven countries and territories in the subregion respectively – Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador (BA.4 only) and Guatemala. Lastly, countries and territories in this subregion with less than 70% of their eligible population having received a completed schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations include Belize (54%); El Salvador (66%); Guatemala (36%), and Honduras (54.6%).³

South America

In South America, a total of 427,229 new COVID-19 cases were reported during EW 31 – a -22.8% decrease compared to the previous week (**Figure 5**).

Figure 5: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). South America. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 31, 2022.



Out of the 10 countries and territories the sub-region, one experienced an increase in cases during EW 31 – Chile (63,595 new cases, 13.5% increase) during EW 31 compared to the previous week. The remaining nine countries reported a decline in cases (range: -37.5 - -0.2) with the largest decline being reported by Paraguay (3,781 new cases, -37.5% decrease), followed by Ecuador (11,566 new cases, -32.7% decrease), and Peru (55,999 new cases, -28.8% decrease).

For the same period, a total of 2,447 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in South America – a -12.5% decrease compared to the previous week. COVID-19 deaths decreased in eight out of the ten countries (range: -33.3% - -5%) relative to the previous week with only Peru (351 new deaths, 45% decrease) reporting an increase. There were no substantial changes in deaths observed in Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) during EW 31 (6 deaths, 0% change). The largest decline in deaths in the subregion were reported by Ecuador (10 new deaths, -33.3% decrease), followed by Uruguay (8 new deaths, -33.3% decrease), and Argentina (71 new deaths, -22% decrease).

Among five countries in South America with available data for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations**, three reported an increase in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations – Ecuador (393 hospitalizations, 23.6% increase), Venezuela (1,137 hospitalizations, 6.2% increase), and Peru (1,406 hospitalizations, 0.3% increase) – and the remaining two reported a decline – Chile (1,691 hospitalizations, -5.8% decrease) and Colombia (1,501 hospitalizations, -

6.6% decrease). Among six countries with available data for **COVID-19 ICU admissions** in this subregion, four reported an increase (range: 1.8 – 18.6% increase), and the remaining two reported a decline – Chile (170 ICU admissions, -6.6% decrease) and Colombia (313 ICU admissions, -25.1% decrease) compared to the previous week.

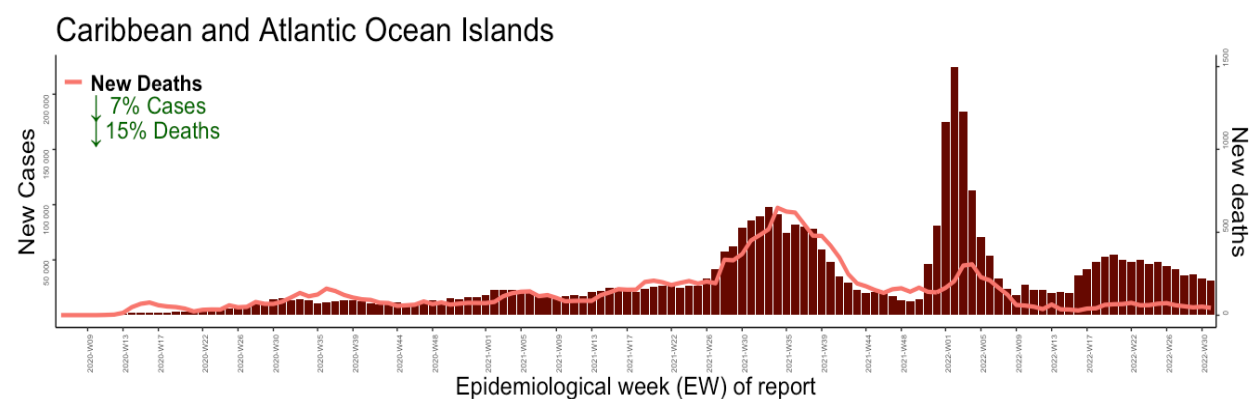
During EW 31 in the subregion, **severity trends** continue to increase in Peru with sustained increases in weekly COVID-19 deaths (45% increase), ICU admissions (11.1% increase), and hospitalizations (0.3% increase) reported compared to the previous week.

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from seven and eight out of the 10 countries in the subregion respectively – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (BA.5 only). Lastly, countries in the subregion with less than 70% of their eligible population having received a completed schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations include Bolivia (51.5%); Paraguay (48.4%); and Venezuela (50%).³

Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands sub-region, **weekly cases** have decreased for the second consecutive week by 7% (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in ten out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 2.8% - 214.3%) while it declined in 22 countries/territories (range: -100% - -4.6%).

Figure 6: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands. Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 31, 2022.



Similar to the weekly cases, **COVID-19 deaths** have decreased by 14.6% (82 deaths) for the second consecutive week in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion with reported COVID-19 deaths during EW 31. Seven countries/territories in the subregion observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths (range: 8.3 – 142.9% increase), and nine countries/territories observed a decline (range: -100 – -18.2% decrease) during EW 31 compared to the previous week.

Among 23 countries and territories with available data, four countries and territories reported an increase in their weekly **COVID-19 hospitalizations** (range: 2.2 – 20.3%), with the largest relative increase being observed in Trinidad and Tobago (160 hospitalizations, 20.3% increase), Suriname (7 hospitalizations, 16.7% increase), and the United States Virgin Island (13 hospitalizations, 8.3% increase). Among 14 countries/territories with data available for **COVID-**

19 ICU admissions, three reported an increase during EW 31, the highest relative increase being observed in Cuba (12 ICU admissions, 50% increase) and Puerto Rico (45 ICU admissions, 2.3% increase). The remaining countries/territories either remained the same (n=6) or reported a decline (n=5; range: -100 - -8.3% decrease).

Significant increases in weekly cases in the subregion during EW 31 were reported from Saba (22 new cases, 214.3%), Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (8 new cases, 100% increase), the Dominican Republic (3,930 new cases, 45.8% increase), and Puerto Rico (19,487 new cases, 13.2% increase).

Notable increases in severity trends are observed in Trinidad and Tobago where there has been a sustained upward trend in weekly hospitalizations for the past four consecutive weeks (160 hospitalizations, 20.3% increase) along with increasing trends observed in both cases and deaths (1,404 new cases; 13% & 17 new deaths; 142.9% during EW 31 compared to the previous week).

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from 14 and 15 out of 34 countries and territories in the subregion, respectively, including the overseas territories of either France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, or 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.

Lastly, 25 countries and territories in this subregion reported less than 70% of their eligible population as having received a completed schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations.³

Immunization

Figure 7. The increase in Complete Primary Series Vaccination Coverage by country/territory from the period before December 2021 to the months of January to July 2022. The region of the Americas (n=51). As of EW 31, 2022.

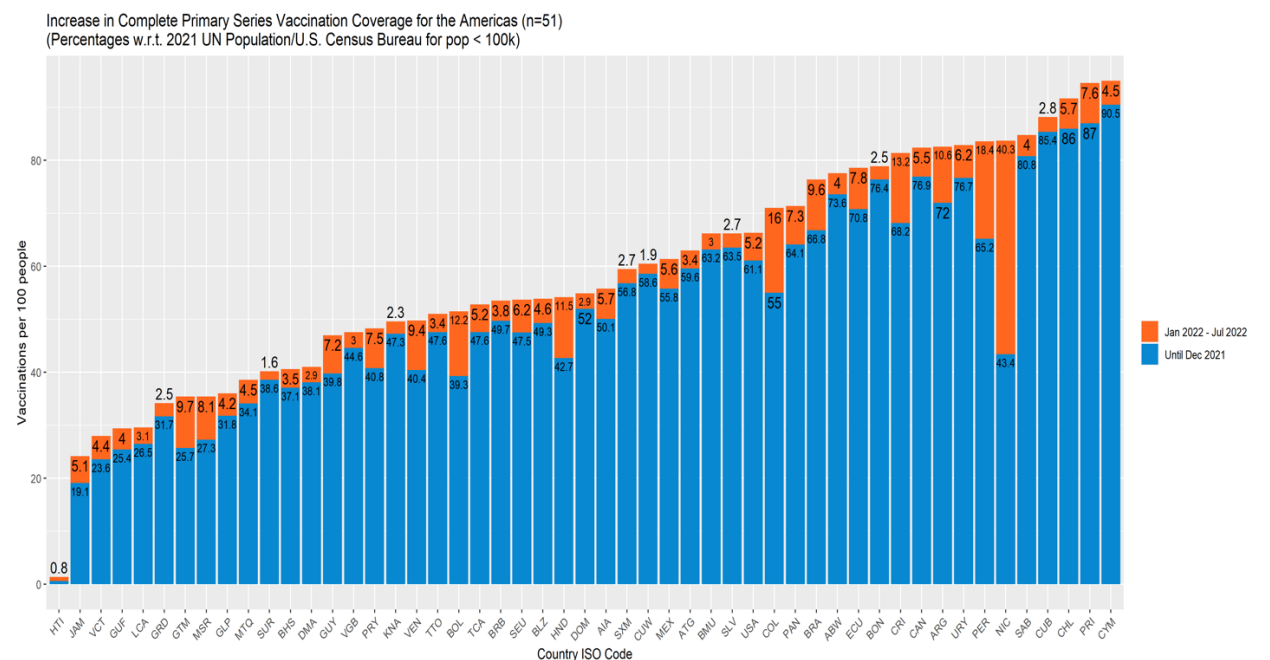


Figure 7 shows COVID-19 vaccination coverage* (i.e., complete primary series) in two segments:

- the coverage value reached by each country/territory until December 2021 (in blue)
- and the coverage added between the months of January to July 2022** (in orange)

Note that coverage increases below 10% occur all throughout the spectrum. Namely, 44 countries/territories have a less than 10% coverage increase in 2022, with 12 of these having reached a coverage rate $\geq 70\%$, while 10 are still below 40% coverage. This dispersion of low coverage rates further supports the statement that COVID-19 vaccination uptake has slowed through 2022, regardless of the coverage rate reached by each individual country/territory.

Genomic surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 420,486 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 8 August 2022.

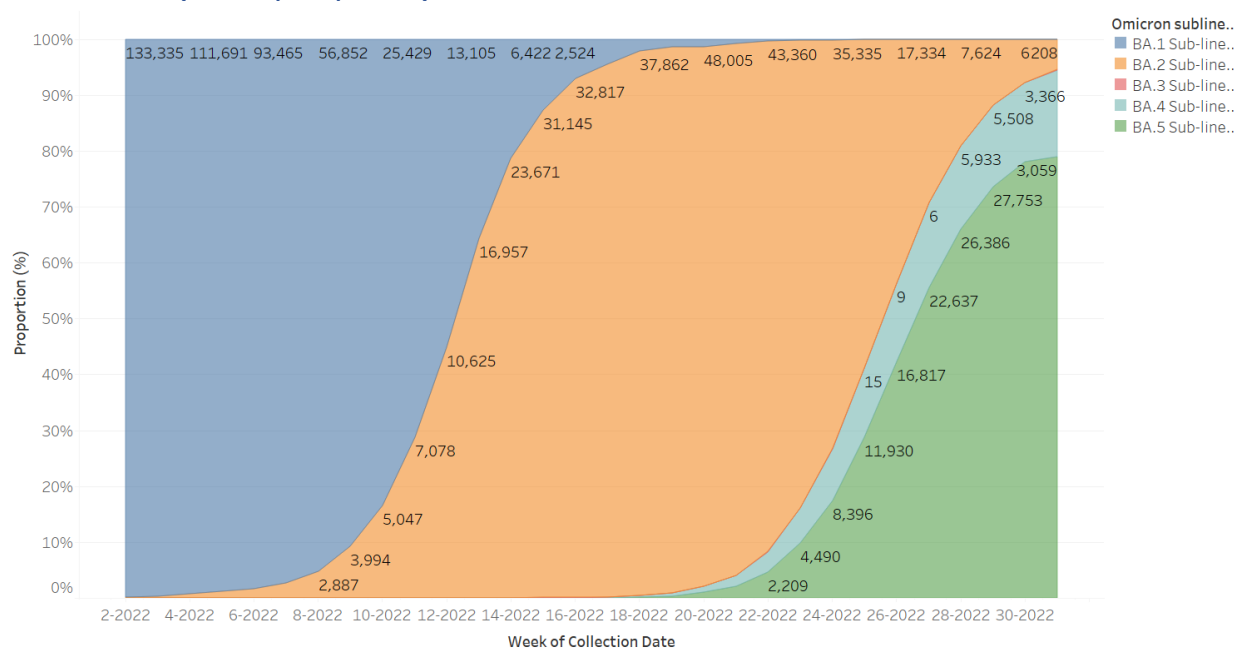
After the introduction of the Omicron VOC in the Americas at the end of 2021, it has rapidly increased in prevalence and has been officially reported by 54 countries or territories. Omicron is now predominant in all PAHO countries, and few other lineages are currently detected in the Region. Omicron comprises the BA.1 to BA.5 sublineages (or subvariants), which are also subdivided into diverse sublineages based on additional mutations that slightly change the genomic profile but not enough to define a new Variant. Important to notice, there is not (so far) sufficient evidence to infer increased severity or phenotypic impact in either of the sublineages, besides the already established for Omicron.

The cumulative proportion of sequences collected in the Americas from November 2021 to date are: 59.89% of BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages), 30.69% of BA.2 (and sublineages), 0.01% of BA.3 (and sublineages), 2.27% of BA.4 (and BA.4 sublineages), and 7.15% 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 BA.4 and BA.5 became predominant between weeks 25 and 31 (**Figure 8**). The proportion of BA.4 and in particular BA.5 continues to increase throughout the Region. Notably, in the past four weeks, the BA.4 and BA.5 combined represent 85.35%, 72.967%, 76.37%, and 81.50% of the characterized samples in North America, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, respectively.

* 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.

** Note that, in 2022, of the 51 countries/territories shown, 7 have spent long periods without reporting updated data. Namely: 1 country last reported data 6 months ago, 4 have not reported data in the last 2 months, and 2 last reported data 1 month ago.

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



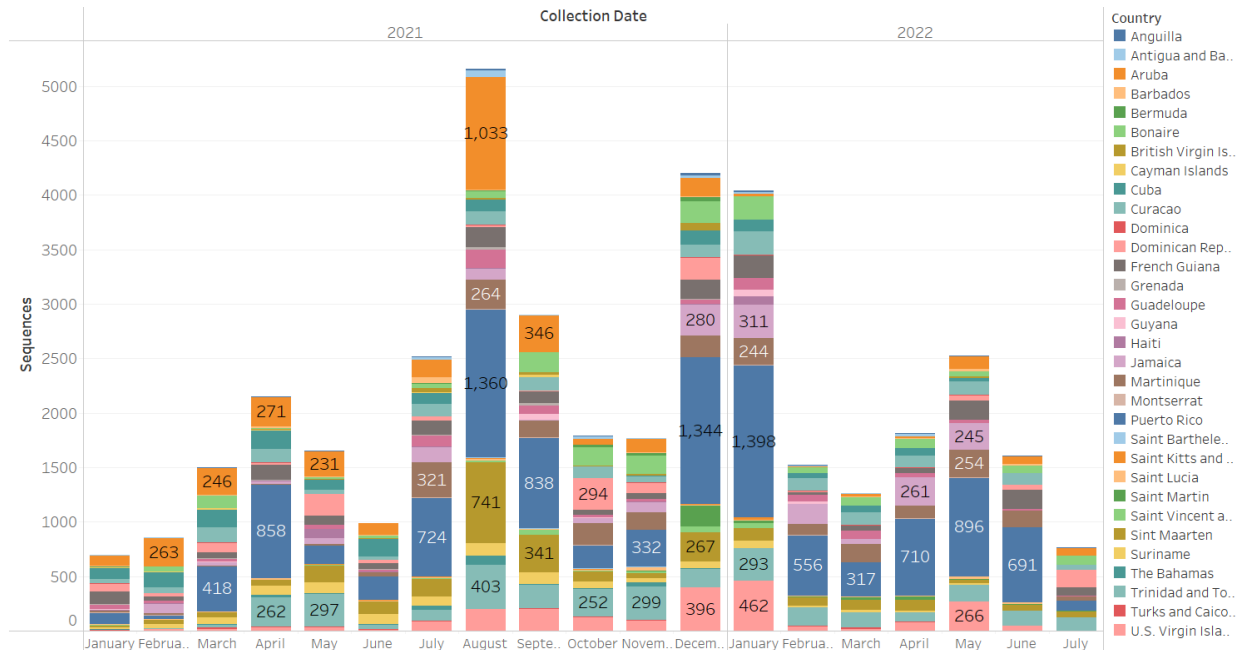
Source: GISAID

Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Caribbean subregion

During the last 18 months (January 2021 to August 2022), 369,714 whole genome sequences from the Caribbean countries and territories 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 four weeks (**Figure 10**). Since Omicron’s first detection, BA.1 and BA.1 sublineages represent the majority (53.29%) of cumulative sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 38.02% of the cumulative sequences, and BA.3, BA.4, and BA.5 (with their respective sublineages) represent 0.01%, 2.28%, and 6.40% of cumulative sequences, respectively (**Figure 11**). However, BA.1 was progressively replaced by BA.2 in weeks 10 to 15, and the proportion of BA.4 and BA.5 have been increasing since week 19 (**Figure 12**). When focusing on the past four weeks, BA.5 is the predominant sublineage (59.42%) while BA.2 and BA.4 account for 17.3% and 23.27% of the sequences, respectively. In the same period, BA.1 and BA.3 were not identified in any of the sequences. It is important to note that the majority of sequences for the 4-week period was contributed by the Dominican Republic (20.56%).

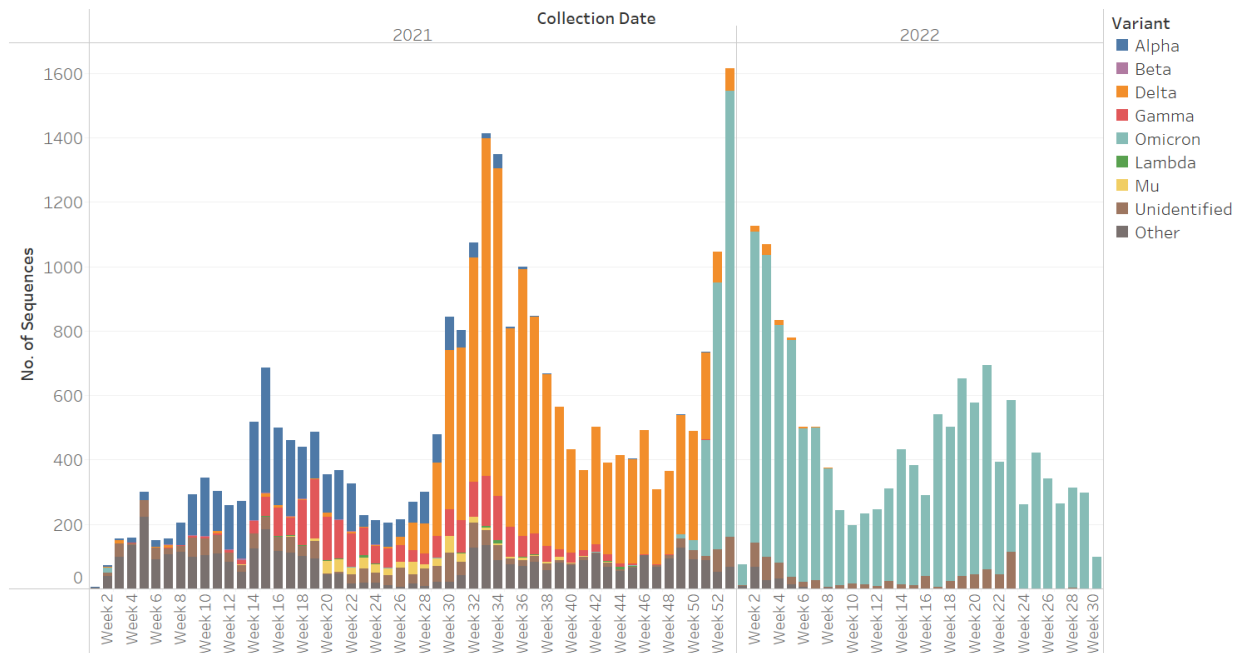
It is important that all countries in the PAHO Region continue the collection of representative samples for sequencing and maintain appropriate COVID-19 genomic surveillance.

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



Source: GISAID

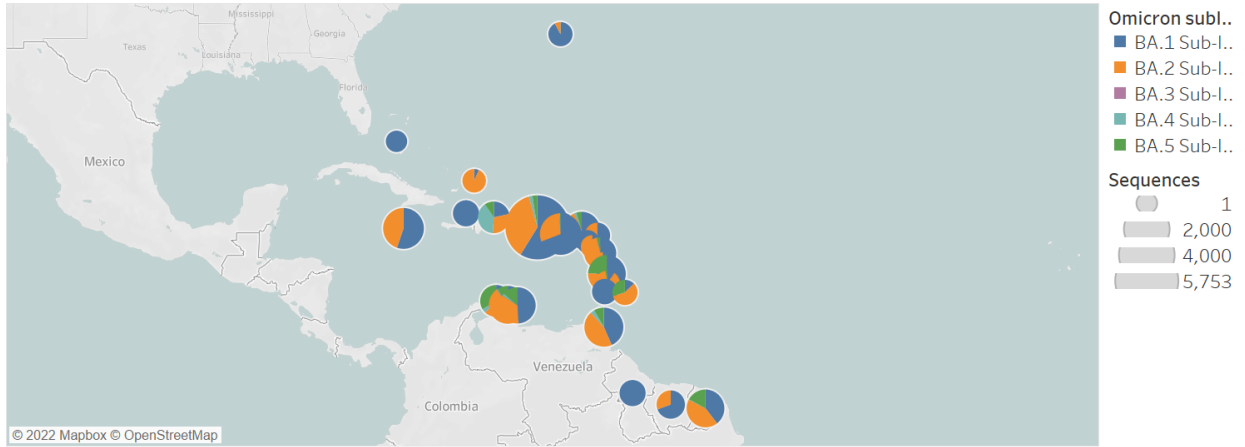
Figure 10. Variants detected and reported by the countries in the Caribbean (January 2021-August 2022)



Source: GISAID

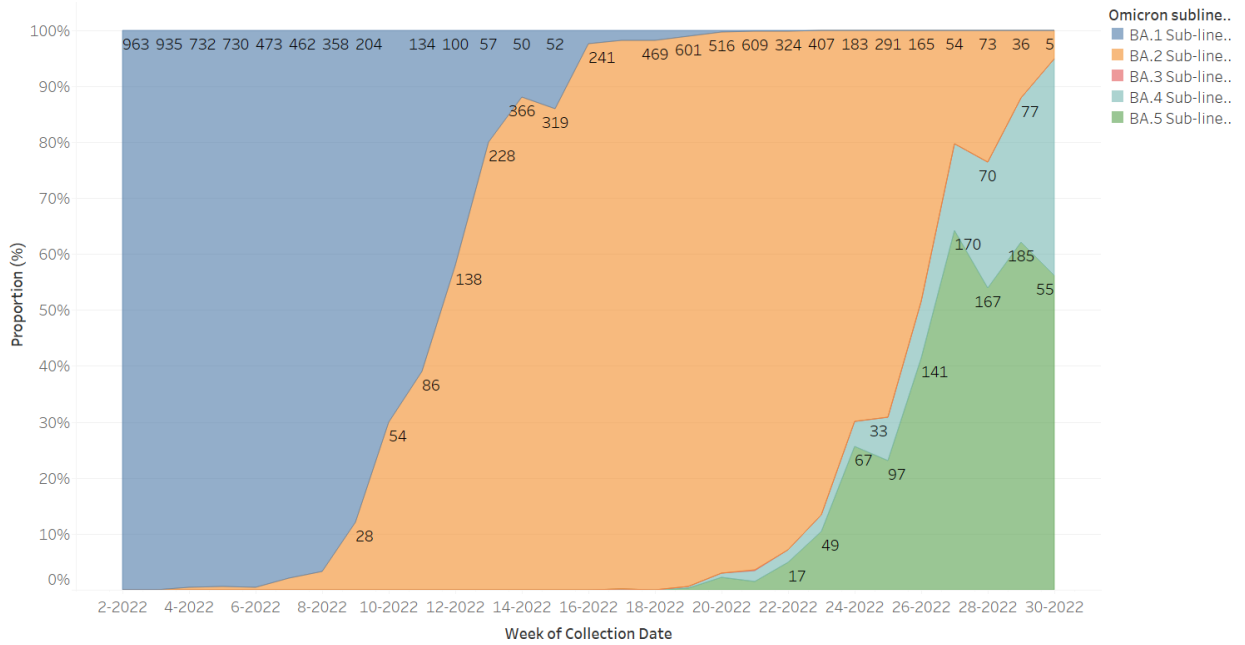
Country-specific data is available at: https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp

Figure 11. Distribution of Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Caribbean subregion (November 2021-August 2022)



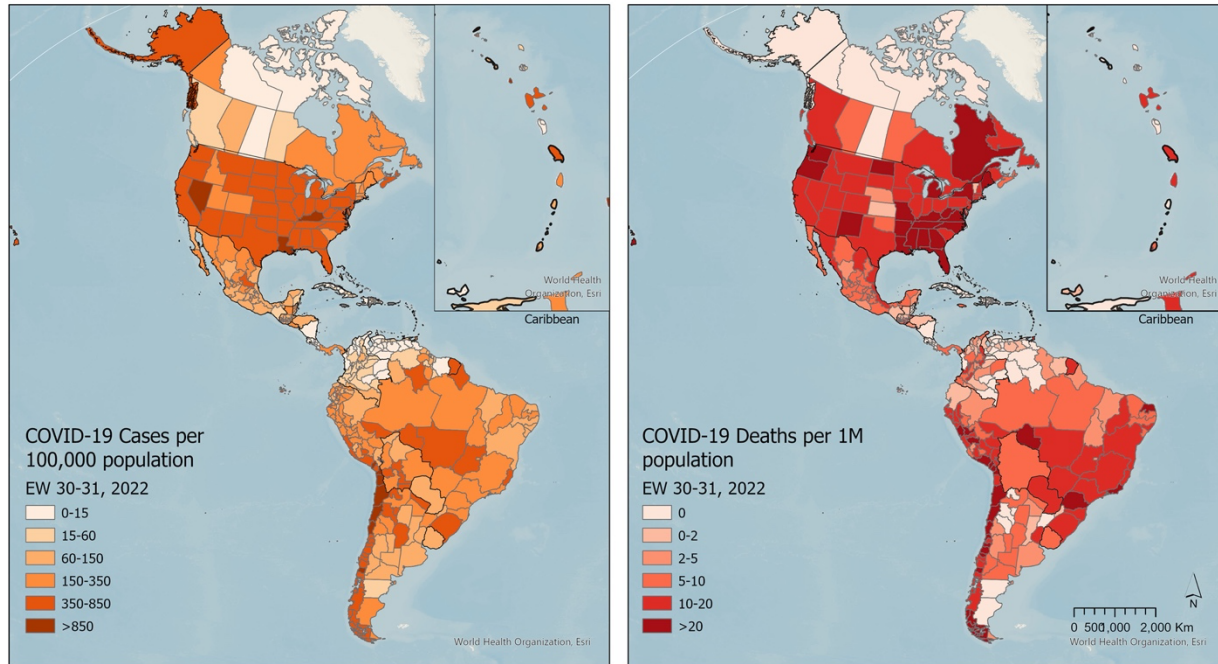
Source: GISAID

Figure 12. Distribution of VOC Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Caribbean subregion (January-August 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 30 and 31, 2022.



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The maps (**Annex 1**) 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 30 and 31, 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, most regions reported a slight decline in incidence compared to the previous two weeks. The overall highest incidences for the past two weeks were observed in the United States in North America, and Chile and Brazil in South America. In North America, higher rates were observed in the states of Nevada, Louisiana, and Kentucky in the United States. In South America, the central parts (including Araucania and Biobio) of Chile, and central-western parts of Brazil observed over 350 cases per 100,000 populations. In the Caribbean, overall decreases in incidence have been observed at the national level.

In terms of mortality, both North and South America reported a slight increase in new deaths compared to the previous 2 weeks. The high mortality rates were observed from the United States, Chile, Peru, and Brazil. In the United States, increases were observed in the southeastern parts including the states of Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina (reporting > 20 deaths per million population). In Chile and Brazil, the increases were observed in most provinces/states within each country, reporting over 20 and 10 deaths per million population, respectively. 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 deaths was observed during EW 30-31 compared to the previous two weeks.