



Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update – Region of the Americas

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Executive Summary

Globally, COVID-19 cases decreased for the second time after weeks of increasing trends since epidemiological week (EW) 50, 2021 (**Figure 1**). Approximately 16 million new cases were reported in epidemiological week (EW) 6, representing a decrease of 18.7% compared to EW 5. The decrease in cases was observed across most WHO regions except for the Western Pacific Region where it increased by approximately 19% compared to the previous week.

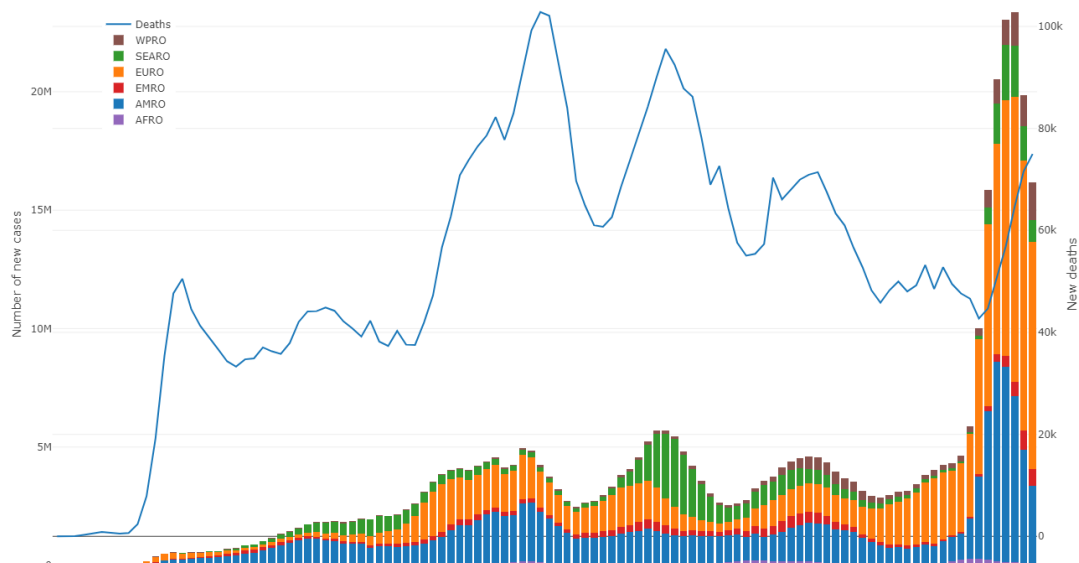
Deaths continue to increase globally with close to 75,000 new COVID-19 deaths reported in EW 6 – a 4.2% increase compared to the previous week. (Figure 1). The increasing trend was consistent across all but one Region – Southeast Asian Region – where it decreased by nearly 9% relative to the previous week.

In the Region of the Americas, the overall epidemiological situation continues to be characterized by a decline in cases notifications and an elevated but stable weekly death rate in many countries and territories. During EW 6, a total of 3.3 million new cases including close to 34,000 deaths were reported, representing a decrease of 32% in cases and an increase of 5.6% in deaths relative to the previous week.

Over all trends for COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions appear to be on the decline in most countries and territories of the region as of EW 6. However, weekly rates are still elevated with continued increases in many places like Chile, Costa Rica, Belize, Martinique, and Barbados.

The SARS-CoV-2 variant of concern (VOC) Omicron has been detected in 47 countries and territories of the region of date.

Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. As of EW 6 2022.

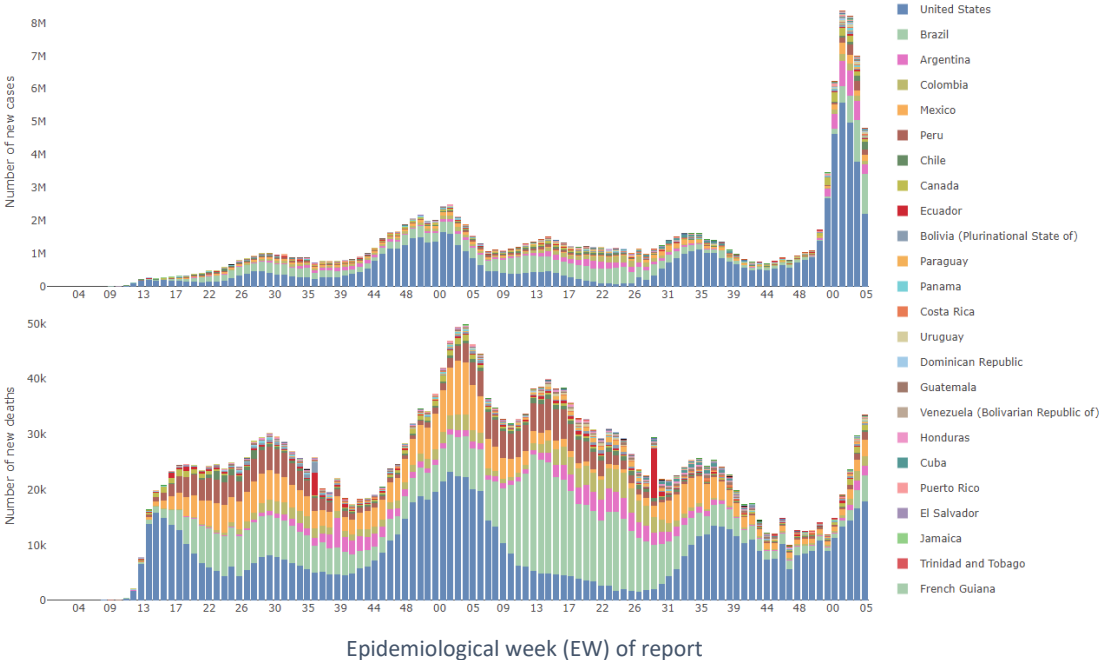


Source: Data from [WHO COVID-19 dashboard](https://www.who.int/dashboards/covid19)

Incidence

Weekly **COVID-19 cases** declined for a fourth consecutive week across all sub-regions with more than 3.3 million new cases reported in the region of the Americas during EW 6 – a 32% decrease compared to the previous week (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and country/territory. Region of the Americas. As of EW 5 2022.



Source: Data published by Ministries of Health

The trend was observed across all four subregions with the largest decline in cases reported from North America (40.5% decrease), followed by South America (24.2% decrease) and Central America (21.3% decrease) **Table 1**.

During EW 6, eight out of the 12 countries and territories reporting an increasing trend in cases were located in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Island subregion with the largest relative increases reported in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (250% increase), Antigua and Barbuda (>200%), and Trinidad and Tobago (69%). The remaining four countries/territories with increasing trends were distributed across the other three subregions – Chile (9% increase), Guatemala (21% increase), Mexico (4.5% increase), and Nicaragua (41% increase).

The United States (1.2. million cases), Brazil (1 million cases), and Chile (248K cases) reported the highest proportions of cases during EW 6 in the region of the Americas. Cases have been decreasing steadily in the United States for the past four weeks and are now at levels comparable to the previous peaks in EW 1 (1.6 million cases) and EW 35 (1.1 million cases) of 2021. On the other hand, weekly cases are at or near the highest levels since the onset of the pandemic in Brazil and Chile.

Subnational trends by country are presented in **Annex 1** accompanied by their corresponding maps.

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 5 and EW 6 by subregion. Region of the Americas

| Subregion | Total Cases | Total Deaths | Cases EW 5 | Deaths EW 5 | Cases EW 6 | Deaths EW 6 | % Change Cases | % Change Deaths |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|
| North America | 85,496,127 | 1,260,247 | 2,367,660 | 20,042 | 1,409,625 | 20,588 | -40.50% | 2.70% |
| Central America | 2,840,761 | 47,783 | 107,388 | 469 | 84,553 | 488 | -21.30% | 4.10% |
| South America | 51,813,062 | 1,234,268 | 2,239,688 | 11,117 | 1,696,888 | 12,375 | -24.20% | 11.30% |
| Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands | 3,127,823 | 33,172 | 69,354 | 426 | 56,658 | 399 | -18.30% | -6.30% |

Source: Data published by Ministries of Health

Severity

Since the beginning of the pandemic and up to 14 February, more than 2.5 million **COVID-19 deaths** have been reported in the Region of the Americas, primarily from the United States (35%), Brazil (25%), and Mexico (12%). Overall, deaths remain elevated in the region of the Americas as of EW 6, with the trends continuing to increase, but at a stable rate in many countries and territories.

Weekly COVID-19 deaths increased for the sixth consecutive week in the region of the Americas with approximately 34,000 deaths reported in EW 6 – a 5.6% increase compared to the previous week (**Figure 1**). The United States (17K deaths), Brazil (6.6K), and Mexico (2.5K) continues to report the highest number of weekly deaths in the region, and the trends in all three countries remain elevated with increases observed in Brazil (44%) and Mexico (7%) during EW 6 relative to the previous week.

At the subregional level, deaths continue to increase in the South American (11%) and Central American (4.1%) subregions while the trends remained elevated with no substantial difference compared to the previous week in North America. In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands, overall, all weekly deaths declined for a second consecutive week (6.3% decrease).

Relative to the previous week, 23 countries and territories out of 53 with reported COVID-19 deaths in the region observed an increase during EW 6 (range: 3.4% - 700%), 24 observed a decrease (range: 6.4% – 100%), and seven did not report any substantial difference. Majority of the 23 countries/territories with increases in weekly deaths were in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Island subregion (13/23), followed by those in South America (Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Venezuela), Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala), and North America (United States and Mexico).

Over all trends for **COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions** appear to be on the decline in most countries and territories of the region as of EW 6. Among the 38 countries and territories with available data for COVID-19 hospitalizations, eight reported an increase during EW 6 (vs. 12 in EW 5) and none observed an increase greater than 50% (range: 4% - 36%) relative to the previous week. **Table 2**

Table 2: Weekly change (%) in COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions by country/territory. EW 5 – EW 6 and corresponding vaccination coverage (per 100 persons). Region of the Americas.

| Country | Hospit EW 5 | Hospit EW 6 | % Variation Hospit. | ICU EW 5 | ICU EW 6 | % Variation of ICU | Complete Schedule per 100 people [1] |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|----------|----------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Uruguay | NA | NA | NA | 165 | 166 | 0.60% | 77.50 |
| Chile | 3,258 | 4,443 | 36.40% | 573 | 790 | 37.90% | 88.83 |
| Honduras | 341 | 412 | 20.80% | 24 | 27 | 12.50% | 43.72 |
| Barbados | 111 | 132 | 18.90% | NA | NA | NA | 51.46 |
| Martinique | 197 | 233 | 18.30% | 36 | 42 | 16.70% | 37.34 |
| Grenada | 7 | 8 | 14.30% | 1 | 2 | 100.00% | 32.90 |
| Belize | 23 | 26 | 13.00% | 6 | 7 | 16.70% | 50.69 |
| Costa Rica | 860 | 970 | 12.80% | 135 | 143 | 5.90% | 72.27 |
| Saint Lucia | 50 | 52 | 4.00% | NA | NA | NA | 27.90 |
| Paraguay | 1135 | 1141 | 0.50% | 210 | 216 | 2.90% | 43.57 |
| Peru | 6801 | 5631 | -17.20% | 1,380 | 1,399 | 1.40% | 70.23 |
| Suriname | 97 | 65 | -33.00% | 14 | 15 | 7.10% | 39.41 |

Sources: Hospitalization data published by Ministries of Health and analyzed by PAHO/WHO

Vaccination data collected by PAHO/WHO Immunization Unit

[1] Number of people who received the last recommended dose of any vaccine or completed their schedule. This includes the second dose if the schedule is a two-dose schedule and the single dose in a single dose schedule

With regards to **COVID-19 ICU admissions**, among the 29 countries and territories with available data, eight reported a relative increase compared to the previous week (range: 2.9% - 100%) – primarily in Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, and Honduras), the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands (Grenada, Martinique, Suriname) and South America (Chile and Honduras).

Overall, among the 12 countries and territories with increasing trends in hospitalizations and/or ICU admissions as of EW 6, only three have achieved the WHO goal of having 70% or more of its eligible population vaccinated with the completed schedule [1]. **Table 2**

Immunization

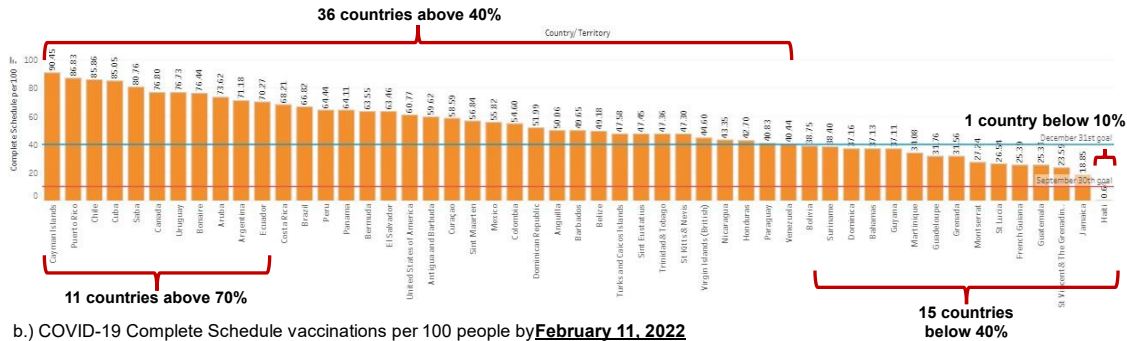
As of EW 6 2022, more 1.6 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in the region of the Americas of which more than 666 million were of the completed schedule [1].

Between 31 December 2021 and 11 February 2022, two countries (Bolivia and Guyana) reached the 40% coverage goal for a completed schedule of COVID-19 vaccination among eligible population [1], bringing the total number of countries to 38 (**Figure 3**). There are still 13 countries that have not achieved this target.

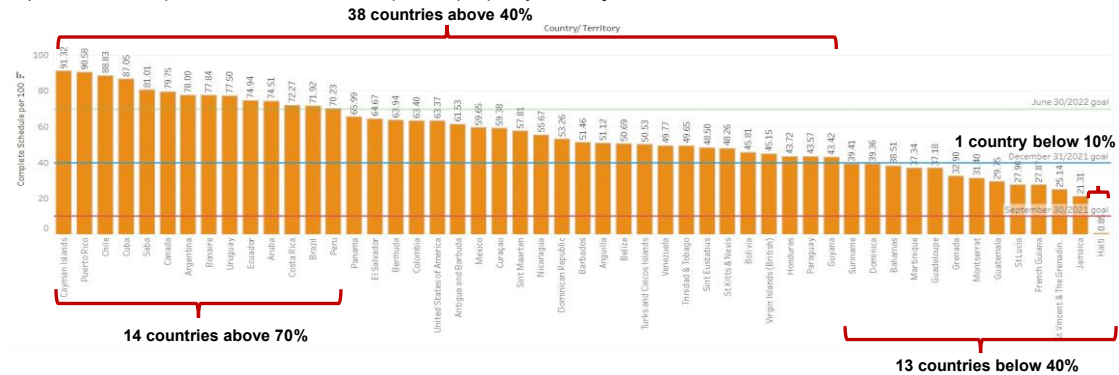
During this same period, three other countries (Costa Rica, Brazil, Peru) surpassed the 70% target set for 30 June 2022, with a total of 14 countries reporting a coverage rate above this threshold (**Figure 3**). Haiti remains below the 10% coverage mark, with its coverage having only increased 0.2% in the aforementioned time frame.

Figure 3: COVID-19 vaccination coverage per 100 population by December 31, 2021 and February 11, 2022. Region of the Americas.

a.) COVID-19 Complete Schedule vaccinations per 100 people by **December 31st, 2021**



b.) COVID-19 Complete Schedule vaccinations per 100 people by **February 11, 2022**



Source: Data published by member states and analyzed by PAHO/WHO

*Based on UN population projections for 2021 and US Census Bureau projections for countries with less than 100,000 inhabitants.

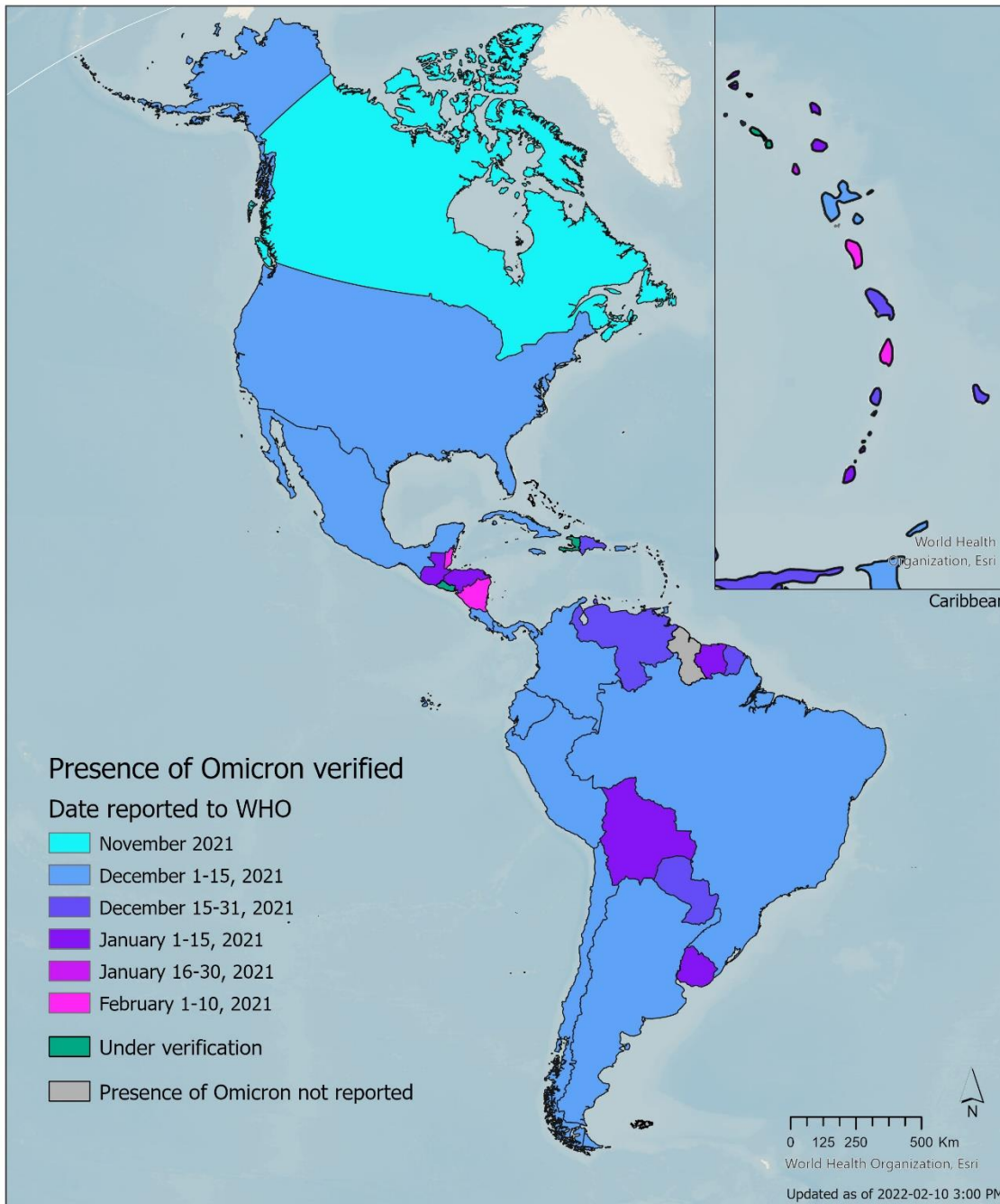
Genomic Surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, more than 269,358 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 15 February 2022.

After the introduction of the Omicron VOC in the Americas by the end of December 2021, it has rapidly increased in prevalence and has been officially reported by 47 Countries or Territories. Omicron is now predominant in all PAHO countries with the BA.1 and BA.1.1 sub lineages identified in more than 98% of the characterized samples.

The earliest countries to have reported omicron to WHO include Canada (end of November 2021), Brazil, United States, Mexico, Chile, and Argentina (early December 2021) (**Map 1**). It is important to note that time of report to WHO is affected by each country's laboratory capacity.

Map 1: Distribution of countries/territories in the region of the Americas with verified presence of SARS-CoV-2 variant of concern (VOC) Omicron by date of report of PAHO/WHO. As of 15 February 2022.



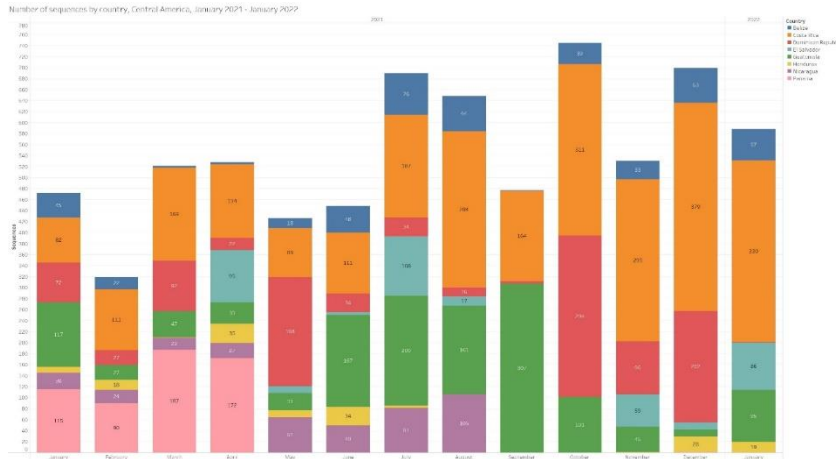
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* PAHO has developed a dashboard on SARS-CoV-2 Variants in the Region of the Americas available at: https://ais.paho.org/phip/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp. The dashboard, which is publicly available and automatically updated, presents in a friendly and flexible way the geographical and temporal distribution of variants in the Region

Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance at Central American subregion

During the last year (January 2021 to January 2022), 7,091 whole genome sequences from Central American countries have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems (**Figure 4**).

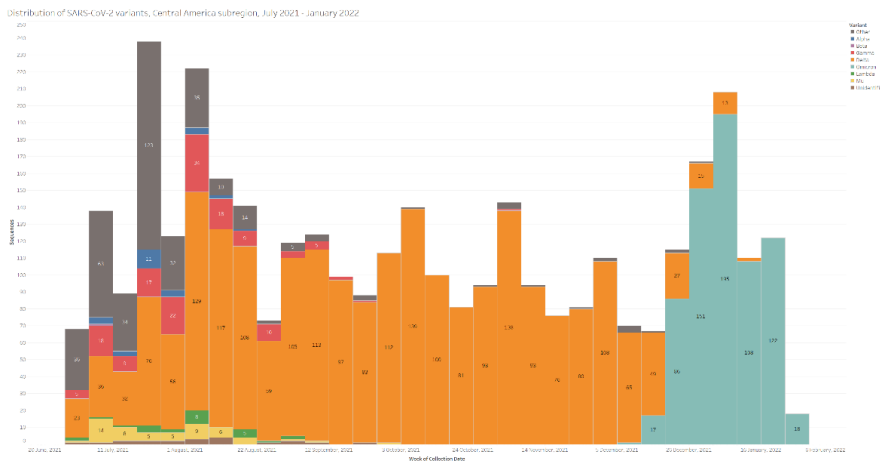
Figure 4: Proportion of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Central American Subregion



Source: GISAID

All VOCs (Alpha -last detected 21 August; Beta-last detected 8 July; Gamma-last detected 31 October; Delta-last detected 10 January 2022; and Omicron) have been detected in addition to other VOIs (Lambda-last detected 1 September; and Mu-last detected 30 September) along with other lineages/variants.

Figure 5: SARS-CoV-2 variants detected and reported in Central American Subregion (July 2021, February 2022)



Source: GISAID

Delta VOC was first detected by May 2021 in Guatemala and Panama, and rapidly expanded to become predominant by mid-July. VOC Omicron was first detected 10 December in Costa Rica. After replacing Delta, Omicron has been predominant in all subregions and has been detected in more than 680 samples (92%) sequenced during the last 6 weeks. So far, BA.1 and BA.1.1 sub lineages are circulating with no BA.2 or BA.3 reported as of January 2022.

Map 2: Incidence of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population during EW 5 and EW 6. Region of the Americas.

