

Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update – Region of the Americas

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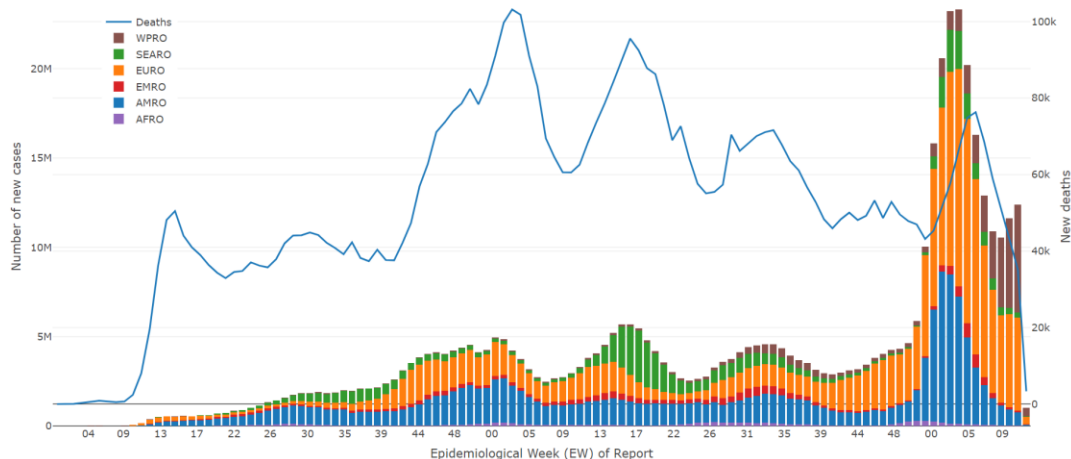
Executive Summary

Since the onset of the pandemic in 2020 and up to 22 March 2022, a cumulative total of over 469 million COVID-19 cases including more than 6 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. Overall, trends during epidemiological week (EW) 11 (March 13 to 19) continued increasing in terms of cases (more than 12.3 million cases globally or a 6.5% increase), mainly produced by the Western Pacific Region (WPRO). Nonetheless, deaths continued to decline globally (over 32 thousand in EW11 or a 24.9% decline). **Figure 1.** Within the WHO regions, WPRO reported more than 6 million cases in EW11, representing a 20.6% increase in comparison to EW10, and nearly 7 thousand deaths (or a 5.4% increase). In addition to WPRO, the Europe region (EURO) reported a slight increase (0.4%) in terms of cases between EW10 and EW11. The rest of WHO regions saw declines both in terms of cases (range: -17.4% in the Americas region (PAHO) to -41.4% in Eastern Mediterranean region (EMRO)) and in terms of deaths (range: -17.6% in EURO to -45.8% in PAHO).

In the Region of the Americas, over 149.7 million cases of COVID-19 including over 2.67 million deaths were reported as of March 22, 2022. COVID-19 cases in the region continued to decline for the ninth consecutive week with more 733 thousand new cases reported in EW 11 – a decline of 17.4% compared to EW10. Similarly, the downward trajectory of weekly deaths continued for a sixth consecutive week with 8,297 new deaths reported during EW11 – a 45.8% decline. **Map 1** (in page 6) shows COVID-19 case incidence and mortality rates in the Americas during EW 10 and 11, 2022.

Trends for COVID-19 **hospitalizations** and/or **ICU admissions** are also generally declining across the region.

Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. As of EW 11, 2022.



Region of the Americas – an overview

Weekly COVID-19 cases declined for ninth consecutive week in 2022 with over 733 thousand new cases reported in EW 11 – a 17.4% decrease compared to the previous week (**Figure 2**). The decreasing trend in cases was observed in all sub-regions ranging from -1.9% in Central America to -18.8% in South America (**Table 1**).

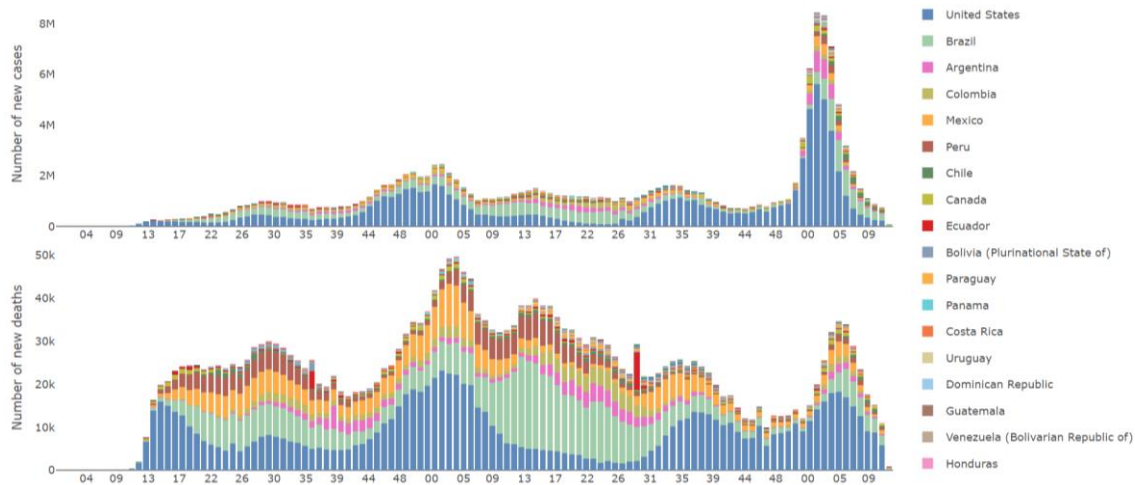


Figure 2: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and country/territory. Region of the Americas. As of EW 11 2022.

Source: Data published by Ministries of Health

Weekly COVID-19 deaths followed a similar downward trajectory for the sixth consecutive week, with 8,297 new deaths reported during EW 11 – a 45.8% decline. At subregional level, declines in deaths were observed in all four subregions, ranging from -6.7% in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands to -57% in North America (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW10 and EW11 by subregion. Region of the Americas

| Subregion | Total of Cases | Total of Deaths | Cases - EW10 | Deaths - EW10 | Cases - EW11 | Deaths - EW11 2 | % Variation of Cases | % Variation of Deaths |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| North America | 88,038,248 | 1,325,762 | 304,890 | 9,523 | 253,810 | 4,092 | -16.80% | -57.00% |
| Central America | 3,057,156 | 49,465 | 26,554 | 243 | 26,042 | 196 | -1.90% | -19.30% |
| South America | 55,434,307 | 1,268,644 | 529,510 | 5,425 | 429,841 | 3,911 | -18.80% | -27.90% |
| Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands | 3,250,614 | 32,327 | 27,046 | 105 | 23,404 | 98 | -13.50% | -6.70% |

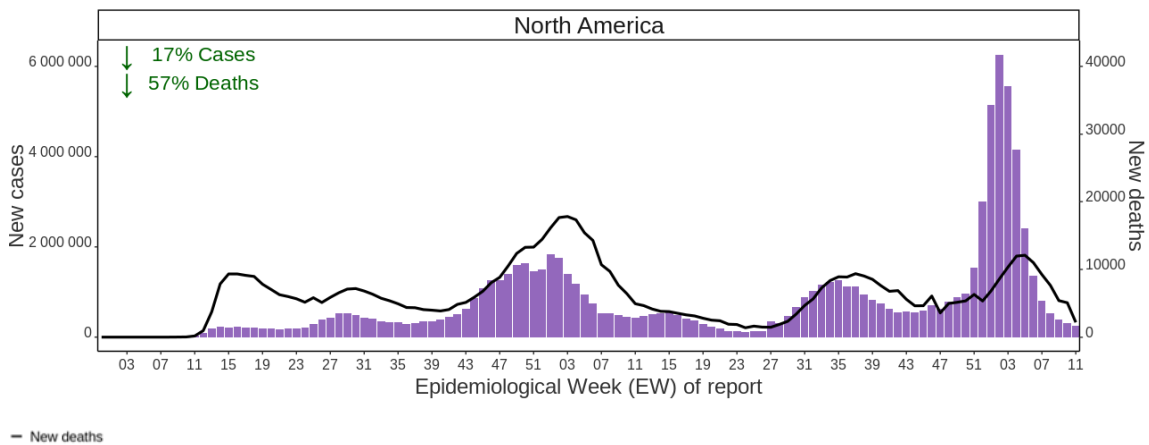
Source: Data published by Ministries of Health

Out of the 35 countries and territories with available data on **hospitalizations**, only 3 showed an increase from EW10 to EW11, those being Cuba (19.3%), Suriname (11.10%) and Venezuela (6.2%). In terms of **ICU bed occupancy**, from the countries and territories where data is available, only 2 countries showed an increase, those being Aruba (50%) and Trinidad and Tobago (37.5%).

North America

All three countries reported declines in the monitored indicators (**Figure 3**). From EW10 to EW11, the decline in **cases** ranges from -13.1% in Canada to -39.5% in Mexico. **Deaths** follow the same trends, with variations from -38.9% in Canada to -59.9% in Mexico.

Figure 3: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **North America.** Region of the Americas. EW 5, 2020 – EW 11 2021.

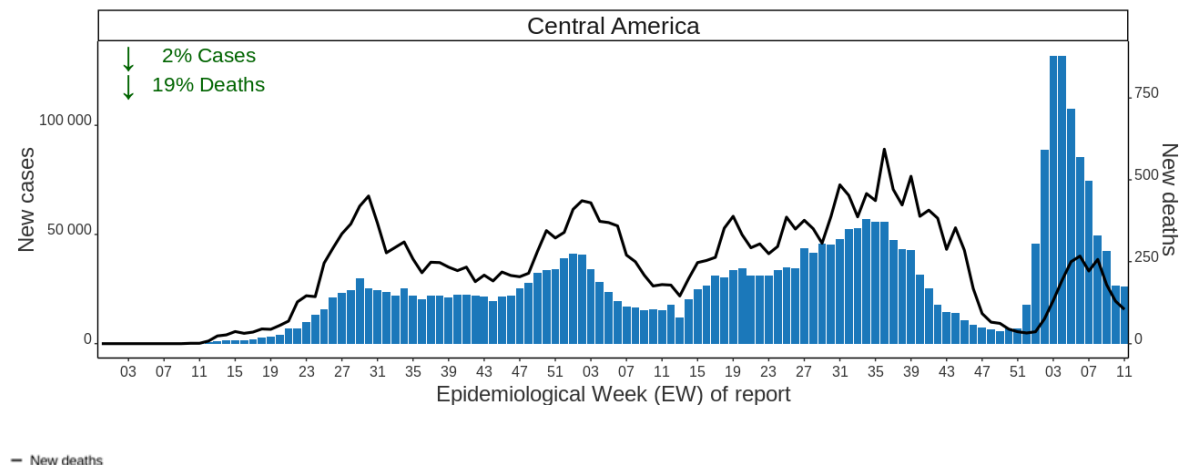


Hospitalization declined by -10% and -22.5% in Canada and the United States respectively, while **ICU bed occupancy** decreased by 8.9% and 26.1% respectively.

Central America

Between EW10 and EW11 all countries in the Central America subregion reported declines in **cases** (range: -15.1% to -35%). **Deaths** however increased only in Belize (100%, 2 deaths) and El Salvador (50%, 14 deaths). (**Figure 4**). **Hospitalizations** and **ICU bed occupancy** declined both in Panama and Costa Rica week on week (-15.1% and -12% respectively and -10% and -15.5% respectively).

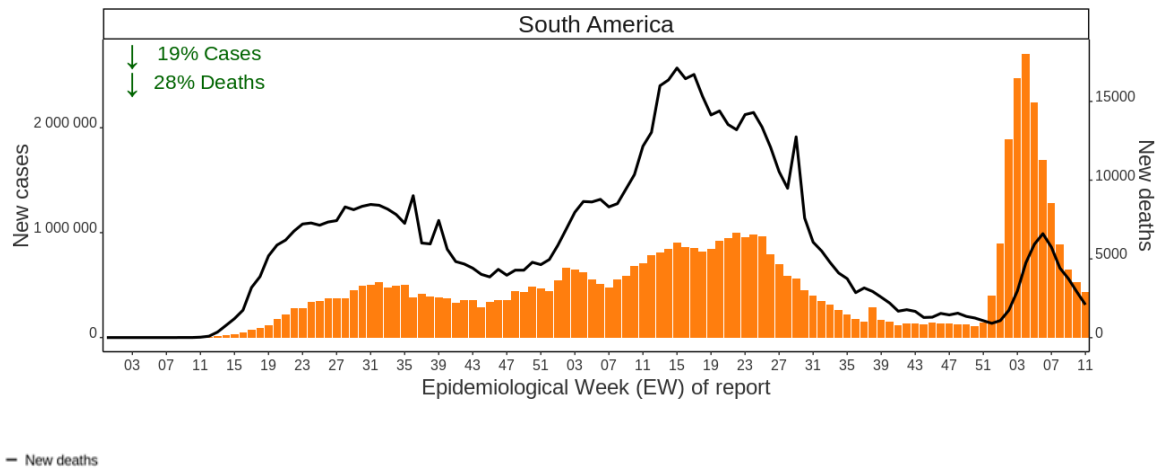
Figure 4: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Central America.** Region of the Americas. EW 5, 2020 – EW 11 2021.



South America

To the exception of Argentina where there was a slight increase in **cases** (1,3%), the rest of the countries presented declines (range: -1.2% to -50.3%). **Deaths** declined in all countries from EW10 to EW11. (**Figure 5** and **Table 2**).

Figure 5: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **South America.** Region of the Americas. EW 5, 2020 – EW 11 2021.



Hospitalization increased in Venezuela by 6.2% but declined in all other countries where data is available. Declines ranged from -13.3% in Peru to -20.9% in Colombia. **ICU bed occupancy** declined in all countries where data is available (range: -11.5% to -34.5%).

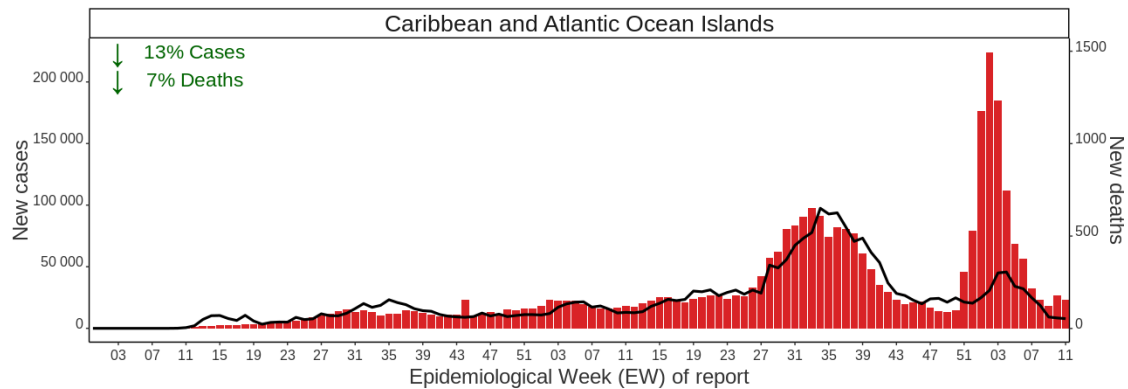
Table 2: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW10 and EW11 in South American countries. Region of the Americas

| Country | Cases - EW10 | Deaths - EW10 | Cases - EW11 | Deaths - EW11 | % Variation of Cases | % Variation of Deaths |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Argentina | 35,868 | 414 | 36,330 | 361 | 1.30% | -12.80% |
| Uruguay | 10,912 | 52 | 10,785 | 44 | -1.20% | -15.40% |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 2,834 | 18 | 2,312 | 9 | -18.40% | -50.00% |
| Brazil | 331,315 | 3,301 | 267,998 | 2,242 | -19.10% | -32.10% |
| Chile | 118,141 | 830 | 95,205 | 655 | -19.40% | -21.10% |
| Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) | 1,763 | 11 | 1,421 | 10 | -19.40% | -9.10% |
| Colombia | 6,231 | 271 | 4,240 | 160 | -32.00% | -41.00% |
| Peru | 10,183 | 428 | 5,421 | 328 | -46.80% | -23.40% |
| Paraguay | 2,313 | 68 | 1,188 | 49 | -48.60% | -27.90% |

Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

Overall, this subregion has shown declines in terms of cases from EW10 to EW11 of 13.5%, reversing the uptick from last week. Nonetheless, out of the 31 countries, 18 have seen increases in cases in the reported period. (Table 3, Figure 6).

Figure 6: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands. Region of the Americas. EW 5, 2020 – EW 11 2021.



— New deaths

Increases ranged from 473% in Saint Pierre and Miquelon (298 cases in EW11) to 5.3% in Anguilla (20 cases in EW11).

Table 3: Weekly change (%) in cases between EW10 and EW11 in selected Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands. Region of the Americas.

| Country | Cases - EW10 | Deaths - EW10 | Cases - EW11 | Deaths - EW11 | % Variation of Cases |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Saint Pierre and Miquelon | 52 | 0 | 298 | 0 | 473.10% |
| Montserrat | 2 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 300.00% |
| Curaçao | 102 | 3 | 375 | 1 | 267.60% |
| Sint Maarten | 16 | 0 | 43 | 0 | 168.80% |
| Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | 3 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 133.30% |
| Dominican Republic | 484 | 3 | 950 | 1 | 96.30% |
| Guadeloupe | 2,097 | 5 | 4,006 | 4 | 91.00% |
| Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba | 11 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 81.80% |
| Aruba | 48 | 1 | 85 | 0 | 77.10% |
| Haiti | 31 | 0 | 48 | 0 | 54.80% |
| Puerto Rico | 1,195 | 17 | 1,566 | 4 | 31.00% |
| Saint Kitts and Nevis | 5 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 20.00% |
| Cayman Islands | 438 | 1 | 525 | 5 | 19.90% |
| Cuba | 3,755 | 4 | 4,457 | 3 | 18.70% |
| Saint Barthélemy | 37 | 0 | 42 | 0 | 13.50% |
| Bermuda | 216 | 1 | 244 | 2 | 13.00% |
| Bahamas | 23 | 0 | 25 | 16 | 8.70% |
| Anguilla | 19 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 5.30% |

In terms of **deaths**, only 3 countries/territories reported increases: Cayman Islands (400%, 5 deaths in EW11), Bermuda (100%, 2 deaths in EW11) and Trinidad and Tobago (16.7%, 28 in EW11).

To the exception of Cuba, where **hospitalization** increased by 19.3%, all other countries and territories where data is available showed decreases (range: -1.5% to 33.8%). Regarding ICU bed occupancy, Aruba and Trinidad and Tobago reported increases (50% and 37.5% respectively) from EW10 to EW11.

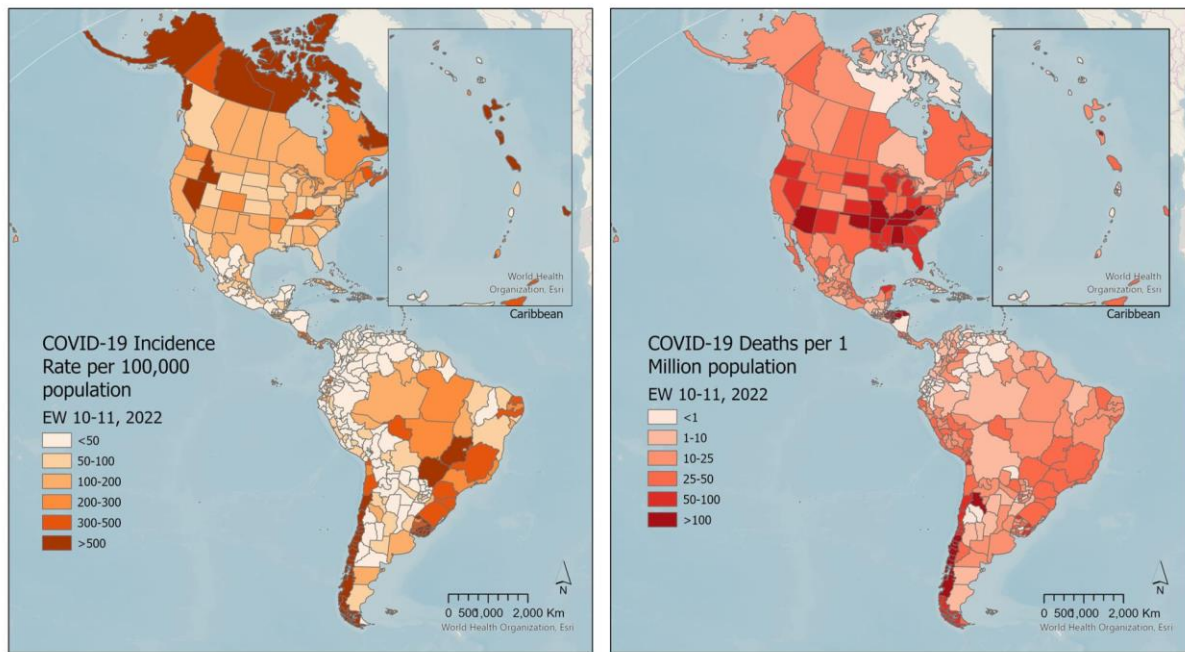
Map 1: COVID-19 case incidence and mortality rates in the Americas during EW 10 and 11, 2022.

The **highest incidence** was observed in Canada, Chile, some parts of Brazil, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominica, and Barbados, while the highest mortality was seen in the US, and Chile.

In **North America**, Nunavut, Newfoundland, Yukon, Prince Edward Island, and the Northwest Territories in Canada, and Idaho, Nevada, and Alaska in the US showed the highest incidence rates. The highest mortality rates were observed in most of the southern states in the US.

In **Central America**, a continued decline in cases and deaths can be seen, while in **South America**, Chile continues to report a high number of cases and deaths. Some parts of Brazil (Goiás, Mato Grosso do Sul), and Uruguay show some of the highest incidence rates in the sub-region.

In the **Caribbean islands**, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Barbados, and the Cayman Islands show high incidence rates, while mortality rates continue to remain relatively low.



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Immunization

The proportion of people who have not received any dose of COVID-19 vaccine in the Americas currently stands at 23.7% for the region's population¹. If we focus on the non-Latin Caribbean countries² (n=13), the proportion of people who have not received any dose of COVID-19 vaccine is 58.8%. This translates to approximately 4.4 million people. **Figure 7** (see Zero dose %) reports the proportion of the population in each of the 13 countries who remains unvaccinated. **Figure 8** (see weight of zero dose) reports the portion of the unvaccinated across the subregion, by country. For example, Grenada reports that 61.7% of its population remains unvaccinated, but only contributes 1.6% of the total number of unvaccinated persons in the Caribbean because of its small population size. Larger countries like Jamaica include 50% of the unvaccinated persons of the subregion. It is important to note that vaccine hesitancy is highly prevalent in the Caribbean, more than in other American subregions.

Figure 7: Weight of zero doses of COVID-19 vaccines in 13 Caribbean countries.

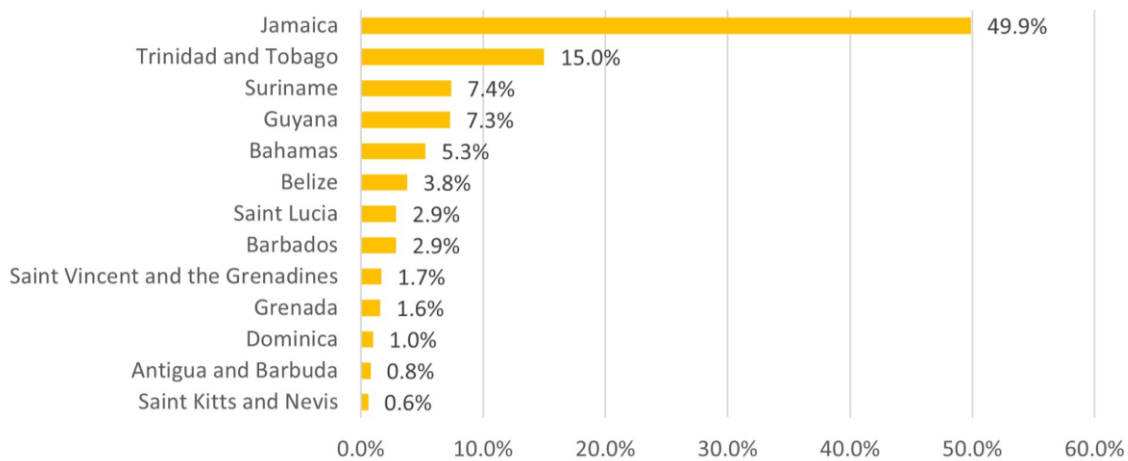
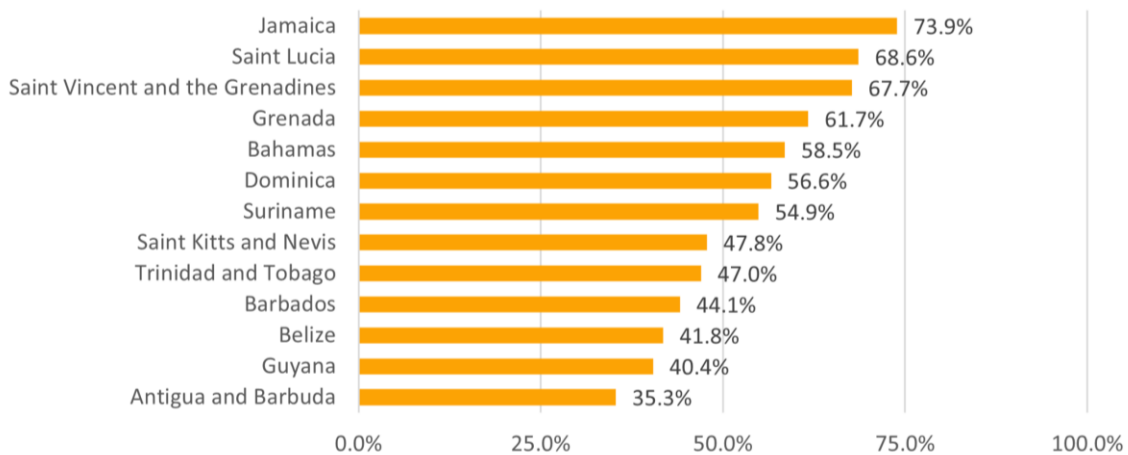


Figure 8: Zero doses of COVID-19 vaccines per 100 population in 13 Caribbean countries.



¹ Population based on UN Population prospects for 2021 and US Census Bureau projections for countries with 100,000 inhabitants or less.

² Does not include territories.

Genomic Surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 302,242 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 21 March 2022.

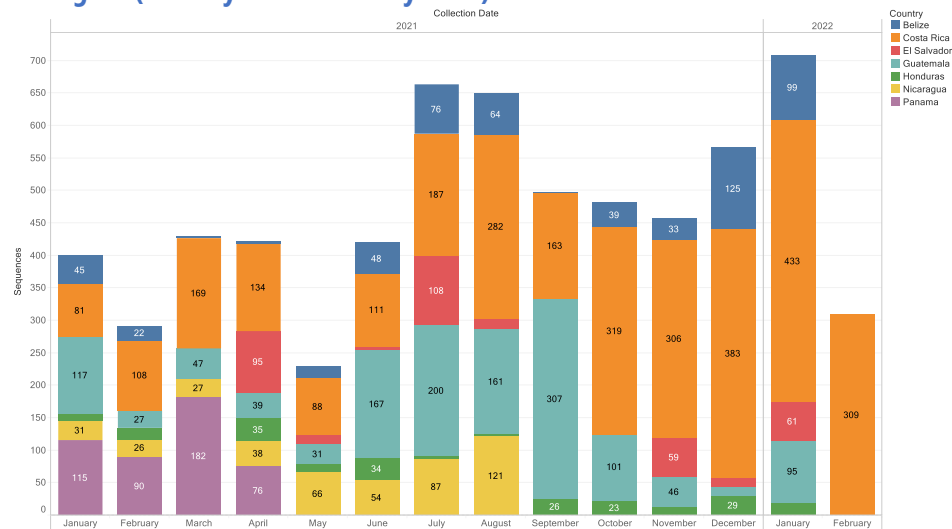
After the introduction of the Omicron VOC in the Americas by the end of December 2021, it has rapidly increased in prevalence and has been officially reported by 52 countries or territories. Omicron is now predominant in all PAHO countries with the BA.1 and BA.1.1 sub lineages identified in more than 98% of the characterized samples from the Americas, less than 1.4% of BA.2, and only 11 samples from USA of BA.3 detected so far.

Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance at Central American subregion

During the last fourteen months (January 2021 to 18 March 2022), 6,535 whole genome sequences from Central American countries have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems. The “previously circulating” VOCs (**Alpha** - last detected 21 August 2021; **Beta** - last detected 8 July 2021; **Gamma** - last detected 31 October 2021) and the “currently circulating” VOCs (**Delta** - last detected 15 January 2022; and **Omicron**) have been detected in the subregion, in addition to “previously circulating” VOIs (**Lambda** - last detected 1 September 2021 and **Mu** - last detected 8 November 2021) and other lineages/variants.

In the **Central America** subregion, Delta VOC was first detected in April 2021 by Guatemala, and rapidly expanded to become predominant by July 2021 in all countries. VOC Omicron was first detected in the subregion in December 2021 by Costa Rica. After replacing Delta, Omicron has been predominant in all the subregion, being detected in 158 samples (100%) sequenced and reported to GISAID during the last 6 weeks. So far, BA.1.1 (73%) and BA.1 (20%) sub lineages are predominant with BA.2 (7%) present, but BA.3 still not detected. (**Figure 9, 10** and **11**).

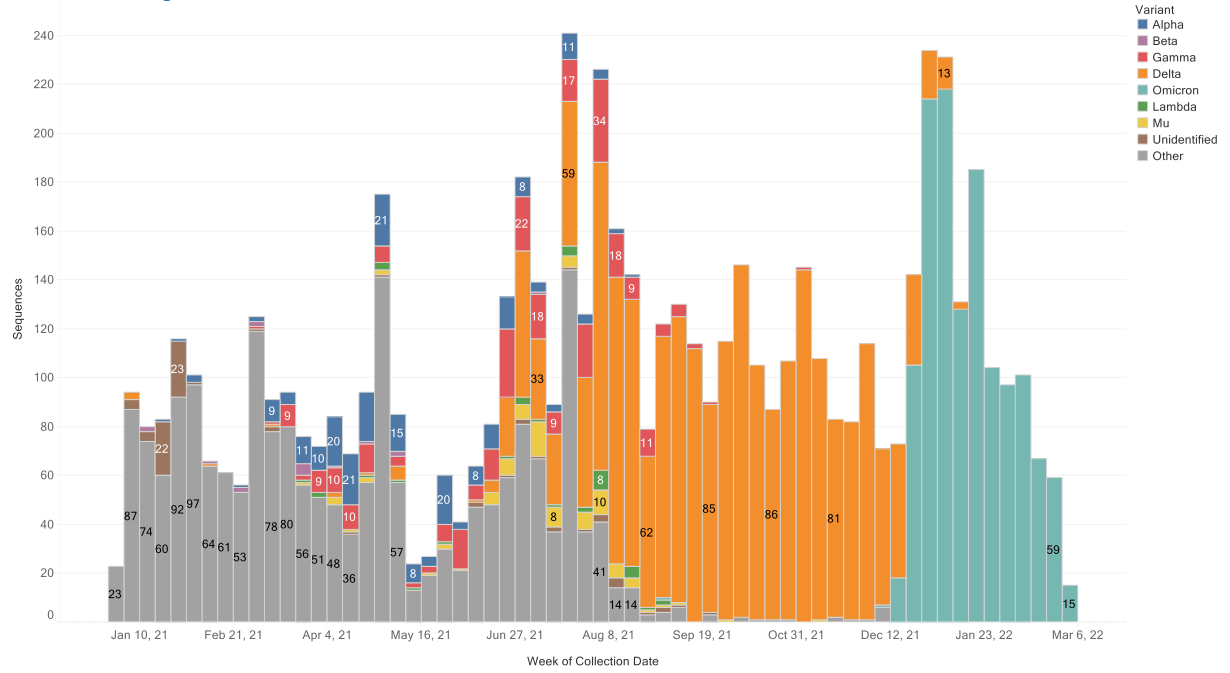
Figure 9: Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Central American subregion (January 2021-February 2022)



Source: GISAID

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

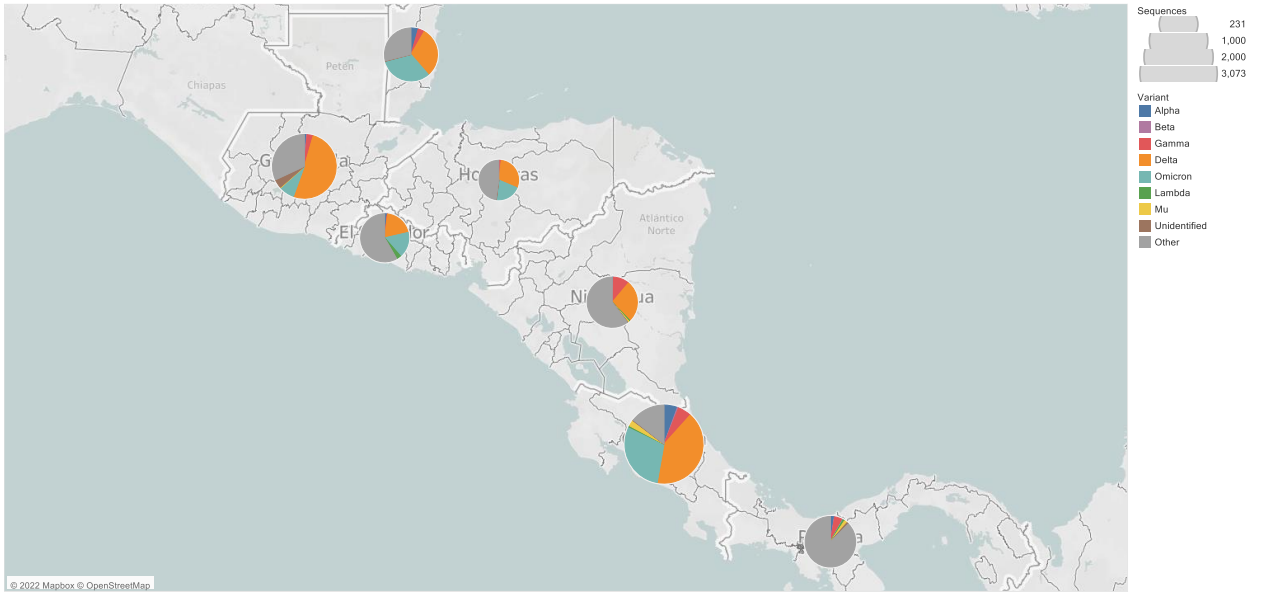
Figure 10: Variants detected and reported by countries in the Central American subregion (January 2021-February 2022)



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 Central American subregion (January 2021-February 2022)



| Country | Variant | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------|---------|-------|------|-------|--------|----|
| | Delta | Omicron | Alpha | Beta | Gamma | Lambda | Mu |
| Belize | + | + | + | | + | | |
| Costa Rica | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| El Salvador | + | + | + | | + | + | |
| Guatemala | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| Honduras | + | + | + | | + | | |
| Nicaragua | + | | + | + | + | + | + |
| Panama | | + | + | + | + | + | + |