

Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

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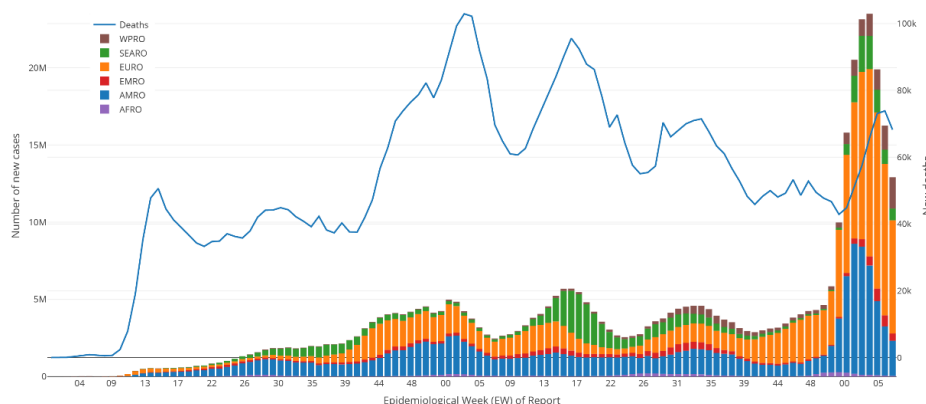
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- Executive summary including global overview
- Regional and sub-regional trends
- Immunisation
- Genomic Surveillance

Executive Summary

- **Since the onset** of the pandemic in 2020 and up to 5 April 2022, a cumulative total of 490,853,129 COVID-19 cases including 6,155,344 deaths were reported from all six WHO regions.
- **Globally**, approximately 9.5 million new COVID-19 cases were reported in epidemiological week (EW) 13 (27 March – 2 April 2022) – a 14.5% decrease compared to EW 12 (20 – 26 March 2022) (Figure 1). For the same period, 27,232 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a 40.9% relative decrease compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 545,965 COVID-19 cases including 7,997 deaths were reported in EW 13 – a 14.1% and 60.2% decrease in cases and deaths respectively compared to the previous week. The large decrease in deaths during EW 13 is primarily due to the data artifact that caused a large increase in deaths during EW 12 from Chile's retroactive addition of more than 11,000 COVID-19 deaths.
- At the subregional level, weekly COVID-19 cases decreased in all but one subregion – North America – where it increased by 6.7%. Similarly, weekly COVID-19 deaths decreased in all but one subregion – the Caribbean and the Atlantic Ocean Islands – where it increased by approximately 76.5%.
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 52.6 cases per 100,000 population during EW 13 (60.1 the previous week) and this rate has been decreasing the last 11 weeks. Between EW 13 and 12, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 26.4 deaths per 1 million population (29 the previous two weeks).
- Among 40 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 10 countries and territories (range: 0.9% - 400%) during EW 13 compared to the previous week. Similarly, among 31 countries and territories with available data, **COVID-19 ICU admissions** increased in four countries and territories (range: 9.9% - 100%).
- By the end of EW 13, the cumulative uptake of completed schedules per 100 people for COVID-19 vaccinations in the Region of the Americas was 64.6% (country range: 1%–92.9%) in the total population. (paho.org)

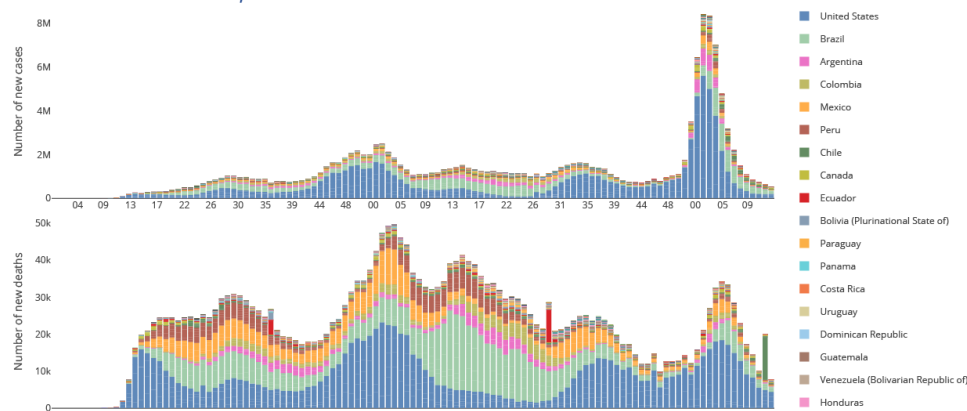
Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. As of EW 13, 2022.



Source: Data published by 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 13, 2022.



Source: Data published by Ministries of Health. Region of the Americas.

During EW 13, a total of 545,965 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas – a 14.1% relative decrease compared to the previous week (**Figure 2**). COVID-19 cases have been decreasing in the region for 11 consecutive weeks and the trend was observed in three out of the four subregions with only North America reporting an increase (6.7%) compared the previous week (**Table 1**). The countries and territories with the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases in the region of the Americas were the United States of America (204,473 new cases, 1.7% increase), Brazil (172,908 new cases, 24.5% decrease) and Canada (56,397 new cases, 33.7 % increase).

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 12 and EW 13 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 12	Deaths EW 12	Cases EW 13	Deaths EW 13	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
North America	88,591,788	1,337,815	249,229	5,338	265,973	4,910	6.70%	-8.00%
Central America	3,089,763	49,697	18,842	139	13,789	111	-26.80%	-20.10%
South America	55,988,486	1,285,934	345,079	14,565	246,093	2,856	-28.70%	-80.40%
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	3,294,982	32,516	22,688	68	20,110	120	-11.40%	76.50%

Source: Data published by Ministries of Health. Region of the Americas.

For the same period, 7,997 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas – a 60.2% decrease from the previous week (**Figure 2**). The large decrease in deaths during EW 13 is primarily due to the large increase in deaths reported during EW 12 from Chile's retroactive addition of more than 11,000 COVID-19 deaths, causing a data artifact. The decreasing trend in weekly deaths was observed across all but one subregion – the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands – where it increased by approximately 76.5% (**Table 1**).

The countries and territories with the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were the United States of America (4,554 new deaths, 7.3% decrease), Brazil (1,436 new deaths, 18.8% decrease), and Bolivia (409 new deaths, 8080% increase). Bolivia's large increase in weekly deaths during EW 13 is a direct result of the Ministry of Health retroactively adding 405 historical deaths to their totals on 29 March 2021¹.

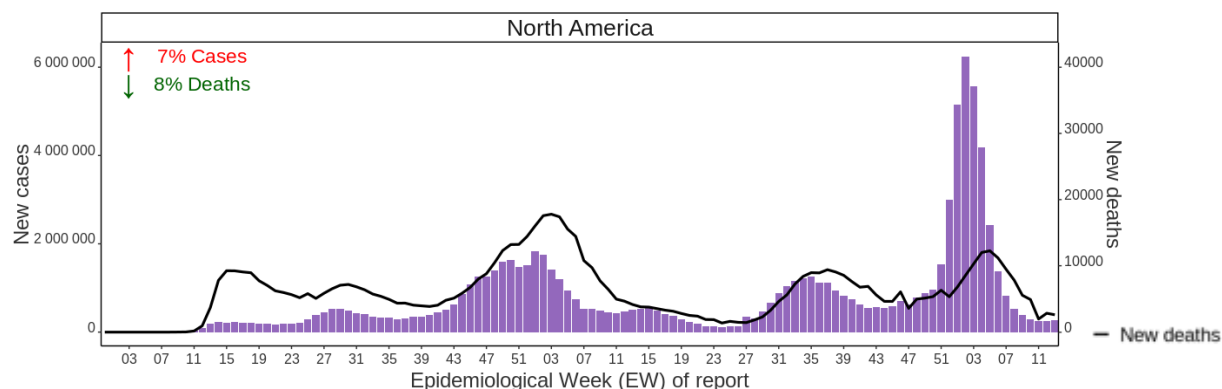
A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 13 by subregion is presented below.

¹ Bolivia Ministry of Health. COVID-19 Health Reports. 29 March 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/35LbeEA>

North America

In the North American subregion, 265,973 new cases were reported during EW 13, representing a 6.7% increase compared to the previous week (**Table 1**). This increase was driven primarily by Canada where a 33.7% increase in weekly cases was observed (56,397 new cases), followed by the United States with over 200,000 new cases – 1.7% increase compared to the previous week. In both the United States and Canada, the BA.2 sub-lineage of Omicron is now the dominant variant, and some states (e.g., New York, Massachusetts, and New Jersey in the United States) and provinces (Ontario and Quebec in Canada) are experiencing an increase in cases, while the transition to managing the pandemic continues with the easing of public health measures. In Mexico, weekly cases remained stable with 5,103 new cases reported in EW 13 – a 14.6% decline compared to EW 12.

Figure 3: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **North America.** Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 – EW 13 2022.



Source: Data published by Ministries of Health. Region of the Americas.

Weekly COVID-19 deaths decreased by 8% in North America during EW 13 relative to the previous week (**Figure 3**) and the decrease was observed in all three countries – United States, (7.3% decrease, 4,910 new deaths), Canada (0.4% decrease, 260 new deaths) and Mexico (42.5% decrease, 96 new deaths). However, please note that the data are preliminary and subject to change.

Among the two countries with available data, while COVID-19 ICU admissions continued to decline in both the United States (23.3% decrease) and Canada (7.2% decrease), COVID-19 hospitalizations increased in Canada by over 10% during EW 13 (4,225 new admissions). In the United States, hospitalizations decreased by 18.7% in EW 13 and the trends declined among all age-groups. According to an analysis by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID-19 hospitalization data collected during February 2022 showed that unvaccinated adults ages 18-years-old and older had five times the risk of getting hospitalized compared to a fully vaccinated adult.² For the same period, unvaccinated adults ages 18-years-old and older had seven times the risk of getting hospitalized compared to a fully vaccinated adult with additional or booster doses. This increase in risk was consistent in all age-groups the analysis was carried out for (12 – 17 years-old, 18 – 49 years-old, 50-64 years-old and >65-years-old).²

To date, the COVID-19 vaccination coverages for those considered “fully vaccinated”³ in the three North American countries stand as follows: United States of America (65.6%), Canada (81.4%), and Mexico (61.2%).

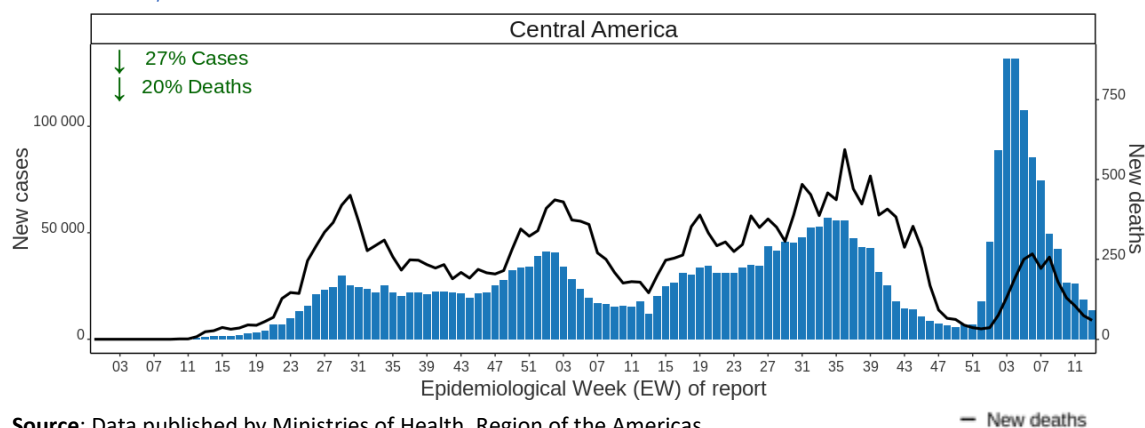
² The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). COVID-19 Data tracker. Rates of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations by vaccination status. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3r4a0kb>

³ Fully vaccinated: % 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

Central America

In Central America, the overall COVID-19 incidence for the subregion continues on a downward trend with 13,789 new cases reported during EW 13 – a 26.8% decrease compared to the previous week (**Figure 4**). Cases declined in all seven countries and territories with the largest declines reported by Honduras (500 new cases, 78.5% decrease), Belize (58 new cases, 34.1% decrease), and Guatemala (6,736 new cases, 25.4% decrease).

Figure 4: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Central America.** Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 – EW 13, 2022



Source: Data published by Ministries of Health. Region of the Americas.

During EW 13, weekly deaths decreased by approximately 20.1% in the subregion (**Figure 4**) with four out of the seven countries and territories reporting a decrease (range: 11.1% - 57.1%), and one reporting an increase of 5% compared to the previous week (Costa Rica, 42 new deaths). Among the four countries and territories with available data for COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions – Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Panama – all four reported a decreasing trend in hospitalizations (range: 13.10% - 66.7%) while two out of four reported a decrease in their ICU admissions – Honduras (78.9% decrease) and Costa Rica (13.1% decrease). The remaining two – Belize and Panama – did not report any substantial changes in their weekly COVID-19 ICU admission trends.

To date, the COVID-19 vaccination coverages for those considered “fully vaccinated”⁴ in the seven Central American countries stand as follows: Costa Rica (77.3%), El Salvador (65.8%), Guatemala (32.9%), Honduras (45.5%), Nicaragua (65.6%) and Panama (69.3%).

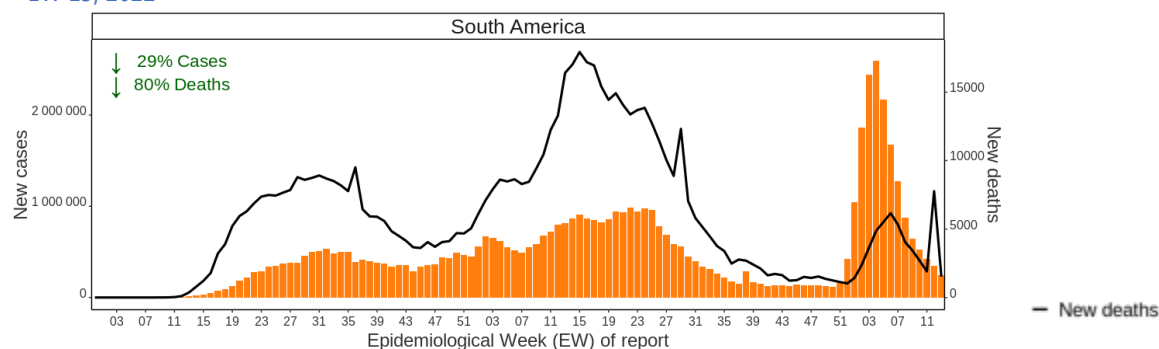
South America

In South America, a total of 246,093 new COVID-19 cases were reported during EW 13 – a 28.7% decrease compared to EW 12 (**Figure 5**). The decreasing trend was observed in nine out of the ten South American countries and territories (range: 4.7% – 50.2%) – only Ecuador reported a relative increase in weekly cases (4,454 new cases, 14.6% increase). However, please note that the data are preliminary – particularly for Ecuador – and subject to change. The largest proportion of weekly cases during EW 13 in South America was reported by Brazil (172,908 new cases, 24.5% decrease), Chile (39,157 new cases, 36.2% increase), and Argentina (15,383 new cases, 50.2% decrease).

During the same period, a total of 2,856 COVID-19 deaths was reported in South America – a 80.4% decrease compared to the previous week (Figure 5). This large decrease in subregional deaths is the result of a data artifact caused by the addition of more than 11,000 retroactive deaths in Chile’s total count during EW 12.

⁴ Fully vaccinated: % 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

Figure 5: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). South America. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 – EW 13, 2022



Source: Data published by Ministries of Health. Region of the Americas.

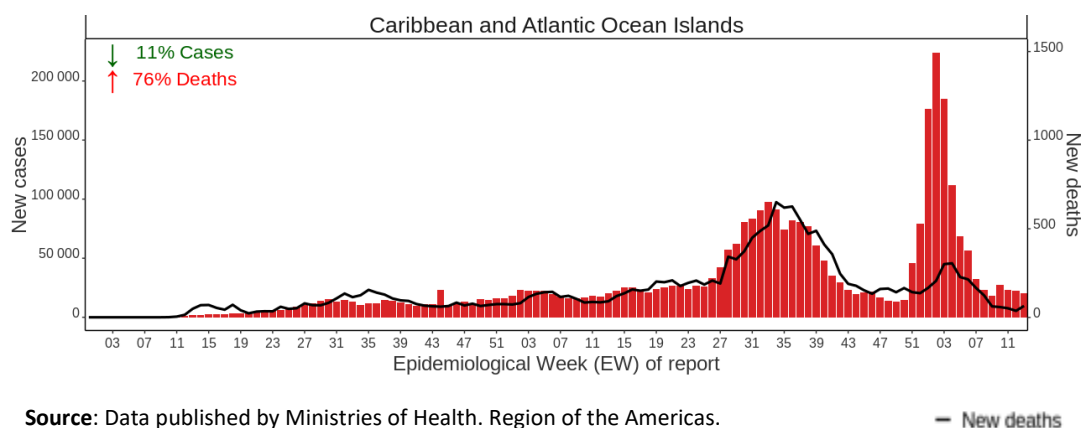
In EW 13, four countries and territories in the South American subregion reported increases in weekly COVID-19 deaths – Bolivia (409 new deaths, 8080% increase), Paraguay (119 new deaths, 190.2% increase), Venezuela (10 new deaths, 25% increase) and Ecuador (26 new deaths, 4% increase). However, besides Venezuela, the increase in weekly deaths reported from the other three countries are due to the addition of retroactive deaths (Bolivia¹ and Paraguay⁵) or ongoing retro adjustments to their COVID-19 databases (Ecuador).

Among the six countries and territories with available data, five reported a decrease in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (range: 5.2% - 33.2%) and one reported a slight increase compared to the previous week (Ecuador, 6.3% increase). Similarly, among the eight countries and territories with available data for weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions, only one reported an increase – Venezuela (9.9% increase) – compared to the previous week. The remaining seven countries and territories reported weekly decreases ranging from 1% to 35.1%.

To date, the COVID-19 vaccination coverages for those considered “fully vaccinated”⁶ in the 10 South American countries stand as follows: Argentina (81.1%), Bolivia (49.0%), Brazil (72.8%), Chile (90.5%), Colombia (67.9%), Ecuador (76.7%), Peru (78.0%), Paraguay (46.1%), Uruguay (81.7%), and Venezuela (49.8%).

Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

Figure 6: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 – EW 13, 2022



Source: Data published by Ministries of Health. Region of the Americas.

⁵ Paraguay Ministry of Health. COVID-19 update. 25 March 2022. [Twitter Post](#).

⁶ Fully vaccinated: % 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

In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion, weekly cases decreased by 11.4% (20,110 cases) and **weekly deaths increased** by 76.5% (120 deaths) in EW 13 compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in 16 out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 5.7% - 373.1%) while it decreased in the remaining 18 countries and territories (range: 2.4% - 100%). In EW 13, the largest relative increase in cases was observed in Aruba (123 new cases, 373.1% increase), Saint Barthélemy (186 new cases, 138.5% increase), and Haiti (39 new cases, 105.3% increase).

Out of 33 countries and territories in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion with reported COVID-19 deaths, eight observed an increase in their weekly deaths (range: 33.3% - 1,025%) for an overall subregional increase of 76.5% (120 new deaths) compared to the previous week.⁷ The large increase in weekly deaths primarily due to the retroactive addition of 43 COVID-19 related deaths by Barbados in EW 13.⁸ If we exclude the 43 retroactive deaths from Barbados, a total of 77 new deaths were reported during EW 13 from the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion representing a 13.2% increase compared to the previous week.

Among the countries and territories reporting an increase in their weekly deaths (excluding Barbados), the highest proportions of weekly deaths were reported by Jamaica (18 new deaths, 50% increase), Puerto Rico (11 new deaths, 120% increase), and Guadeloupe (7 new deaths, 133.3% increase). Weekly deaths either remained the same (n=20, 0% change) or declined (n=5 countries and territories) in the remaining countries and territories of the subregion.

Among the 20 countries and territories with available data for COVID-19 hospitalizations, eight reported an increase (range: 0.9% - 150%), five did not report any changes (0% change), and seven reported a decrease (range: 5.8% – 100%) compared to the previous week. Similarly, among the 14 countries and territories with available data for COVID-19 ICU admissions, three reported an increase – Aruba (3 ICU admissions, 50.0%), Cuba (33 ICU admissions, 22.2%), and Guadeloupe (13 ICU admissions, 18.2%) – eight reported a decrease (range: 9.1% – 100%), and the remaining three did not report any changes compared to the previous week.

Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions in EW 12 vs. EW 13, 2022. Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands. Region of the Americas

Country/territory	Hospit. EW 12	ICU EW 12	Hospit. EW 13	ICU EW 13	% Variation Hospit.	% Variation ICU	% Vaccinated complete schedule
Aruba	5	2	6	3	20.00%	50.00%	76.00%
Bahamas	8	1	10	1	25.00%	0.00%	39.50%
Barbados	43	NA	58	NA	34.90%		52.50%
Cuba	3,780	27	4,018	33	6.30%	22.20%	87.60%
Curaçao	5	2	6	1	20.00%	-50.00%	59.80%
Guadeloupe	86	11	81	13	-5.80%	18.20%	35.40%
Martinique	107	11	108	10	0.90%	-9.10%	38.00%
Saint Pierre and Miquelon	2	NA	5	NA	150.00%		
Trinidad and Tobago	175	11	191	8	9.10%	-27.30%	50.50%

Source: Data published by Ministries of Health and analyzed by PAHO/WHO

⁷ In the region of the Americas, only the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) has not reported any COVID-19 deaths to date.

⁸ Barbados Government Information Site. Discovery Of COVID-Related Deaths in Community. 30 March 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3u9sbSh>

Immunization

Figures 7 and 8 show the percent increase in COVID-19 vaccination coverage rate for each country during Q1 of 2022 (data taken from 31 December 2021 to 25 March 2022). For the 37 countries/territories that report coverage rate below 70% as of 25 March 2022, we note that:

1. Two countries/territories show a percent coverage increase above 10%.
2. Seven countries/territories have shown a percent coverage increase between 5% and 10%.
3. 28 countries/territories have shown a percent coverage increase below 5%.

It is important to note that not all countries report data consistently. Therefore, our calculations may underestimate the percent increase in coverage rate for countries with outdated information.

The population denominator used is in accordance with the United Nations 2019 population estimates for 2021 and U.S. Census Bureau population division data for countries with a population lower than 100,000 inhabitants.

Figure 7: Percent increase (%) in COVID-19 vaccination coverage rate and associated coverage by country. Region of the Americas. 31 December 2021 to 25 March 2022.

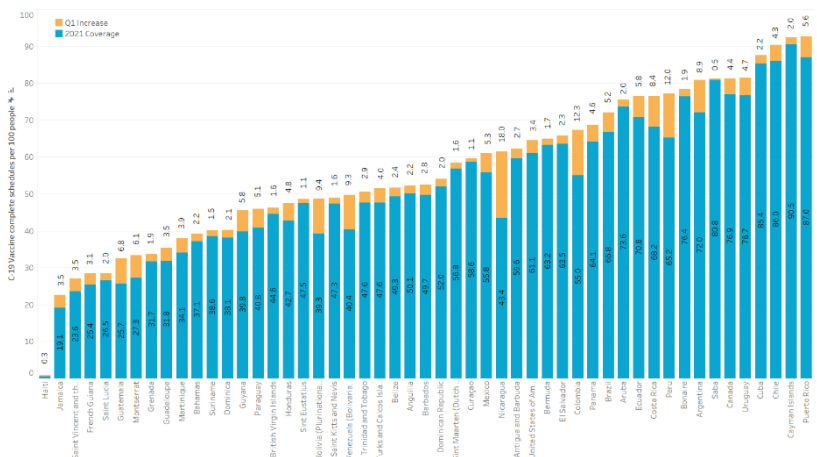
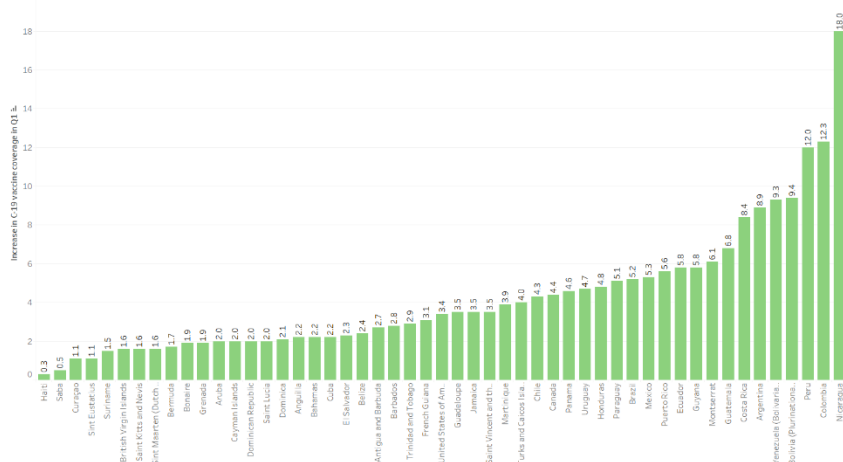


Figure 8: Percent increase (%) in COVID-19 vaccination coverage rate by country. Region of the Americas. Q1, 2022.



Source: Data published by Ministries of Health and analyzed by PAHO/WHO Immunization.

Genomic Surveillance

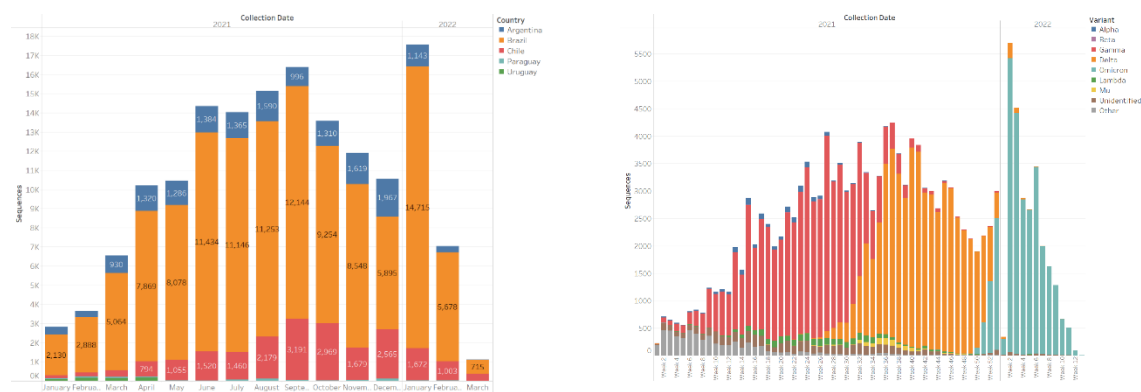
Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, more than 314,430 full genome sequences of SARS-CoV-2 from Latin America and the Caribbean have been uploaded to the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) platform up to 4 April 2022.

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 53 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 97% of the characterized samples.

Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Southern Cone

During the last fifteen months (January 2021 to March 2022) 162,627 whole genome sequences from the Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems. The "previously circulating" VOCs (Alpha - last detected 7 December 2021; Beta - last detected 12 August 2021; Gamma - last detected 30 December 2021) and the "currently circulating" VOCs (Delta - last detected 2 March 2022; and Omicron) have been detected in the subregion, in addition to "previously circulating" VOIs (Lambda - last detected 29 January 2022 and Mu - last detected 19 December 2021) and other lineages/variants.

Figure 9: (A) Number of sequences generated monthly (B) SARS-CoV-2 variants detected. Southern Cone. January 2021 – March 2022)



Source: Data from GISAID

From the Southern Cone countries, Delta VOC was first detected in July 2021 by Paraguay, and rapidly expanded to become predominant by mid-July in all countries. VOC Omicron was first detected in the subregion on 26 October 2021 in Chile. After replacing Delta, Omicron has been predominant in all the subregion and has been detected in 2,528 samples sequenced and reported to GISAID during the last 6 weeks (99% of the sequences). So far, BA.1 (73%) and BA.1.1 (26%) sub lineages are predominant with only 1% of samples identified as BA.2 and still no BA.3 detected.

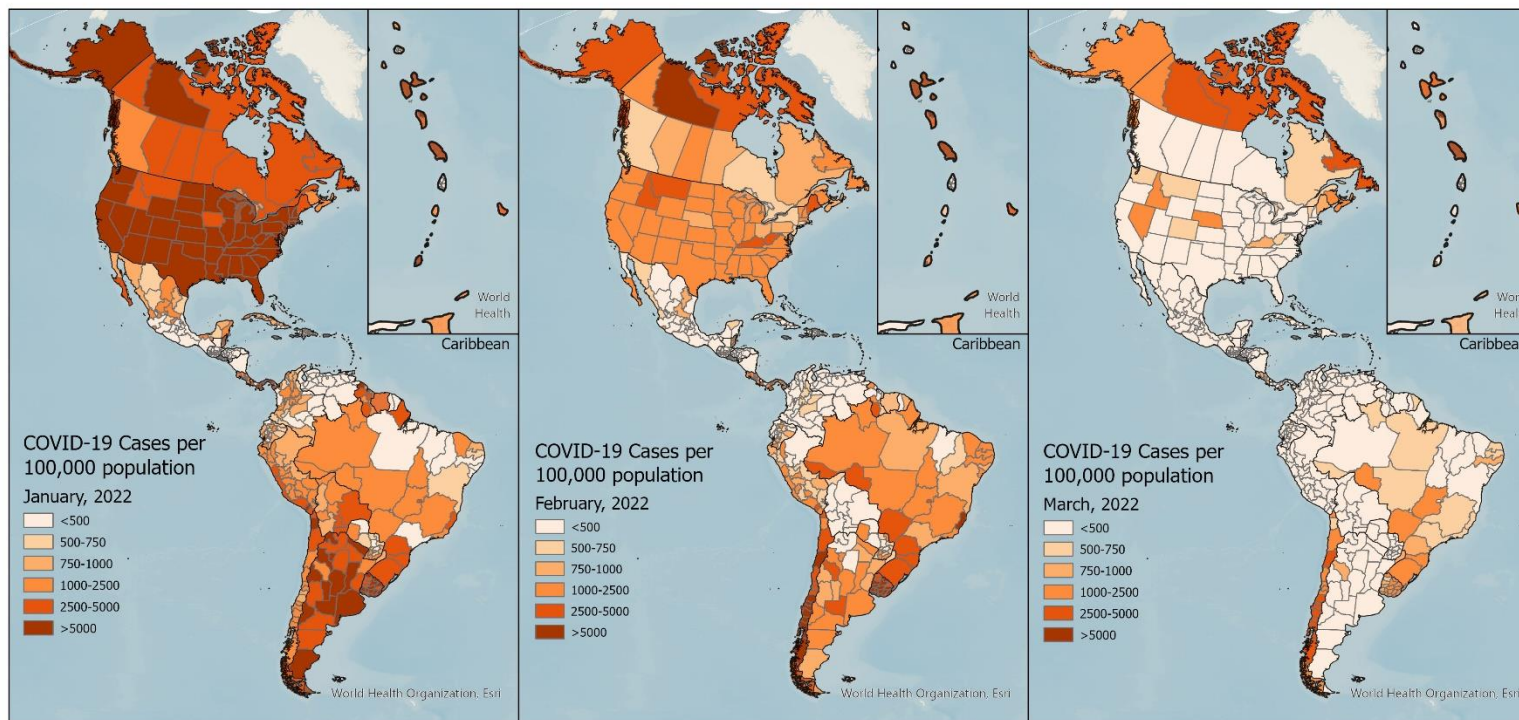
Country	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta	Omicron	Lambda	Mu
Argentina	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Brazil	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Chile	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Paraguay	+		+	+	+		
Uruguay			+			+	

Source: GISAID

*Uruguay has also officially reported Alpha, Beta, Delta, and Omicron detection. Nevertheless, up to 4 April 2022, sequences were not yet available at GISAID.



Annex 1: COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 population by country and first administrative level divisions. Region of the Americas. January vs. February vs. March 2022



In January 2022, a relatively high COVID-19 case incidence was observed in almost every country/territory of the region coinciding with the detection of Omicron variant in many parts of the region. The highest monthly incidences were observed in the US, and Canada in North America, Panama in Central America, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Paraguay in South America and Guadeloupe, Martinique, Dominica in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands.

By February, COVID-19 cases began decreasing across the region with the largest relative decreases observed in the US, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay. On the other hand, high incidence rates still continued to be reported in Uruguay, some parts of Brazil, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Dominica. Unlike most countries and territories in the region, Chile began reporting an increase in cases during February relative to January.

The declining trend in cases continued during the month of March in every country in the region. However, some countries and territories like Chile, Canada (northern provinces), Uruguay, Martinique, Dominica, and Guadeloupe reported moderately high incidence relative to the previous months.