

## Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

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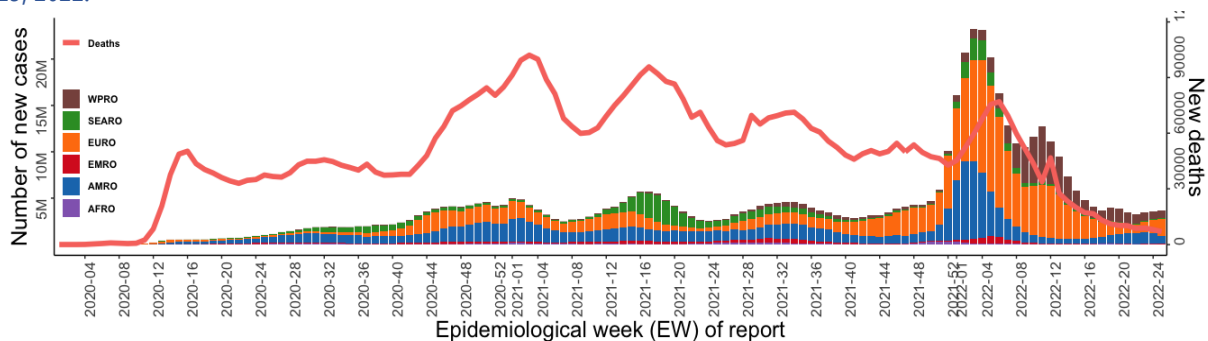
### Contents:

- 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 June 28, 2022, a cumulative total of approximately 546.9 million COVID-19 cases including about 6.3 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During epidemiological week (EW) 25, cases increased in four WHO regions (range: 13.9% - 46.8%) while they decreased in two regions – the African region (-34.4%) and the Western Pacific region (-2.5%). COVID-19 deaths increased in four WHO regions (range: 2.9% - 22.1%) while they decreased in the regions of Western Pacific (-6.1%) and Europe (-1.3%).
- **Globally**, approximately 4.3 million new COVID-19 cases were reported in EW 25 (June 19, 2022-June 25, 2022) - a 20.3% increase compared to EW 24 (June 12, 2022-June 18, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 8,753 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a 3.4% relative increase compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 1,371,165 cases and 4,158 deaths were reported in EW 25 - a 13.9% increase in cases and 9.4% increase in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, COVID-19 cases increased in all subregions (range: 3.2-48.4%) and deaths increased in two subregions - South America (32.8%) and Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands (13.3%).
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 134.1 cases per 100,000 population during EW 25 (117.7 the previous week). Between EW 25 and 24, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 7.8 deaths per 1 million population (7.6 the previous two weeks).
- Among 32 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 13 countries and territories (range: 2.8% - 100%) during EW 25 compared to the previous week. Among 26 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in 9 countries and territories (range: 2.3% - 100%).
- The global increase in prevalence of **Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5** has coincided with a rise in COVID-19 incidence for many countries and territories including those in the region of the Americas. For some countries and territories, a subsequent rise in hospitalizations and ICU was also observed – however current evidence available does not indicate a change in severity associated with any of the three Omicron descendent lineages BA.2.12.1, BA.4 and BA.5.

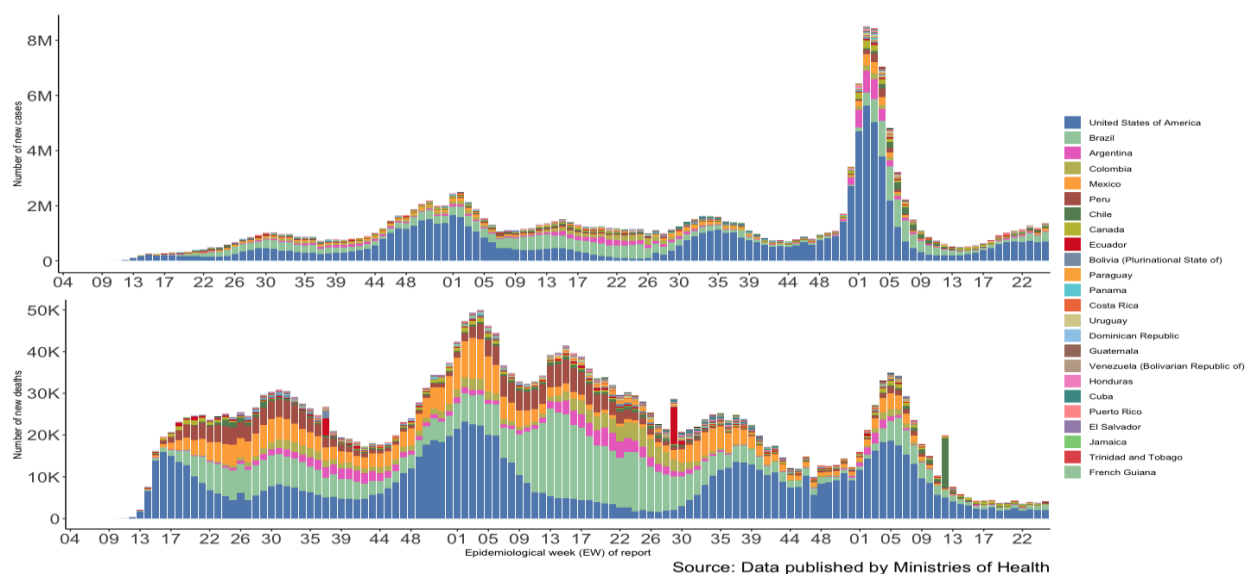
**Figure 1:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 - EW 25, 2022.



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 - 25, 2022.



During EW 25, 1,371,165 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative increase of 13.9% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 cases during EW 25 was reported from the North American subregion (793,313 cases, 7.7% increase compared to the previous week). (**Table 1**). During EW 25, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported by United States of America (701,855 new cases, 4.9% increase), Brazil (349,791 new cases, 36.6% increase), and Mexico (76,407 new cases, 47.5% increase).

In the region of the Americas, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 – associated with recent increases in cases – have been reported by 15 and 20 countries and territories in the region respectively.

**Table 1:** Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 24 and EW 25 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 24	Deaths EW 24	Cases EW 25	Deaths EW 25	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	3,847,451	33,664	46,225	113	47,703	128	3.2%	13.3%
Central America	3,384,569	51,322	22,824	129	33,876	124	48.4%	-3.9%
North America	95,750,855	1,375,599	736,908	2,273	793,313	2,200	7.7%	-3.2%
South America	59,113,029	1,300,908	398,266	1,285	496,273	1,706	24.6%	32.8%

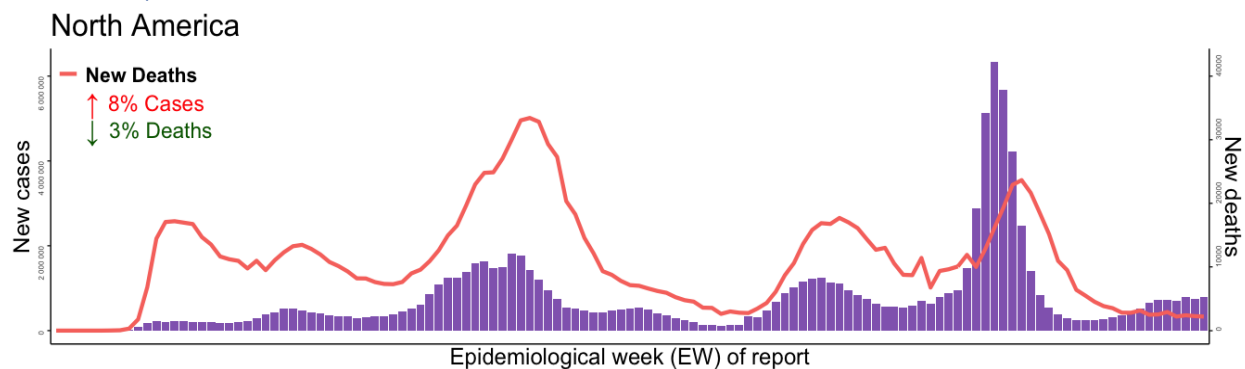
For the same period, 4,158 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative increase of 9.4% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The subregion reporting the the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in the last week was North America (2,200 deaths, 3% decrease) (**Table 1**). At the country level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths was reported from the United States of America (1,997 deaths, 1.8% decrease), followed by Brazil (1,313 deaths, 37.3% increase), and Chile (159 deaths, 6% increase).

**A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 25 by subregion is presented below.**

## North America

During EW 25, the overall trends for **COVID-19 cases** in the North American subregion have increased by 7.7% compared to the previous week. The largest proportion of reported cases were reported by the United States of America (701,855 cases, 4.9 % increase), followed by Mexico (76,407 cases, 47.5 % increase), and Canada (15,051 cases, 4.3 % decrease).

**Figure 3:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **North America.** Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 25, 2022.



During the same period, **weekly COVID-19 deaths** decreased by 3.2% in North America relative to the previous week. The largest relative decline in deaths were reported by Canada (137 new deaths, 21.3% decrease), followed by United States of America (1,997 new deaths, 1.8% decrease). There were no significant changes in weekly deaths reported from Mexico (66 new deaths, 0% change) during EW 25 compared to the previous week.

Among two countries with data available for **COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions**, Canada continued to report a decline in both weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (n=3,400; 3.7% decrease) and ICU admissions (n=232; 2.9% decrease). In the United States of America, weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions have been increasing over the past nine consecutive weeks – a 3.7% and a 2.3% increase was observed in weekly hospitalizations (n=31,601) and weekly ICU admissions (n=3,455), respectively, while weekly deaths have been slightly decreasing over the past three weeks. The current 7-day daily average of new hospital admission in the United States of America for June 15–21, 2022 was 4,375 - 1% increase from the prior 7-day average<sup>1</sup>.

In the United States of America, the proportion of **Omicron variant of concern (VOC) lineages BA.4 and BA.5**, which makes up about 52.3% of the total weekly sequenced samples – 15.7% and 36.6%, respectively – has now surpassed the proportion of BA.2.12.1 (42.2%) for the week ending 25 June 2022<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, in Canada, the proportion of BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants of Omicron has been increasing for the past four weeks, making up about 8.1% and 14.6%, respectively, of the sequenced data within the country as of the week of June 5, 2022<sup>3</sup>. Lastly, in Mexico where 100% of the weekly sampled sequences were confirmed to be the Omicron VOC – BA.4 and BA.5 lineages made up 4% and 24% of the weekly sequenced samples respectively during EW 23 of 2022. In all three countries, there is a much higher proportion of BA.5 circulating compared to BA.4 per the sampled data so far.

The percentage of eligible population in each of the three countries that received a completed primary schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations<sup>4</sup> are as follows: Canada – 82%; United States of America – 66%; and Mexico – 61%.

<sup>1</sup> United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review. Accessed 28 June 2022. <https://bit.ly/3s2MKi3>.

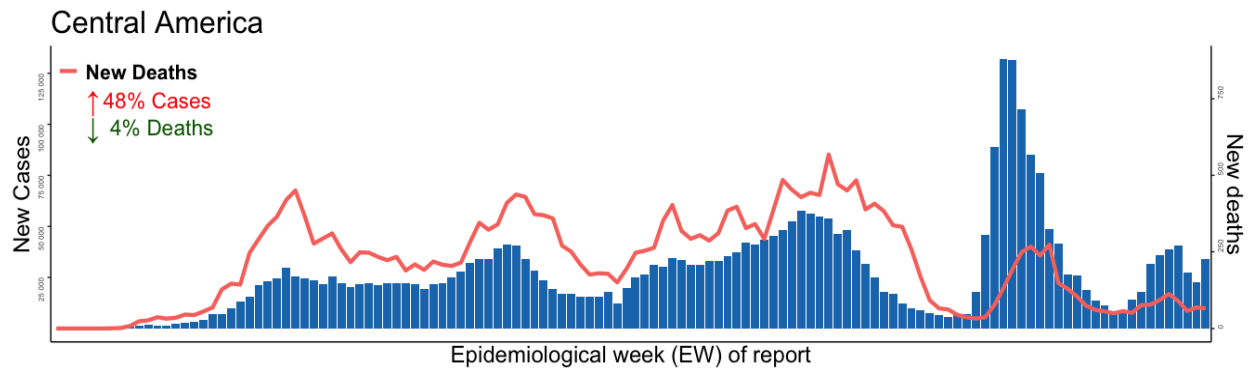
<sup>2</sup> United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Variant Proportions. Accessed 28 June 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Obz8cT>

<sup>3</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). COVID-19 Epidemiological Update. Accessed 28 June 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3bbFRFr>

<sup>4</sup> 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.

## Central America

**Figure 4:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). Central America. Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 25, 2022.



In Central America, COVID-19 incidence increased by 48.4% with 33,876 new cases reported during EW 25 compared to the previous week (**Figure 4**) – primarily drive by the large increase in cases in Guatemala and El Salvador. Please note that data between EW 23 to EW 25 for Costa Rica was not publicly available, resulting in a data artifact in percent change of COVID-19 cases and deaths for the subregion.

During EW 24, four countries/territories reported an increase in weekly cases compared to the previous week (range: 6.1 – 103.6%). The largest proportion of reported cases was observed in Guatemala (14,670 new cases, 67.5% increase), followed by Panama (12,015 new cases, 5.4% decrease), and El Salvador (5,512 new cases, 100% increase). Please note that the increase in cases for El Salvador during EW 25 may be a result of a data artifact since new cases had not been reported in the previous week.

COVID-19 **weekly deaths** decreased by approximately 3.9% EW 25 in the subregion during relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**). Apart from Belize – where there a 100% increase in weekly deaths (1 new death) during EW 25 – all six other countries/territories in the subregion either reported a decline (range: 3% - 100%) or reported no change (Honduras; 1 death) compared to the previous week.

Among three countries/territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations** in the Central American Subregion, Belize reported a 55.6% increase in weekly hospitalizations (n=14) while Panama observed a 19.4% decrease (n=245 hospitalizations), and Honduras reported no significant changes (n=24; 0% change) during EW 25. Similarly, both countries/territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions** reported a decline during EW 25 – Honduras (2 ICU admissions, -50%) and Panama (38 ICU admissions, -2.6%). In Panama, while the weekly number of cases and deaths had been decreasing over the past five weeks and three weeks, respectively – severity trends like hospitalizations and ICU admissions only started declining during the last week.

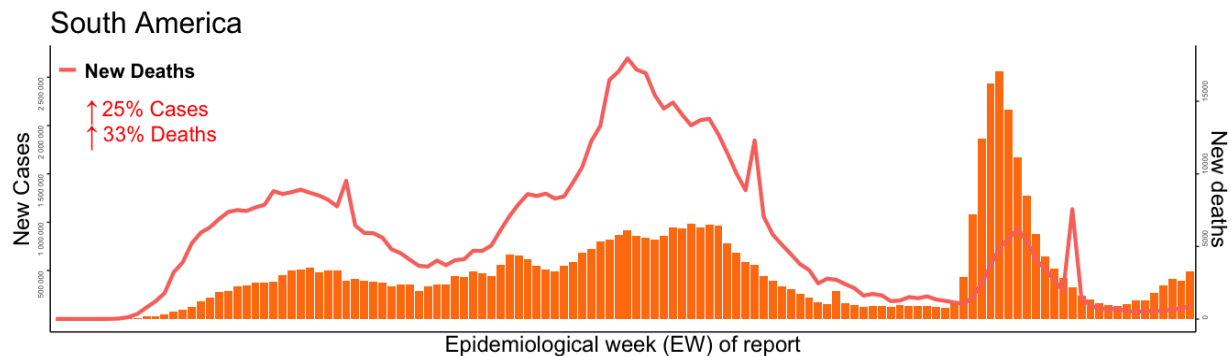
To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from two of the seven countries and territories in the subregion – Costa Rica and Panama. Lastly, countries and territories in this subregion with less than 70% of their eligible population having received a completed schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations<sup>5</sup> include Belize (53%); El Salvador (66%); Guatemala (35%), and Honduras (53%).

<sup>5</sup> 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.

## South America

In South America, there has been a large increase in **COVID-19 incidence** with a total of 496,273 new COVID-19 cases reported during EW 25 – a 24.6% increase 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 25, 2022.**



Out of the 10 countries and territories the sub-region, seven experienced an increase in cases during EW 25 with the largest proportion of reported cases being reported by Brazil (349,791 new cases, 36.6% increase), followed by Chile (65,587 new cases, 10.7% decrease), and Argentina (25,680 new cases, 8.4% decrease). The largest relative increase was observed in Bolivia (5,485 cases, 109.6% increase), followed by Peru (14,746 new cases, 92% increase), and Paraguay (2,104 new cases, 52% increase).

During EW 25, a total of 1,706 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in South America – a 32.8% increase compared to the previous week, primarily due to a big increase reported by Brazil (1,313 new deaths, 37.3% increase), accounting for the largest proportion of reported deaths in the subregion. Seven countries/territories in the subregion reported an increase in weekly deaths during EW 25 (range: 4.5 – 145.5%), with the largest relative increase being reported from Argentina (54 new deaths, 145.5% increase), followed by Colombia (52 new deaths, 116.7% increase). Two countries reported a decline – Uruguay (19 deaths, -13.6%) and Ecuador (21 deaths, -25%) – while Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) reported no substantial changes in weekly deaths (2 deaths, 0% change).

For the same period, among five countries/territories with available data for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations**, all countries/countries experienced an increase in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (range: 7.4 - 37.8%). Similarly, among seven countries/territories with data available for **COVID-19 ICU admissions**, five reported an increase in their ICU admissions during EW 24 (range: 4.1 - 100% increase).

Severity trends continued to be elevated in Colombia where sustained increases have been observed in weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions – 1,400 hospitalizations; 23% increase & 313 ICU admissions; 23.2% increase during EW 25, as well as in weekly deaths (116.7% increase during EW 25 compared to the previous week).

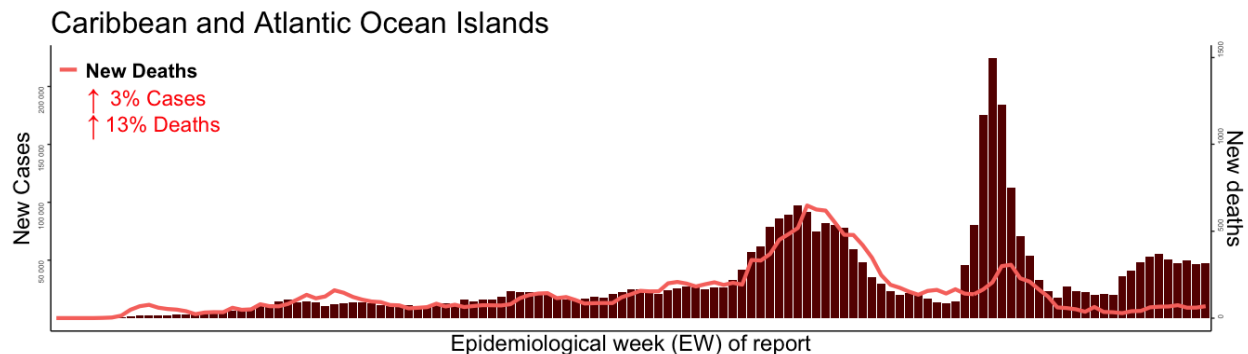
To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from six out of the 10 countries in the subregion – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Lastly, countries in South America with less than 70% of their eligible population having received a completed schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations<sup>6</sup> include Bolivia (51%); Paraguay (48%); and Venezuela (50%) – and all three countries are experiencing increased COVID-19 transmission in recent weeks.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

## Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands sub-region, **weekly cases** have been plateauing for the past two consecutive weeks with a 3.2% increase observed during EW 25. However, COVID-19 **weekly deaths** increased by 13.3% compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in 14 out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 2.7% - 1200%) while they declined in the remaining countries and territories (range: -100% - -4.1%).

**Figure 6:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands.** Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 25, 2022.



During EW 25, there was a 13% increase in COVID-19 weekly deaths with a total of 128 reported deaths in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion. Of the total, Nine countries/territories observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths during EW 25 compared to the previous week (range: 9.1-100%), ten reported a decline (range: -100 - -20%), and one remained the same - French Guiana (1 death, 0% change). The remaining countries/territories have not reported weekly deaths during EW 25.

Among 22 countries/territories with available data, six reported an increase in their **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations** (range: 2.8 – 100%), eight reported a decline (range: -100 - -5.6%), and eight countries/territories remained the same during EW 25 compared to the previous week. Among 14 countries/territories with data available for **COVID-19 ICU admissions**, three countries/territories reported an increase in their ICU admissions, including Martinique (n=10; 42.9% increase), French Guiana (n=5; 25% increase), and Trinidad and Tobago (n=5; 25% increase). The remaining countries/territories reported either no change (Suriname, Jamaica, and Guyana) or a decline (n=9; range: -100% - -3.3%) during EW 25 compared to the previous week.

**Significant increases in weekly cases** in the subregion during EW 25 were observed in Saba (13 cases, 1200%, Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (51 cases, 121.7% increase), and Grenada (155 cases, 93.8% increase).

**Remarkable increases in weekly hospitalizations and weekly ICU admissions** during EW 25 were observed in French Guiana (32 hospitalizations; 88.2% increase) including ICU admissions (n=5; 25% increase), the Bahamas (45 hospitalizations; 60.7% increase), and Martinique (122 hospitalizations; 43.5% increase & 10 ICU admissions; 42.9% increase) relative to the previous week.

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from nine out of 34 countries and territories in the subregion – and all nine were overseas territories of either France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, or the United States of America. Lastly, at least 26 countries and territories in this subregion reported less than 70% of their eligible population as having received a completed schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations<sup>7</sup>.

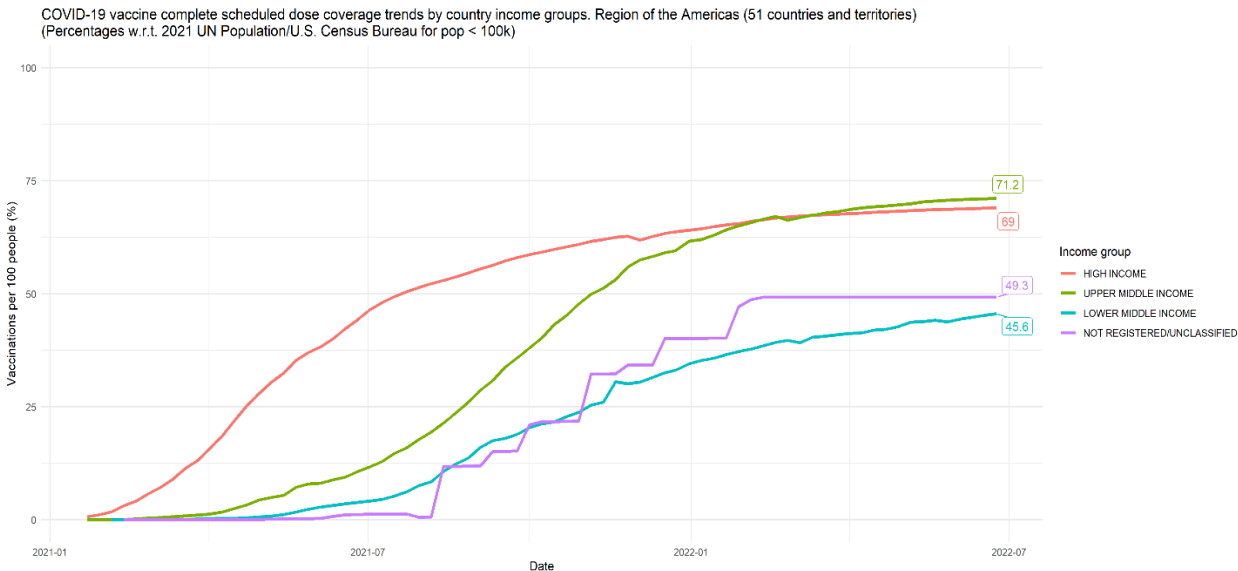
<sup>7</sup> Completed schedule is calculated using the last dose of the primary schedule, which means the first dose for 1 dose schedules, second dose or third dose in accordance with each country's established schedule.



# Immunitization

**Figure 7** shows the COVID-19 vaccine complete scheduled dose coverage trends grouped by country income in the region of the Americas as of EW 25, 2022.

**Figure 7.** the COVID-19 vaccine complete scheduled dose coverage trends grouped by country income. The region of the Americas. As of EW 25, 2022.



When stratified by World Bank 2021-2022 income level classification\*\*, the COVID-19 vaccination coverage rate\* in the Americas shows a significant disparity (greater than 20 percentage points) between lower-middle income countries/territories and upper-middle/high income countries/territories. Also, it is important to note that high income countries/territories began vaccination campaigns much sooner (thanks to bilateral purchases) and were able to achieve higher coverage rates more quickly (thanks to established vaccination platforms for adults) compared to their lower-income counterparts. By July 2021, high income countries had achieved greater than 40% vaccination coverage for the primary series, while upper- and lower-middle income countries were still below 15%. Since then, however, upper-middle income countries have closed the gap – and even surpassed – high income countries in their coverage rate, gaining 2 percentage points at the time of this report. Finally, it is important to note that countries in all four income level categories have reached a plateau in the administration of the primary vaccination series.

\* Coverage based on 2021 U.N. Population/U.S. Census Bureau for countries with less than 100,000 inhabitants.

\*\* Please note that the following countries/territories are yet unregistered/unclassified by the World Bank and are shown as one group in the figure above: Anguilla, Bonaire, Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Montserrat, Martinique, Saba, Sint Eustatius and Venezuela.

## Genomic Surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 376,852 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 28 June 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 with the BA.1 and BA.1 sub lineages identified in more than 70% of the characterized samples from the Americas and BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages in 28.5% of the samples. The BA.3, BA.4, and BA.5 sub-lineages account for <0.01%, 0.39%, and 0.59% respectively of samples detected. Beyond Omicron, few lineages are currently detected in the Region.

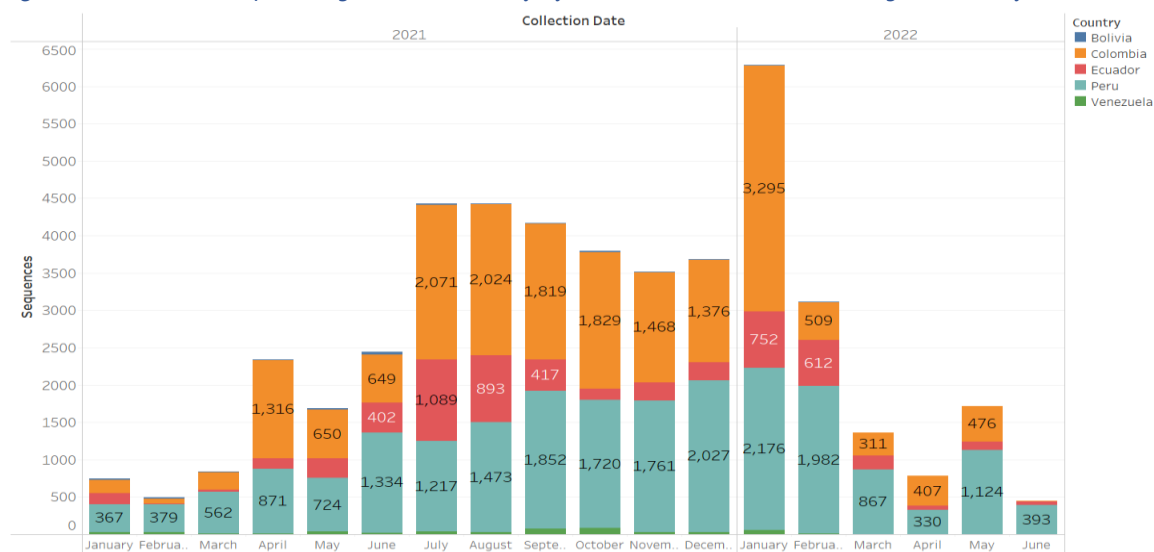
### Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Andean subregion

During the last 18 months (January 2021 to 22 June 2022), 46,297 whole genome sequences from Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela) have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems (**Figure 8**). The “previously circulating” VOCs (**Alpha** - last detected 3 October 2021; **Beta** - last detected 15 October 2021; **Gamma** - last detected 23 December 2021; **Delta** - last detected 5 May 2022) and the “currently circulating” VOC **Omicron** have been detected in the subregion, in addition to “previously circulating” VOIs (**Lambda** - last detected 13 April 2021 and Mu - last detected 25 January 2022) and other lineages/variants (**Figure 9,10**).

After replacing Delta, Omicron has been predominant in the subregion, being detected in 1,839 samples (97.2%) sequenced and reported to GISAID during the last 8 weeks of available data. Since Omicron's first detection, BA.1 and BA.1 sublineages represent the majority (81%) of sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 17.9% of the sequences and BA.3, BA.4, and BA.5 represent 0.03%, 0.55%, and 0.31% of sequences respectively. The proportion of sequences identified as BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages) has been decreasing for the past 8 weeks where data is available while BA.2 (and BA.2 sublineages) has been increasing during the same period. In EW 23-2022, BA.2 and its sublineages increased to 87.4% of sequences submitted (**Figure 11**).

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 8.** Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Andean subregion (January 2021-June 2022)

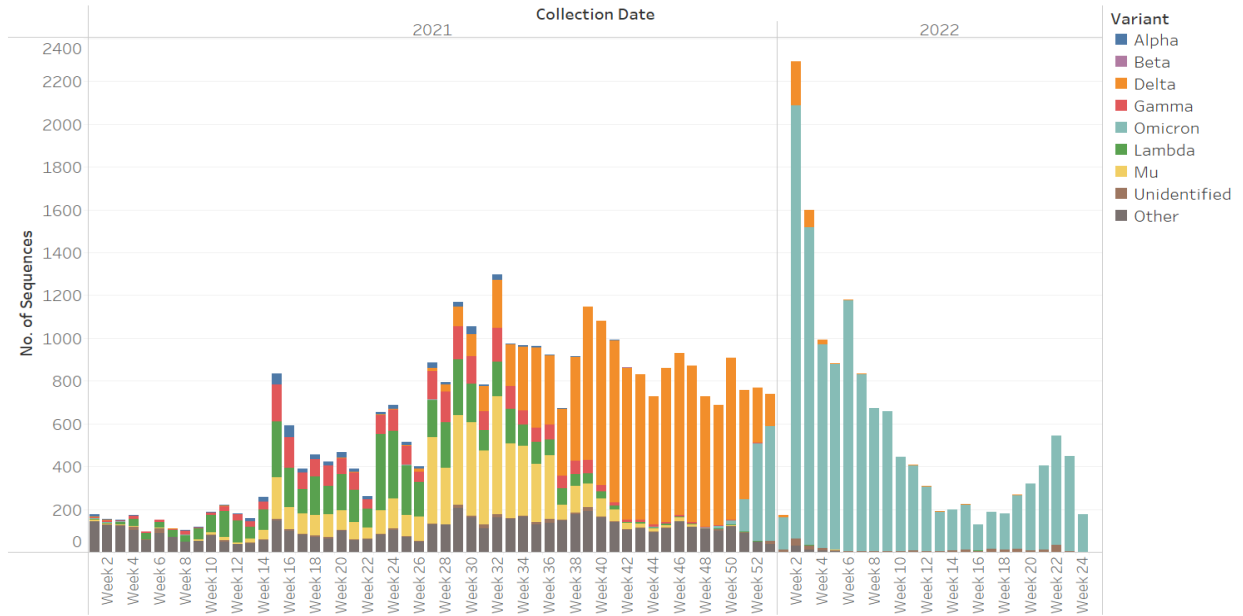


Source: GISAID

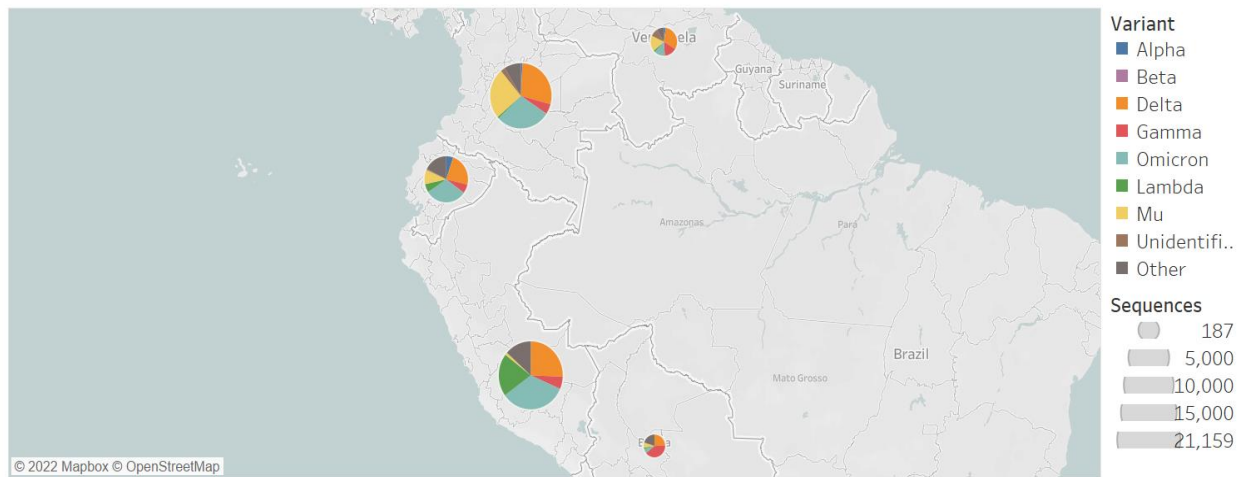


**Figure 9.** Variants detected and reported by countries in the Andean subregion (January 2021-June 2022)

Source: GISAID. Country-specific data is available at: [https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS\\_CoV2\\_variants\\_regional.asp](https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp)



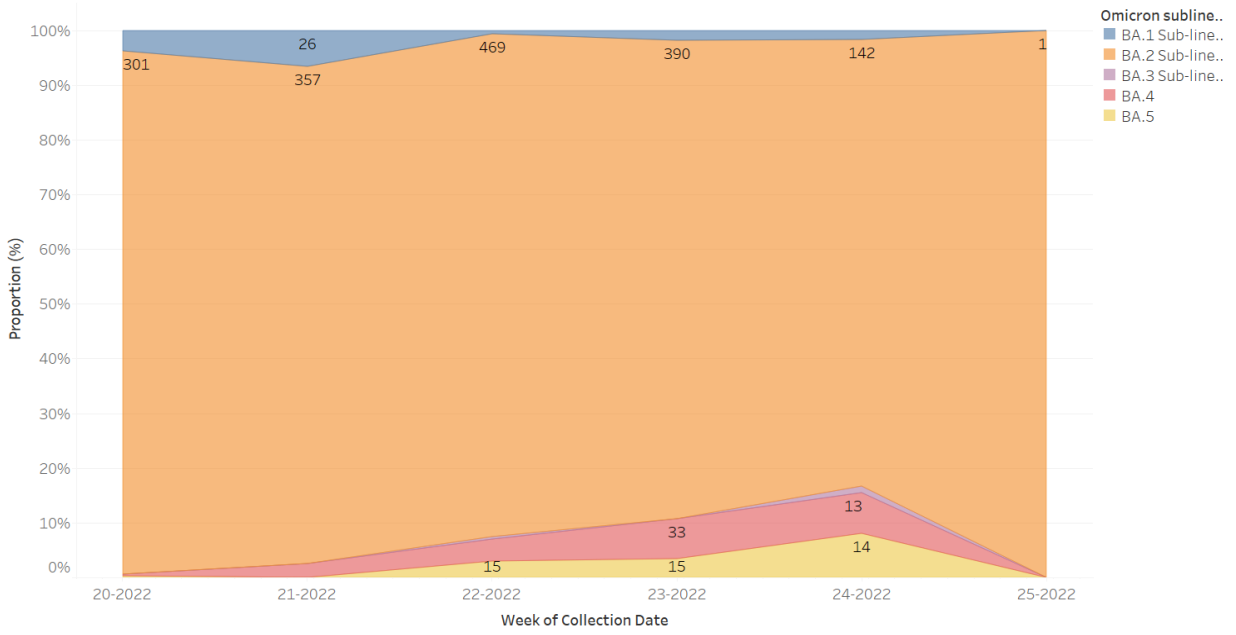
**Figure 10.** Distribution of VOC and VOI identified by countries in the Andean subregion (January 2021-June 2022)



Country	Variant						
	Alpha	Beta	Delta	Gamma	Omicron	Lambda	Mu
Bolivia			+	+	+	+	+
Colombia		+	+	+	+	+	+
Ecuador	+		+	+	+	+	+
Peru	+		+	+	+	+	+
Venezuela	+		+	+	+	+	+

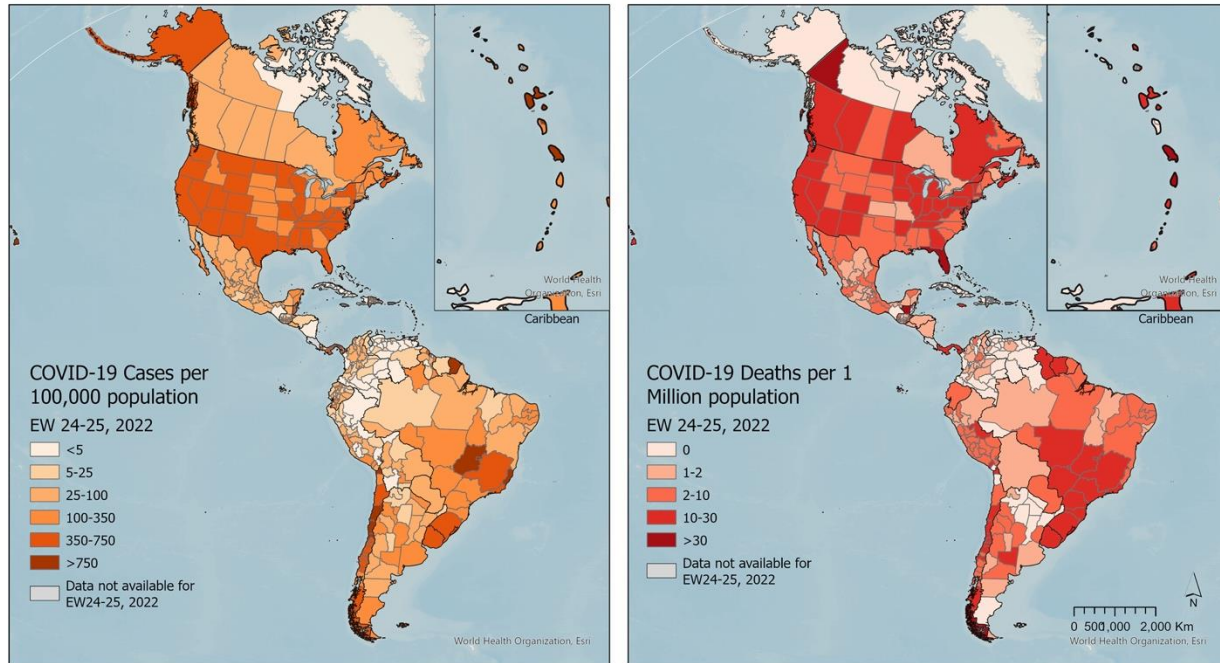
Source: GISAID

**Figure 11.** Distribution of VOC Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Andean subregion (January-June 2022)



Source: GISAID

**Annex 1.** The maps of COVID-19 incidence rate per 100,00 population (left) and the mortality rate from COVID-19 per 1 million population (right) . Region of the Americas. EW 24 and 25, 2022.



The maps (**Annex 1**) represent the COVID-19 incidence rate per 100,00 population and the mortality rate from COVID-19 per 1 million population in the Region of the Americas reported in EW 24 and 25, 2022. Countries reporting highest incidence (>350 cases per 100,000 people) over the past two weeks were the U.S., Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, French Guiana as well as several Caribbean Islands including: Barbados, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Puerto Rico. Highest mortality rates (>30 deaths per 1 million people) were observed in Canada, the U.S., Guatemala, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Puerto Rico, Aruba, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In North America, incidence rates were slightly higher overall in the United States and in Mexico compared to the previous two weeks. Mortality rates were also higher in Canada and the United States compared to the previous two weeks (more states and territories reporting over 10 deaths per million people). In Central America, rates were similar to the previous two weeks, though a slight decline in incidence was noted for southern districts in Belize, and an increase in mortality was noted in the department of Peten in Guatemala. In South America, incidence was slightly higher in eastern states of Brazil as well as in French Guiana compared to the previous two weeks. Mortality increased slightly in eastern districts of Peru (specially in Ucayali, reporting between 10-30 deaths per million people, as well as in Ecuador. Finally, incidence and mortality rates remain high in the Caribbean sub-region with slight increase in mortality noted overall compared to the previous two weeks.