

Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

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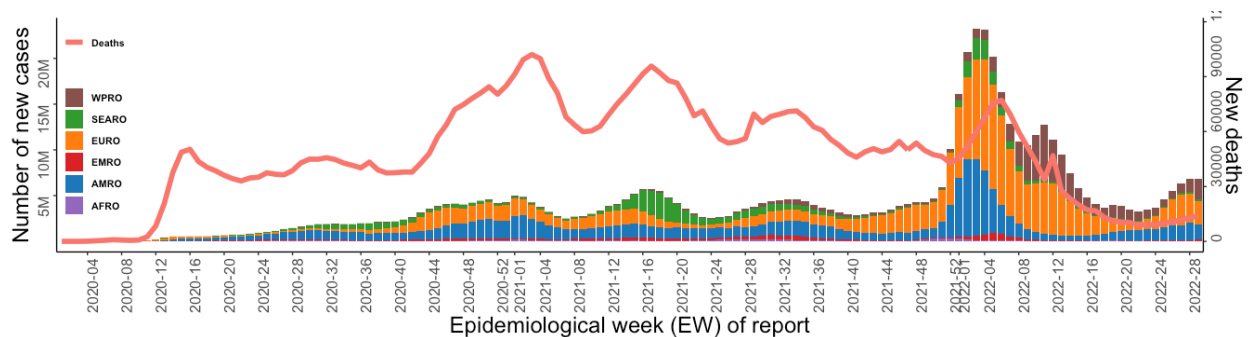
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Executive Summary

- **Since the onset of the pandemic** in 2020 and up to August 02, 2022, a cumulative total of approximately 573 million COVID-19 cases including about 6.4 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During epidemiological week (EW) 30, cases decreased in all WHO regions (range: -39.5 - -2.6%). COVID-19 deaths decreased in four regions while they increased in the regions of the Americas (2.9%) and Western Pacific (2.6%).
- **Globally**, approximately 5,399,961 new COVID-19 cases were reported in EW 30 (July 24, 2022-July 30, 2022) - a -21.3% decrease compared to EW 29 (July 17, 2022-July 23, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 12,078 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a -16.5% relative decrease compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 1,700,230 cases and 6,344 deaths were reported in EW 30 – a -0.8% decrease in cases and 2.9% increase in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, COVID-19 cases increased in 2 subregions - South America (4.4%) and Central America (27.6%). Deaths increased in all (range: 9.9 - 21.6%) but one subregion - North America (-9.6% decrease) during EW 30 relative to the previous week.
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 163 cases per 100,000 population during EW 30 (166.7 the previous week). Between EW 30 and 29, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 12.1 deaths per 1 million population (11.8 the previous two weeks).
- Among 33 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 15 countries and territories (range: 0.8% - 200%) during EW 30 compared to the previous week. Among 26 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in 13 countries and territories (range: 6.7% - 100%).

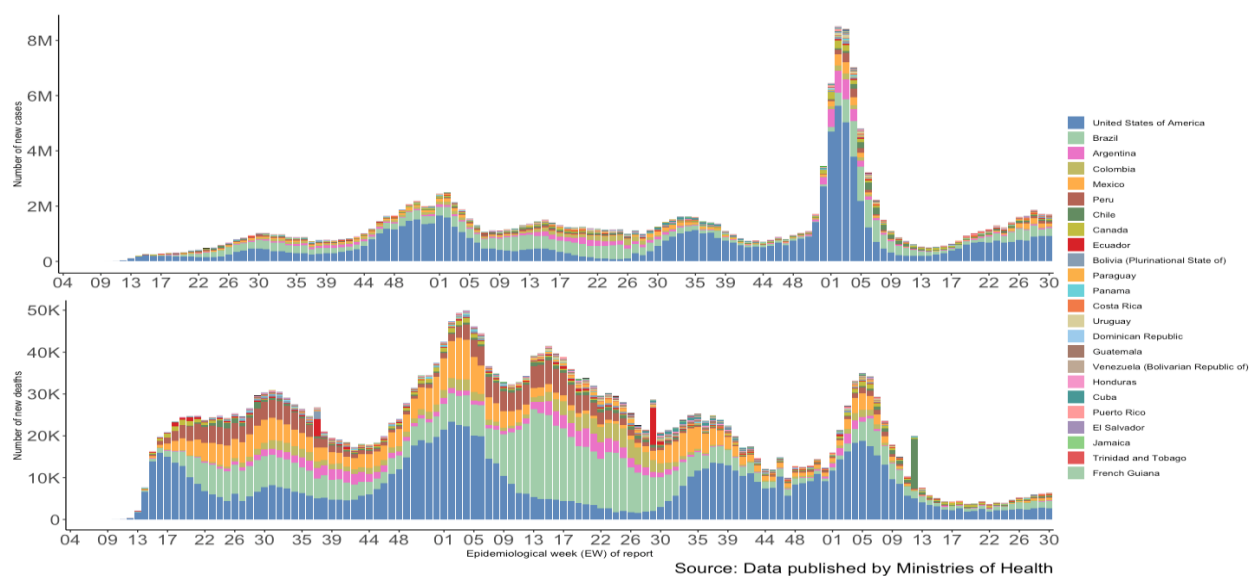
Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 - EW 30, 2022.



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 - 30, 2022.



During EW 30, 1,700,230 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of -0.8% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 cases during EW 30 was reported from the North American subregion (1,040,850 cases, -4% decrease) compared to the previous week. (**Table 1**). The highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported by the United States of America (923,366 new cases, 1.8% increase), Brazil (284,971 new cases, 11.5% increase), and Mexico (84,591 new cases, -44.4% decrease).

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 29 and EW 30 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 29	Deaths EW 29	Cases EW 30	Deaths EW 30	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	4,041,912	34,192	36,246	86	35,451	98	-2.2%	14.0%
Central America	3,749,545	52,254	55,510	181	70,819	199	27.6%	9.9%
North America	100,963,159	1,392,751	1,091,518	3,596	1,040,850	3,250	-4.6%	-9.6%
South America	62,036,582	1,312,874	529,864	2,301	553,110	2,797	4.4%	21.6%

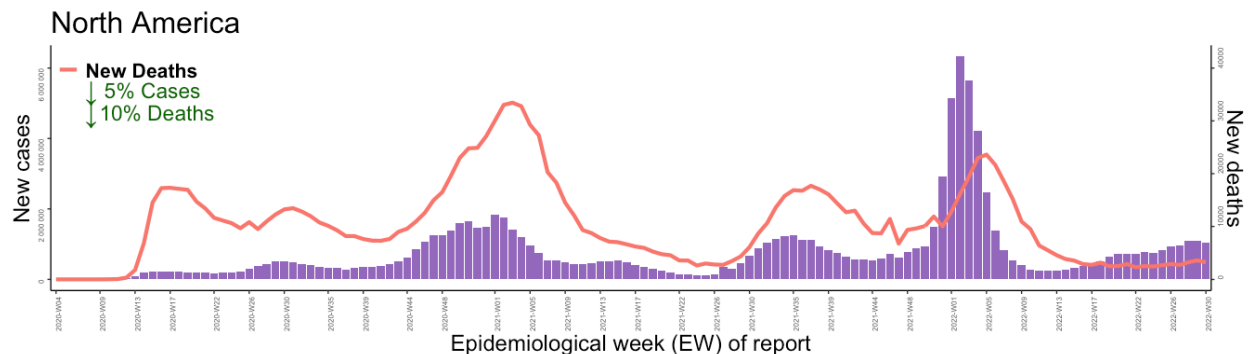
For the same period, 6,344 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative increase of 2.9% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 deaths during EW 30 was reported from the North American subregion (3,102 deaths, -13% decrease) (**Table 1**). At the national level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were reported from United States of America (2,626 deaths, -9.7% decrease), Brazil (1,827 deaths, 30.9% increase), and Mexico (371 deaths, -22.9% decrease).

A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 30 by subregion is presented below.

North America

The overall trends for **COVID-19 cases** have declined in North America during EW 30 for the second consecutive week, with a 4.6% decline in cases reported compared to the previous week. COVID-19 cases decreased in Mexico (84,591 cases, -44.4% decrease) during EW 30, while they increased in the United States of America (923,366 cases, 1.8% increase), and Canada (32,893 cases, 2.3% increase) compared to the previous week.

Figure 3: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). North America. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 30, 2022.



During the same period, weekly **COVID-19 deaths** decreased by -9.6% in the North American subregion during EW 30 relative to the previous week. While COVID-19 deaths decreased in Mexico (371 new deaths, -22.9% decrease) and in the United States of America (2,626 new deaths, -9.7% decrease) during EW 30, Canada reported a 22.2% (253 new deaths) increase during EW 30 compared to the previous week.

Among two countries with data available for **COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions**, the United States of America has observed a large increase in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations with a steeper increase observed in the last three weeks. During EW 30, a total of 44,508 hospitalizations and 5,188 ICU admissions were reported in the United States of America – an increase of 2.9% and 6.7% respectively compared to the previous week. In Canada, COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions continued to increase for the fifth consecutive week since EW 26 – an increase of 4.3% (n=5,569 hospitalizations) and 12.7% (n=311 ICU admissions) was reported during EW 30 as compared to the previous week.

In Mexico, COVID-19 deaths have decreased for the second consecutive week during EW 30 with a 22.9% decrease observed compared to the previous week. The national hospital occupancy of Mexico has slightly increased from 16% on July 11¹ to 18% on July 25, 2022.² In Mexico, the proportion of Omicron VOC – BA.4 and BA.5 lineages made up about 9.3% and 72% respectively of the sequenced samples between EW 27 and EW 28.

In Canada, the proportion of BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants of Omicron have been increasing for the past two months, primarily with BA.5, making up about 85.6% – 12% and 73.6% respectively – of the sequenced data within the country as of the week of July 10, 2022.³ Similarly in the United States of America, the proportion of Omicron variant of BA.4 and BA.5 made up about 95% of the total weekly sequenced samples during EW 30.⁴ The proportion of BA.5 Omicron subvariant has increased by 8% from the previous week – making up nearly 82% – while the proportion of BA.4 variant has slightly declined – accounting for about 13% of sequenced samples for the same period.⁴

1 Secretaría de Salud de México. COVID-19 Technical Statement. 2 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3aW5Bps>

2 Secretaría de Salud de México. COVID-19 Technical Statement. 2 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3BI5PkW>

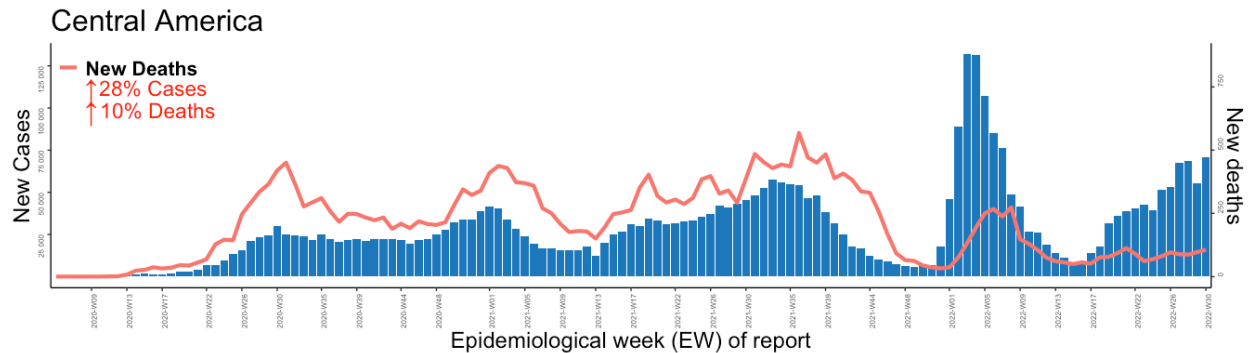
3 Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). COVID-19 Epidemiological Update. Accessed 2 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3bbFRFr>

4 The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Variant Proportions. Accessed 2 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Ozb8cT>

Central America

In Central America, the overall COVID-19 incidence for the sub-region has increased by 27.6% (70,819 new cases) during EW 30 compared to the previous week (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Central America. Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 30, 2022.**



During EW 30, four countries/territories in the subregion reported an increase in **weekly cases** – Honduras (5,105 new cases, 92.1% increase), Guatemala (33,440 new cases, 24.9% increase), and Nicaragua (30 new cases, 15.4% increase), and El Salvador (9,848 new cases, 100% increase). Please note that the percent change in cases of El Salvador is a result of data artifact since no cases had been reported during EW 29. The largest relative decline in cases was observed in Belize (490 new cases, -21.9% decrease), followed by Costa Rica (16,010 new cases, -15.9% decrease), and Panama (5,896 new cases, -7.7% decrease).

For the same period, **weekly deaths** increased by approximately 9.9% relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**) with two out of the seven countries and territories reporting an increase – Costa Rica (50 new deaths, 35.1% increase) and Guatemala (124 new deaths, 25.3% increase). Weekly deaths declined in three countries/territories – Panama (13 new deaths, -23.5% decrease), El Salvador (10 new deaths, -41.2% decrease), and Honduras (2 new deaths, -81.8% decrease) during EW 30 compared to the previous week.

Among four countries/territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations** in this subregion, two countries reported an increase in weekly hospitalizations – Belize (6 hospitalizations, 200% increase) and Costa Rica (383 hospitalizations, 2% increase), while there were no substantial changes observed in Panama (183 hospitalizations, -6.6% decrease) and Honduras (179 hospitalizations, -6.8% decrease) during EW 30 compared to the previous week. In terms of **weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions**, two out of three countries reported an increase – Honduras (10 ICU admissions, 11% increase) and Costa Rica (62 ICU admissions, 19% increase) – while Panama reported a 6.3% decrease (n=30) for the same period.

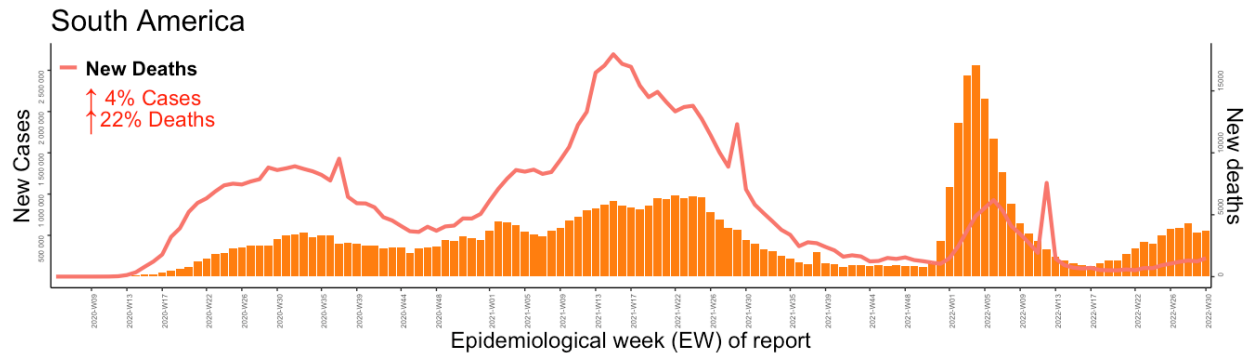
In Guatemala, COVID-19 incidence has been increasing since end of May 2022, reaching over 33,000 cases observed during EW 30 – the second highest number since the beginning of the pandemic. Weekly deaths in Guatemala have increased after about six weeks of a plateaued trend – an average of 124 deaths a week (25.3% increase) – during EW 30 compared to the previous week.

To date, the Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from four and three out of seven countries/territories in the subregion – Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador (BA.4 only) and Guatemala.

South America

In South America, COVID-19 cases have plateaued with a total of 553,110 new COVID-19 cases reported during EW 30 – a 4.4% 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 30, 2022.**



Out of the 10 countries and territories the sub-region, five experienced an increase in **COVID-19 cases** during EW 30 (range: 4.9 – 26.4% increase). The largest relative increase in cases was reported from Argentina (52,745 new cases, 26.4% increase), followed by Chile (56032 new cases, 18.5% increase), and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (2,943 new cases, 14.1% increase). In the subregion, the largest proportion of reported cases observed in Brazil (284,971 new cases, 11.5% increase), followed by Peru (78692 new cases, -9.5% decrease). The remaining five countries reported a decline in weekly cases (range: -50.6 - -3.5% decrease) during EW 30 compared to the previous week.

For the same period, a 21.6% increase in **COVID-19 deaths** (n= 2,797) was reported in South America compared to the previous week. Six out of 10 countries/territories in the subregion reported an increase in weekly deaths (range: 1.7 – 31.5% increase) during EW 30. The largest relative increase was observed in Peru (242 new deaths, 31.5% increase), followed by Brazil (1827 new deaths, 30.9% increase), and Argentina (456 new deaths, 19.7% increase).

Among five countries in South America with available data for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations**, Chile reported a decline (1,795 hospitalizations, -2.3% decrease) during EW 30, and the remaining four countries reported an increase in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (range: 2.7 - 76.7% increase). Among seven countries with available data for **COVID-19 ICU admissions** in this subregion, four reported an increase (range: 13.7 – 100% increase), and the remaining three did not report any substantial change compared to the previous week.

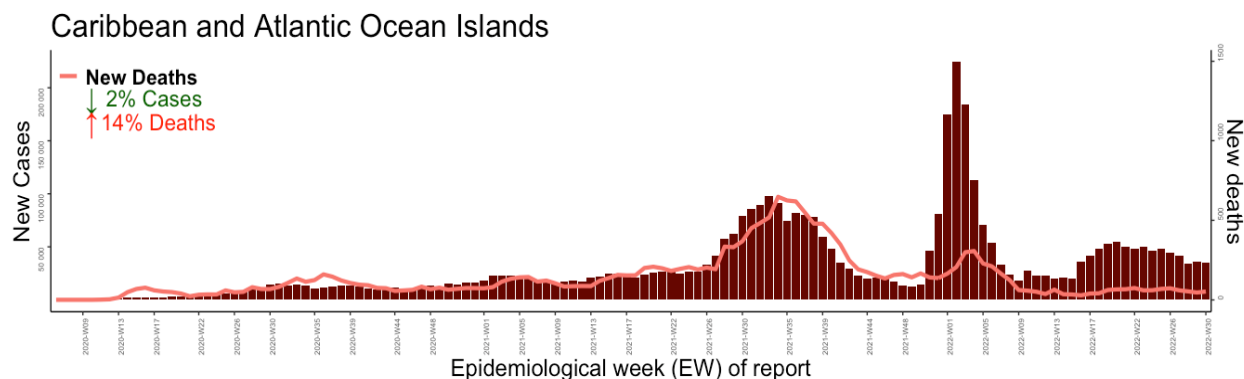
Severity trends continue to increase in Peru with sustained increases in weekly COVID-19 deaths (31.5% increase), hospitalizations (14.9% increase), and ICU admissions (15.4% increase) reported during EW 30 compared to the previous week. Important increases in severity trends were also observed in Argentina where there have been sustained increases in COVID-19 cases and deaths – 26.4% (52,745 new cases) and 19.7% (91 new deaths) reported during EW 30 respectively – along with a continued upward trend observed in COVID-19 ICU admissions since mid-May 2022.

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).

Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands sub-region, weekly cases slightly decreased during EW 30 - by 2.2% - compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in 12 out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 1.5% - 214.3%) while it declined in 18 countries and territories (range: -89.4% - -7.6%).

Figure 6: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands**. Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 30, 2022.



For the same period, **COVID-19 deaths** have increased by 14% (n=98 deaths) during EW 30 after four consecutive weeks of declining trends in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion with reported COVID-19 deaths. Among 15 countries and territories reporting deaths, eight observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths in EW 30 compared to the previous week (range: 9.1 – 233.3% increase). The highest proportion of weekly deaths were reported by Puerto Rico (44 deaths, 1% increase), Jamaica (12 deaths – including 9 historical deaths, 9.1% increase), and Barbados (10 deaths, 233.3% increase). Weekly deaths either remained the same (Martinique, 0% change) or declined in the remaining six countries and territories of the subregion (range: -100 – -2.2% decrease).

Among 23 countries and territories with available data, five countries and territories reported an increase in their weekly **COVID-19 hospitalizations** (range: 0.8 – 71.4%), with the largest relative increase being observed in the United States Virgin Island (12 hospitalizations, 71.4% increase) and Trinidad and Tobago (133 hospitalizations, 30.4% increase). Among 14 countries/territories with data available for **COVID-19 ICU admissions**, four reported an increase during EW 30 compared to the previous week. Notable relative increases in ICU admissions were observed in Guadeloupe (12 ICU admissions, 33.3% increase), Trinidad and Tobago (7 ICU admissions, 16.7% increase), and Cuba (8 ICU admissions, 14.3% increase).

Significant increases in weekly cases in the subregion during EW 30 were reported from Montserrat (22 new cases, 214.3% increase), Saint Lucia (312 new cases, 64.2% increase), and Sint Maarten (85 new cases, 54.5% increase).

To date, the Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from 11 and 13 out of 34 countries/territories in the subregion, respectively, including the territories of France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and 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.

Immunization

Figure 7. COVID-19 Complete Primary Series Vaccinations grouped by Country, Age, and Income (where available; n=16). As of EW 30, 2022.



From the 16 countries/territories with COVID-19 vaccination data disaggregated by age group (between the months of June and July 2022), it can be seen that:

- The four reporting* countries/territories in the high income** group achieved vaccination coverage rates*** above 75% among persons aged ≥ 60 years.
- The upper-middle income group is the most varied with respect to vaccination coverage for the elderly, with coverages as low as 36% and as high as 100%.
- The only two reporting* countries/territories in the lower-middle income group report coverage above 70% for people aged ≥ 60 years.
- Only one country/territory in the "Not Registered/Unclassified" income group reported data in the last two months, and it shows considerable disparity between the available age groups.

* Take into account that the World Bank 2021-2022 Income Level Classification includes: 17 countries/territories in the High-Income group classification, 19 in the Upper-Middle Income classification, 6 in the Lower-Middle Income classification and 9 "Not Registered/Unclassified" countries/territories.

** According to the World Bank 2021-2022 Income Level Classification.

*** 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.

- It is important and useful that countries and territories report data with the greatest disaggregation level possible, as this enables more valuable and in-depth analyses.

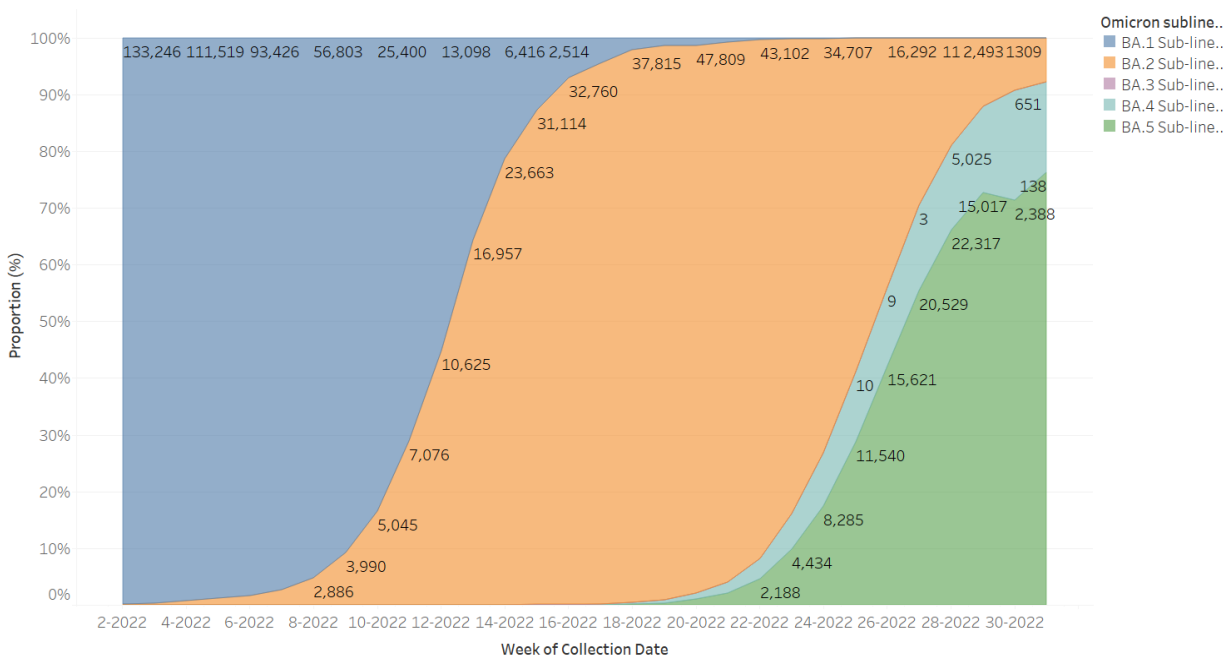
In all countries, older adults have a higher vaccination coverage rate than younger age groups - in line with SAGE recommendations. However, the discrepancy in vaccination rate between age groups is large in several countries. In 10 of the 16 countries, the coverage rate in people <60 years is less than 70%. In these countries, vaccine acceptance and uptake operations need to target this younger population.

Genomic Surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 403,120 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 2 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, which are also subdivided into additional sublineages. The cumulative proportion of sequences collected in the Americas from November 2021 to date are: 60.9% of BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages), 30.89% of BA.2 (and sublineages), 0.01% of BA.3 (and sublineages), 2.07% of BA.4 (and BA.4 sublineages), and 6.13% 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 30 (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 78.45%, 71.07%, 64.76%, and 75.29% of the characterized samples in North America, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, respectively.

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



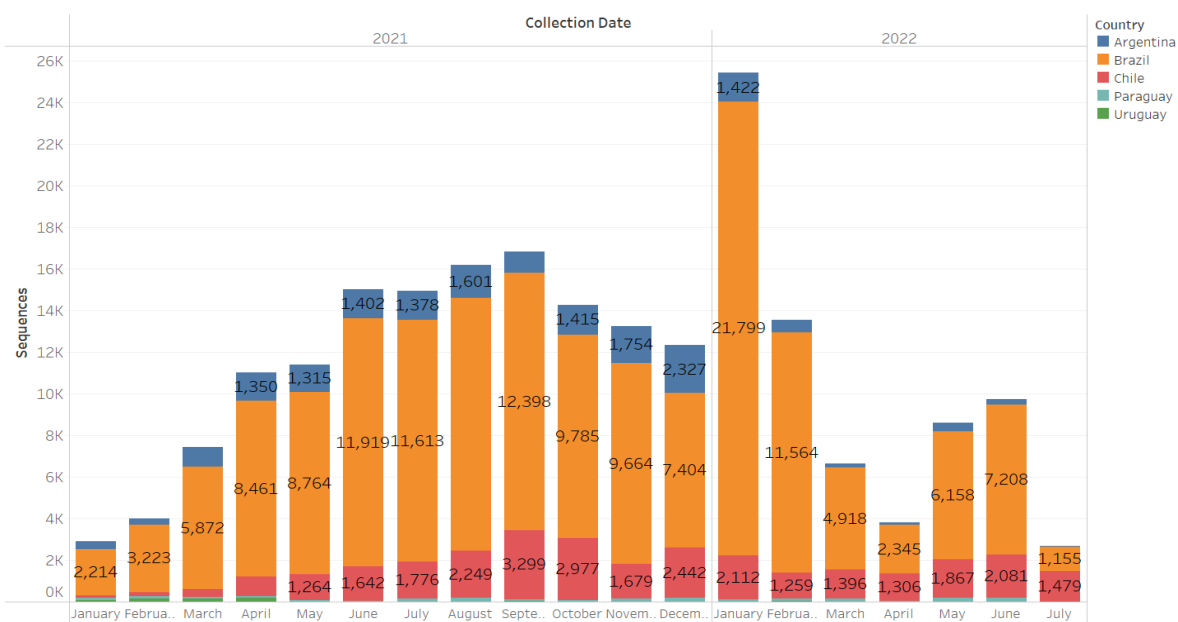
Source: GISAID

Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Southern Cone

During the last 18 months (January 2021 to 27 July 2022), 210,074 whole genome sequences from the Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems (**Figure 9**). As in other subregions, Omicron is vastly predominant and there have been no “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 (67.98%) of cumulative sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 20.77% of the cumulative sequences, and BA.3, BA.4, and BA.5 represent 0.01%, 4.51%, and 6.73% of cumulative sequences, respectively (**Figure 11**). However, BA.1 was progressively replaced by BA.2 in weeks 12 to 18, and BA.2 is being replaced by BA.4 and BA.5 since week 22 (**Figure 12**). When focusing on the past four weeks, BA.5 is the predominant sublineage (49.96%) while BA.2 and BA.4 account for 11.75% and 38.29% 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 Chile (51.64%).

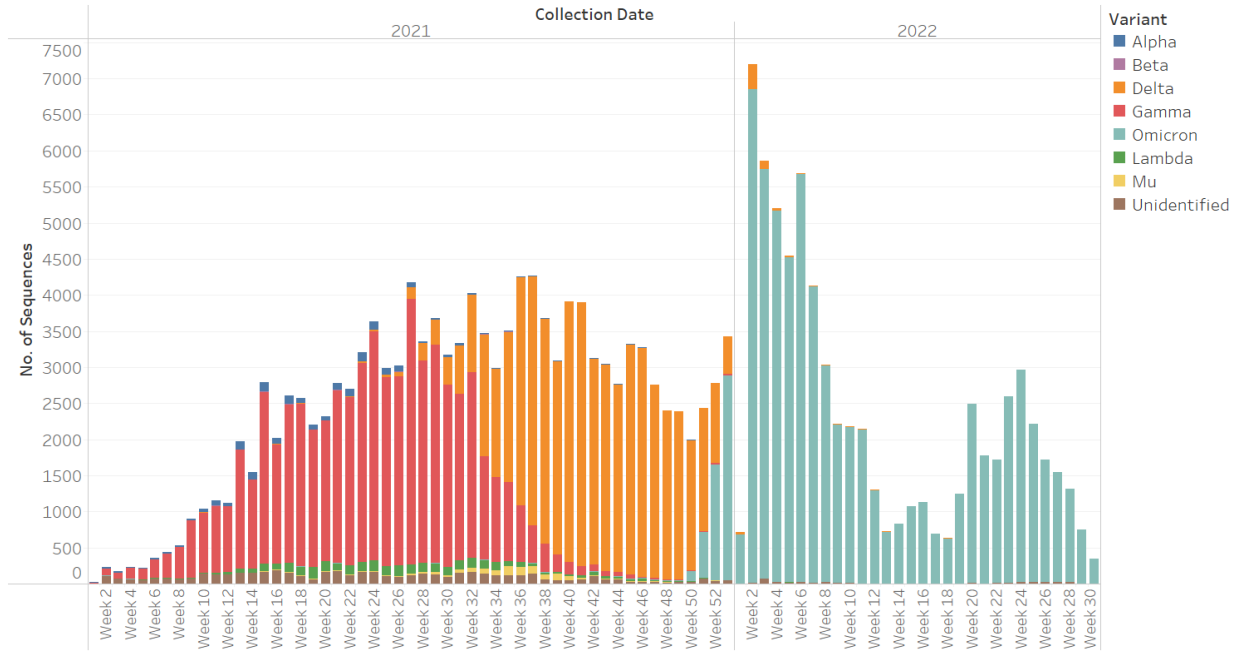
It is important that all countries in the PAHO Region continue the collection of representative samples for sequencing and maintain appropriate COVID-19 genomic surveillance.

Figure 9. Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Southern Cone (January 2021-July 2022)



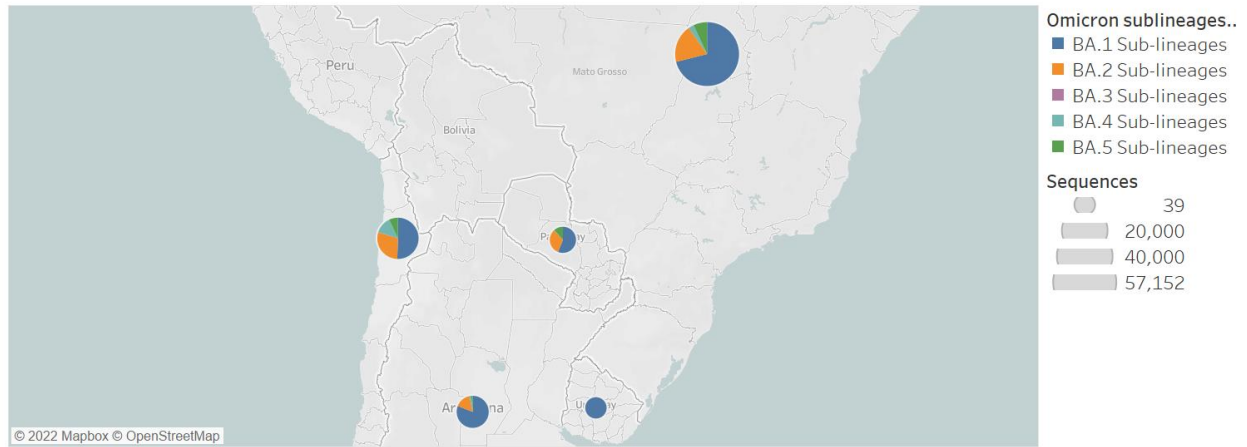
Source: GISAID

Figure 10. Variants detected and reported by the countries in the Southern Cone (January 2021-July 2022)



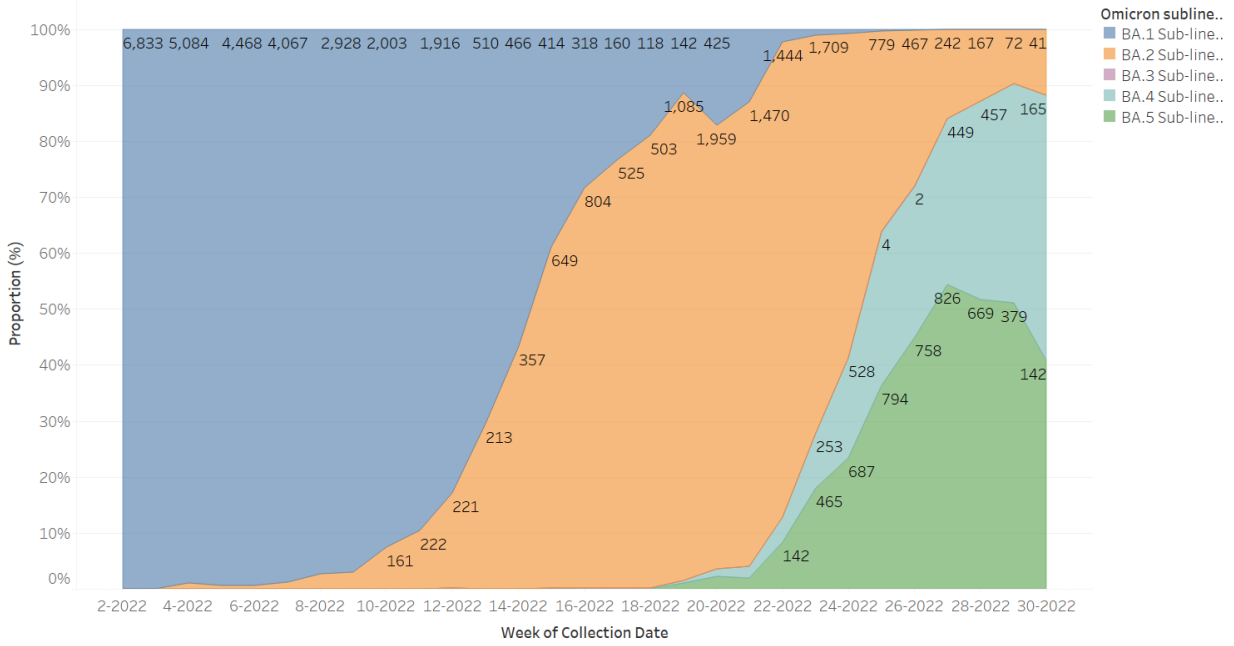
Source: GISAID
 Country-specific data is available at: https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp

Figure 11. Distribution of Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Southern Cone (November 2021-July 2022)



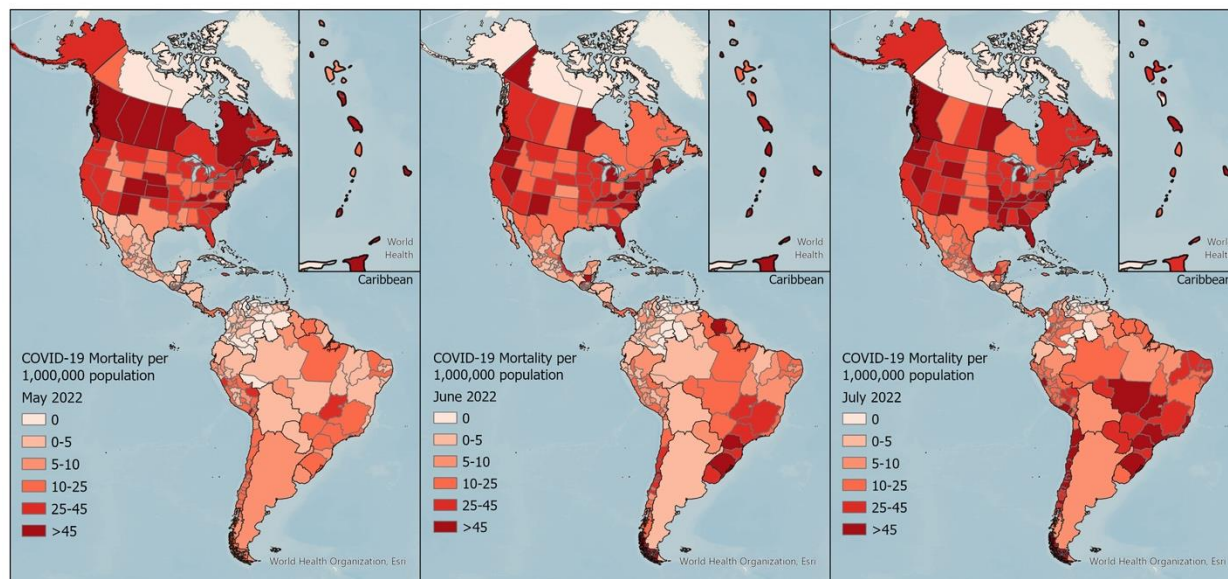
Source: GISAID

Figure 12. Distribution of VOC Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Southern Cone subregion (January-July 2022)



Source: GISAID

Annex 1. The maps of monthly COVID-19 mortality rate per 1 million population. The region of the Americas. From May to July 2022.



The maps compare the monthly COVID-19 mortality rates per 1,000,000 population in the region of the Americas for the months of May, June, and July 2022.

Overall, at the regional level an increase in COVID-19 mortality was observed over time in the last three months, with a larger increase perceived from June 2022 to July 2022. The subregion with the largest relative increase over the three-month period was South America. From May to June 2022, countries in South America with largest relative increase in mortality (>50% increase) were Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, and Colombia. From June to July 2022, those countries were: Colombia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, Peru, Chile, and Brazil.

In the Caribbean region, an increase in mortality was steady over time, with about 20% increase at the subregional level from May to June 2022 and from June to July 2022. From May to June, countries showing largest relative increases (>100%) in the Caribbean region were Aruba, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Guyana, Dominican Republic, Suriname, French Guiana, Haiti, Saint Martin, British Virgin Islands and Saba. From June to July 2022, those countries were Curacao, Guadeloupe, Cayman Islands, Bermuda, Sint Maarten, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Barthelemy.

In July 2022, countries/territories reporting the highest mortality rates per 1,000,000 (>45 deaths per million people) were: Brazil, Chile, Peru, the United States, Canada, Martinique, Barbados, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla.