

Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

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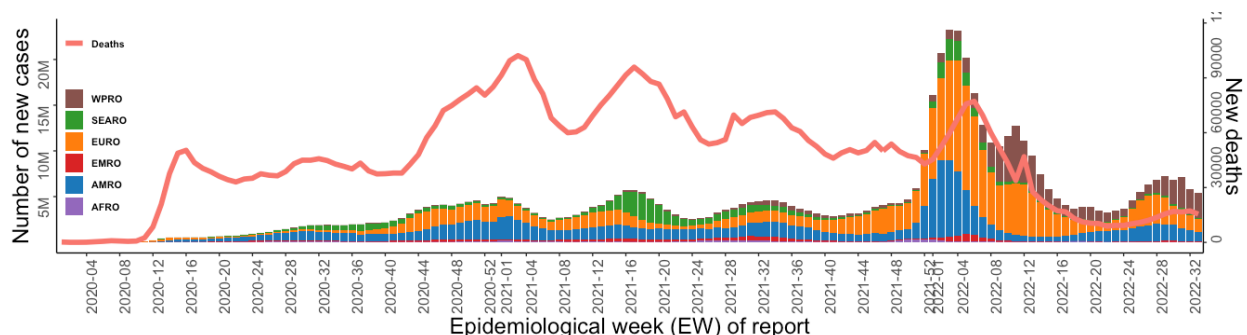
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Executive Summary

- **Since the onset of the pandemic** in 2020 and up to August 30, 2022, a cumulative total of approximately 599 million cases including about 6.5 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During epidemiological week (EW) 34, COVID-19 cases decreased in all six WHO regions (range: -36.9 - -12.7%). COVID-19 deaths increased in two WHO region – WPRO (3.5%) and SEARO (15.5%) while they decreased in the remaining four regions (range: -61 - -9.6%)
- **Globally**, approximately 4,637,091 new COVID-19 cases were reported in EW 34 (August 21, 2022-August 27, 2022) - a 15% decrease compared to EW 33 (August 14, 2022-August 20, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 13,630 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a 13.1% relative decrease compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 906,186 cases and 5,329 deaths were reported in EW 34 - a -12.7% decrease in cases and -9.6% decrease in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, **COVID-19 cases and deaths** decreased in all four subregions (range: cases; -16.2 - -5.1% decrease, deaths; -13.2 – -7.7% decrease).
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 88.7 cases per 100,000 population during EW 34 (101.5 the previous week). Between EW 34 and 33, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 11 deaths per 1 million population (12.2 the previous two weeks).
- Among 31 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 5 countries and territories (range: 0.3% - 6.2%) during EW 34 compared to the previous week. Among 24 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in 6 countries and territories (range: 2.5% - 100%).

Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 - EW 34, 2022.

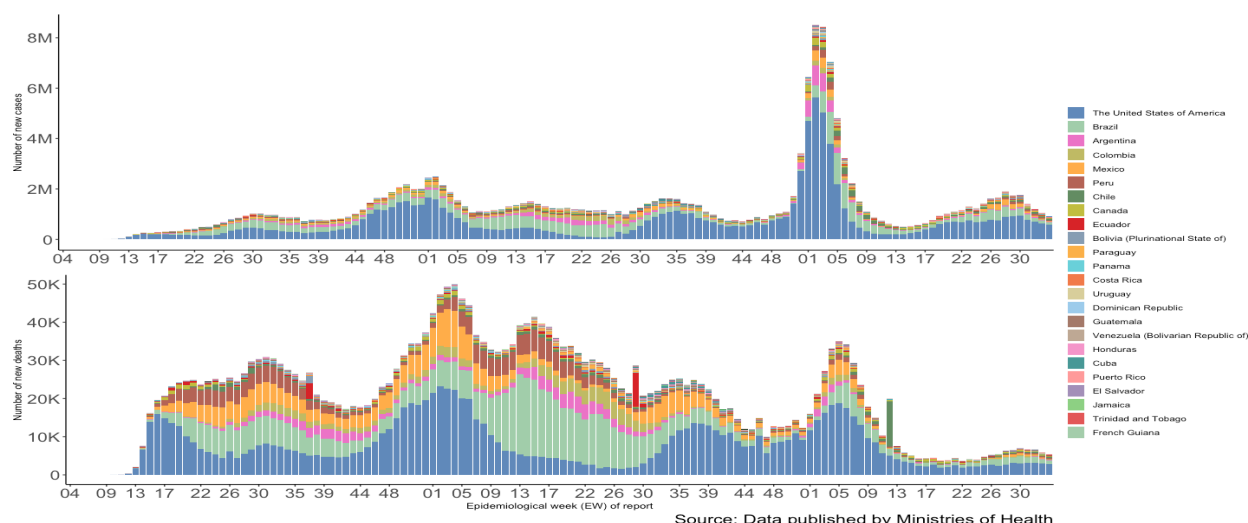


Source: Data from WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

Data are retro-adjusted every week and the numbers and percent changes of COVID-19 cumulative cases and deaths may not match with the previous COVID-19 weekly situational reports.

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 - 34, 2022.



During EW 34, 906,186 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of -12.7% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 cases in the last week was reported from the North American subregion (616,646 cases, -11% decrease) compared to the previous week. (**Table 1**). At the national level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported by the United States of America (576,437 new cases, -10.1% decrease), Brazil (104,672 new cases, -9.8% decrease), Chile (54,867 new cases, -12.7% decrease).

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 33 and EW 34 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 33	Deaths EW 33	Cases EW 34	Deaths EW 34	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	4,155,284	34,631	25,248	129	23,962	112	-5.1%	-13.2%
Central America	3,887,617	52,891	34,792	186	29,062	163	-16.5%	-12.4%
North America	104,035,516	1,408,703	696,427	3,524	616,646	3,254	-11.5%	-7.7%
South America	63,288,684	1,321,442	282,138	2,056	236,516	1,800	-16.2%	-12.5%

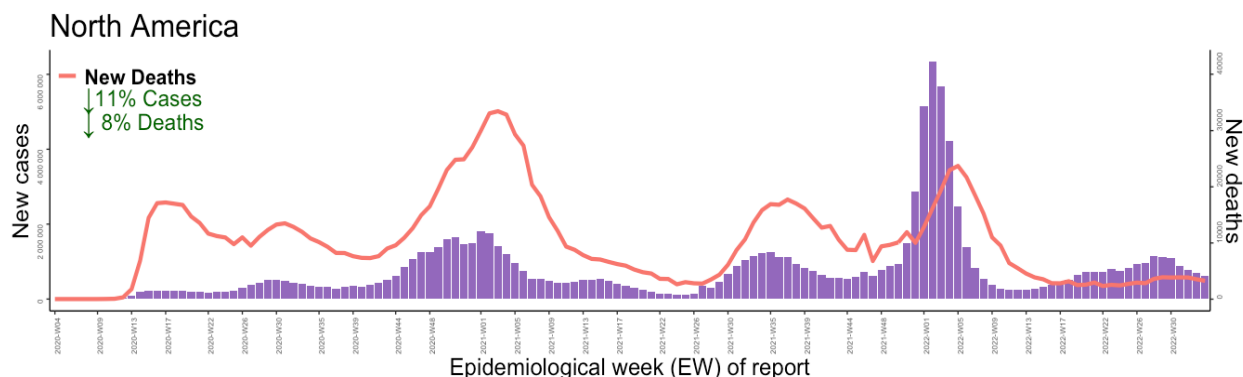
For the same period, 5,329 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of -9.6% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The subregion reporting the the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in the last week was North America (3,254 deaths, -7% decrease) (**Table 1**). At the country level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were reported from the United States of America (2,818 new deaths, -6.2% decrease), Brazil (1,039 new deaths, -6% decrease), and Canada (292 new deaths, 0% decrease).

A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 34 by subregion is presented below.

North America

The overall trends for COVID-19 cases have been decreasing in North America for the past seven consecutive weeks as of EW 34. During EW 34, all three countries in the subregion reported a decline in weekly cases – the largest decline in cases being reported by Mexico (17,325 cases, -40.8 % decrease), followed by Canada (22,884 cases, -10.9 % decrease), and the United States of America (576,437 cases, -10.1 % decrease).

Figure 3: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). North America. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 34, 2022.



For the same period, **Weekly COVID-19 deaths** in North America have decreased for the fourth consecutive week by -7.7% during EW 34 relative to the previous week. Similar to weekly cases, all three countries in the subregion reported a decline or no changes in weekly deaths. The largest decline in deaths were reported by Mexico (144 new deaths, -36.6% decrease), followed by the United States of America (2818 new deaths, -6.2% decrease), and Canada (292 new deaths, 0% change).

During EW 34, among the two countries in North America with available data for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions**, both countries – the United States of America and Canada – did not report any substantial changes in weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions. The United States of America reported a slight decline in hospitalizations (n=39,018, -4.3% decrease) and ICU admissions (n=4,640, -4.6% decrease) while Canada reported a 0.3% increase in weekly hospitalizations (n=5,391) and -1.4% decrease in ICU admissions (n=287) during EW 34 compared to the previous week.

The Omicron variant of concern (VOC) sub-lineages of BA.4 and BA.5 are predominant in all three countries in the subregion, and there were no substantial changes in proportions of the two sub-lineages compared to the previous week. The BA.5 and BA.4 sub-lineages made up about 88.7% and 11.1% of cases for the week ending on 27 August 2022 in the United States of America¹, 85.6% and 10.5% for the week of 7 August 2022 in Canada², and 91% and 4.7% as of EW 32 in Mexico, respectively.

¹ The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Variant Proportions. Accessed 30 August 2022. Available at:

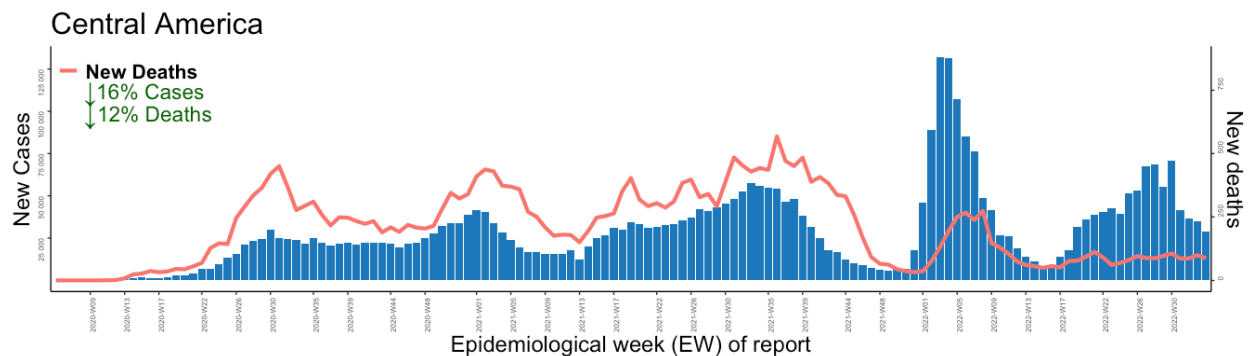
<https://bit.ly/3Obz8cT>

² Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). COVID-19 Epidemiological Update. Accessed 30 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3bbFRFr>

Central America

In Central America, the overall COVID-19 incidence for the sub-region has been on a downward trend for the fourth consecutive week, with 29,062 new cases reported during EW 34 – a -16.5% decrease 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 34, 2022.



During EW 34, two countries in the subregion reported an increase in **weekly cases** – Belize (296 new cases, 13.4% increase) and Nicaragua (32 new cases, 18.5% increase), one reported no substantial changes – Honduras (3,050 new cases, 0.7% increase) – while the remaining three countries and territories reported a decline (range: -22.9 - -10.6% decrease). The largest decline in cases included Guatemala (11,412 new cases, -22.9% decrease), Costa Rica (8,891 new cases, -16.6% decrease), and Panama (5,381 new cases, -10.6% decrease).

For the same period, **weekly deaths** decreased by approximately -5% relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**) with two out of the seven countries and territories reporting an increase – Panama (14 deaths, 16.7% increase) and El Salvador (2 deaths, 100% increase). The remaining four countries and territories either did not report deaths (Nicaragua, Belize) or reported a plateaued trend in weekly deaths during EW 34 – Costa Rica (28 deaths, 0% change), Honduras (7 deaths, -36.4% decrease), and Guatemala (112 deaths, -16.4% decrease).

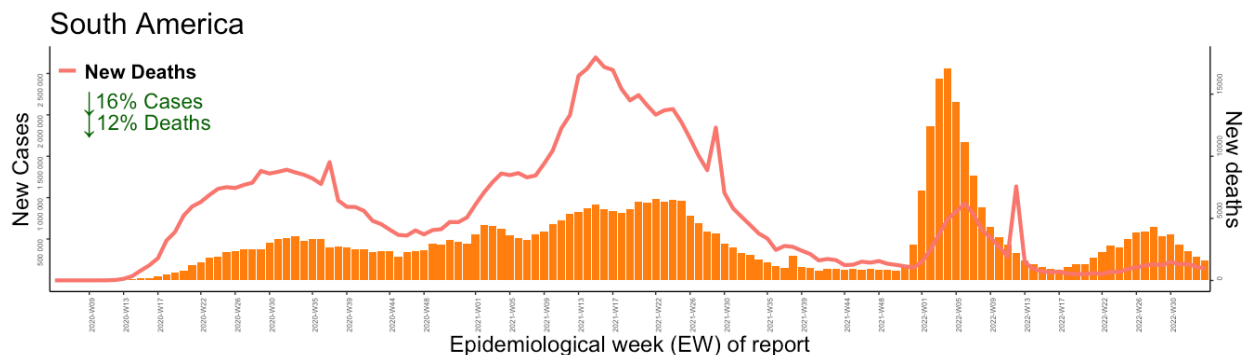
Among four countries and territories with available data in the Central American Sub-region, three reported a decline in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (range: -33.3 - -5.9% decrease) while Belize did not report any substantial changes (2 hospitalizations, 0% change). With regards to **ICU admissions**, among three countries with available data, weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions declined in two countries– Honduras (2 ICU admissions, -66.7% decrease) and Panama (17 ICU admissions, -41.4% decrease) – while it remained the same in Costa Rica (52 ICU admissions, 0% change).

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

South America

In South America, COVID-19 incidence has decreased for the fourth consecutive week, with a total of 236,516 new COVID-19 cases being reported during EW 34 – a -16.2% decrease 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 34, 2022.



Out of the 10 countries and territories the sub-region, one experienced an increase in cases during EW 34 – Ecuador (6,288 new cases, 35% increase) – while the remaining nine countries and territories reported a decline (range: -48.4 - -4.1% decrease). with the largest decline in cases being reported by Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (7,566 new cases, -48.4% decrease), followed by Paraguay (822 new cases, -42.6% decrease), and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (852 new cases, -41.6% decrease).

During the same period, weekly **COVID-19 deaths** have decreased by 12.5% in South America compared to the previous week with a total of 1800 COVID-19 deaths being reported. At the national level, COVID-19 deaths decreased in nine countries and territories (range: -48.9 - -5% decrease), the largest decline in deaths being reported by Paraguay (30 new deaths, -67% decrease), followed by Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (24 new deaths, -48.9% decrease), and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (8 new deaths, -38.5% decrease).

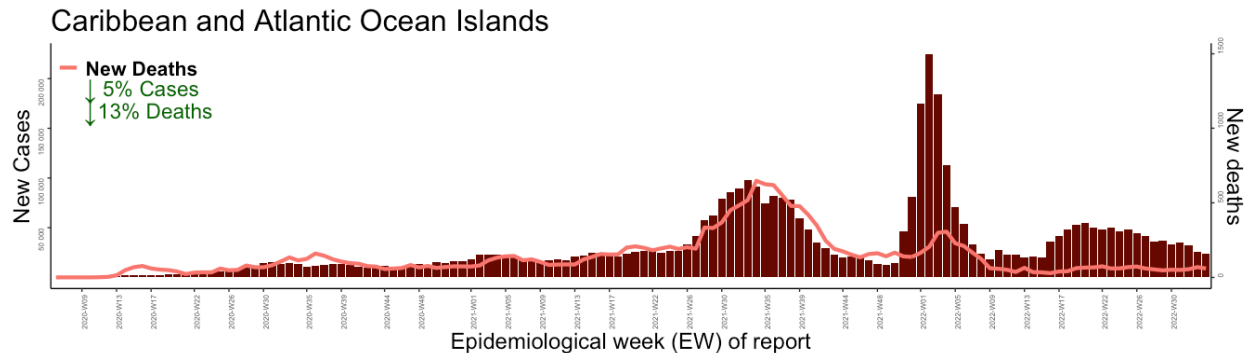
For the same period, among five countries and territories in the subregion with data available for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations**, four observed a decline in their weekly hospitalizations (range: -47.5 - -8.2% decrease) while one country – Chile – reported an increase of 5.7% (1,712 hospitalizations) during EW 34 compared to the previous week. Among six countries with available data for **COVID-19 ICU admissions** in this subregion, two countries observed an increase in weekly ICU admissions during EW 34 – Uruguay (38 ICU admissions, 26.7% increase) and Chile (165 ICU admissions, 2.5% increase), while the remaining countries reported a decline compared to the previous week (range: -11 - -6.1% decrease).

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** decreased by -5.1% during EW 34 compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in nine countries and territories in the subregion (range: 2.5% - 122.2%) while they declined in the remaining 23 countries and territories (range: -100% - -5.9%).

Figure 6: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands**. Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 34, 2022.



During EW 34, **COVID-19 weekly deaths** decreased by 13.2% (112 deaths) in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion compared to the previous week. Six observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths (range: 47.6 – 100% increase), nine reported a decline (range: -100 - -18.8% decrease) while the remaining countries and territories either remained the same – Guadeloupe (4 deaths, 0% change) – or had not reported any deaths during EW 34 compared to the previous week.

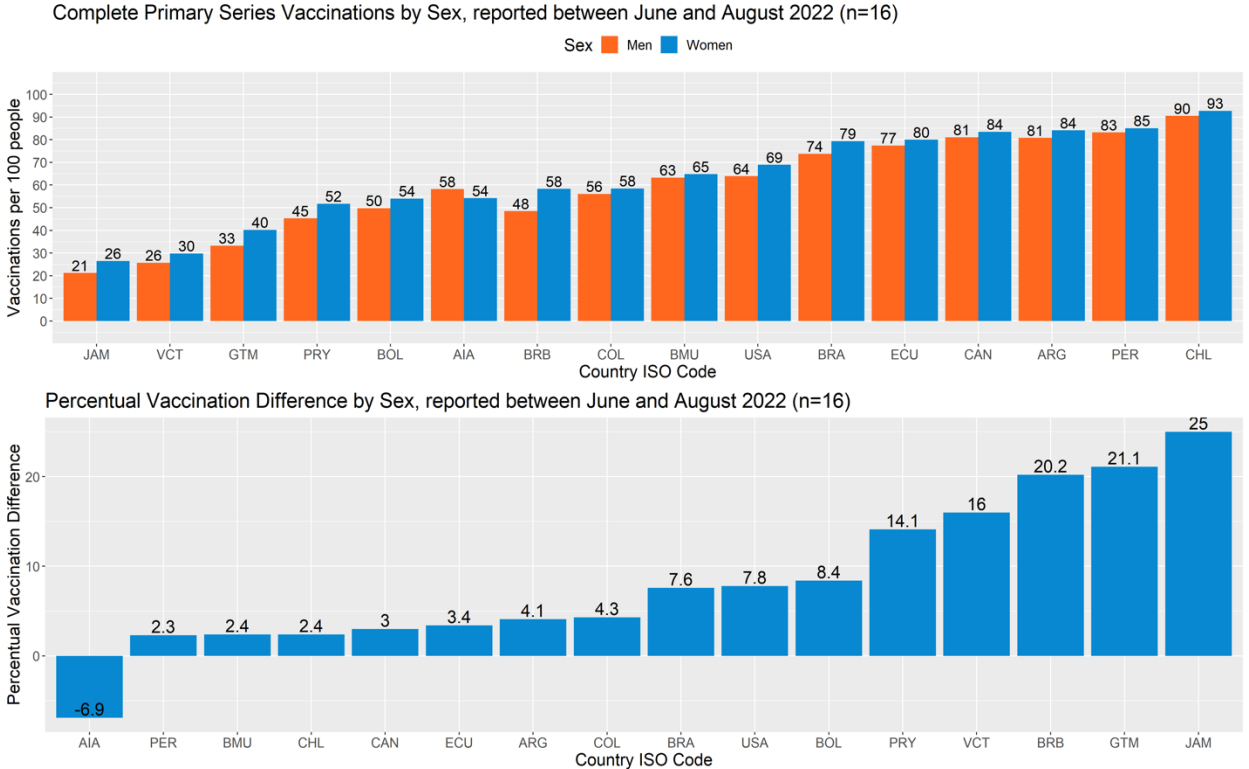
Among 19 countries and territories with available data, three countries and territories reported an increase in their weekly **COVID-19 hospitalizations** – Martinique (51 hospitalizations, 6.3% increase), Jamaica (120 hospitalizations, 3.4% increase), and Trinidad and Tobago (220 hospitalizations, 1.9% increase) – while nine countries and territories reported a decline (range: -100 - -2.1% decrease). Among 13 countries and territories with data available, **COVID-19 ICU admissions** increased in three countries and territories – Jamaica (4 ICU admissions, 100% increase), Suriname (1 ICU admission, 100% increase), and Puerto Rico (52 ICU admissions, 13% increase) during EW 34 compared to the previous week.

Notable increases in weekly cases in the subregion during EW 34 were reported from Montserrat (20 new cases, 122.2% increase), Saint Kitts and Nevis (11 new cases, 83.3% increase), and Saint Barthélemy (32 new cases, 39.1% increase). For the same period, important increases in weekly deaths in the subregion were observed from Trinidad and Tobago (31 deaths, 47.6% increase).

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from 16 out of 34 countries and territories in the subregion, respectively, including the overseas territories of either France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, or 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 and territories.

Immunization

Figure 7. Countries and territories (n=16) with Complete Primary Series Vaccinations reported between June and August 2022, stratified by sex and. The region of the Americas. As of EW 34, 2022.



The **figure 7** shows the COVID-19 vaccination coverage rates for the countries and territories of the Americas between June and August 2022, stratified by sex. Of 16 total countries/territories who report this stratification to PAHO, 15 show a higher coverage rate among women compared to men. The average percent different across the 15 countries is 9.5%, with a peak of 25% in Jamaica. Only 1 territory – Anguilla – reported a reversed trend, with a higher vaccination coverage rate reported among men compared to women.

Overall, COVID-19 vaccination coverage rates vary significantly between reporting countries. Of the forementioned 16 reporting countries/territories, 63% report a coverage rate below 70% among the general population (both men and women).

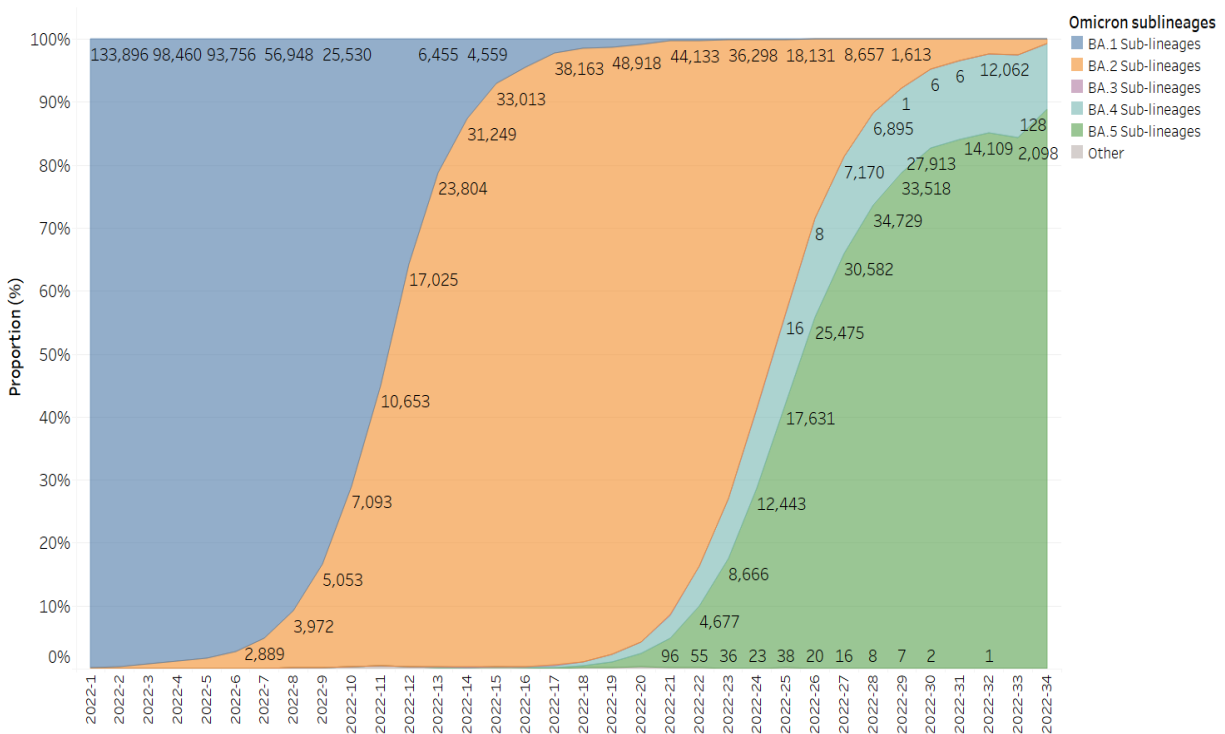
Genomic surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 437,393 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 29 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 (or subvariants), which are also subdivided into diverse sublineages based on additional mutations that slightly change the genomic profile but not enough to define a new Variant. Important to notice, there is not (so far) sufficient evidence to infer increased severity or phenotypic impact in either of the sublineages, besides the already established for Omicron.

The cumulative proportion of sequences collected in the Americas from November 2021 to date are: 55.0% of BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages), 29.1% of BA.2 (and sublineages), 0.01% of BA.3 (and sublineages), 3.2% of BA.4 (and BA.4 sublineages), and 12.8% 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 34 (**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 97.1%, 97.8%, 96.7%, and 94.7% of the characterized samples in North America, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, respectively.

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



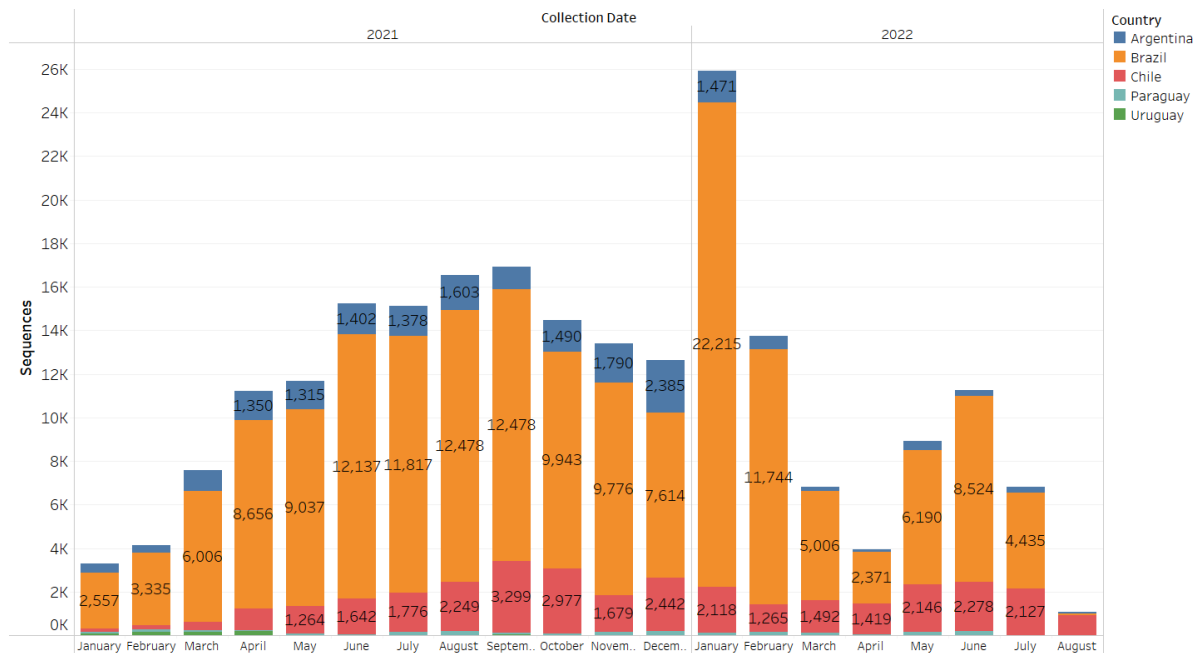
Source: GISAID

Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Southern Cone

During the last 18 months (January 2021 to 27 August 2022), 220,312 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 (55%) of cumulative sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 29.1% of the cumulative sequences, and BA.3, BA.4, and BA.5 represent 0.01%, 3.2%, and 12.8% 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 (57.7%) while BA.4 and BA.2 account for 37.0% and 5.2% 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 (86%).

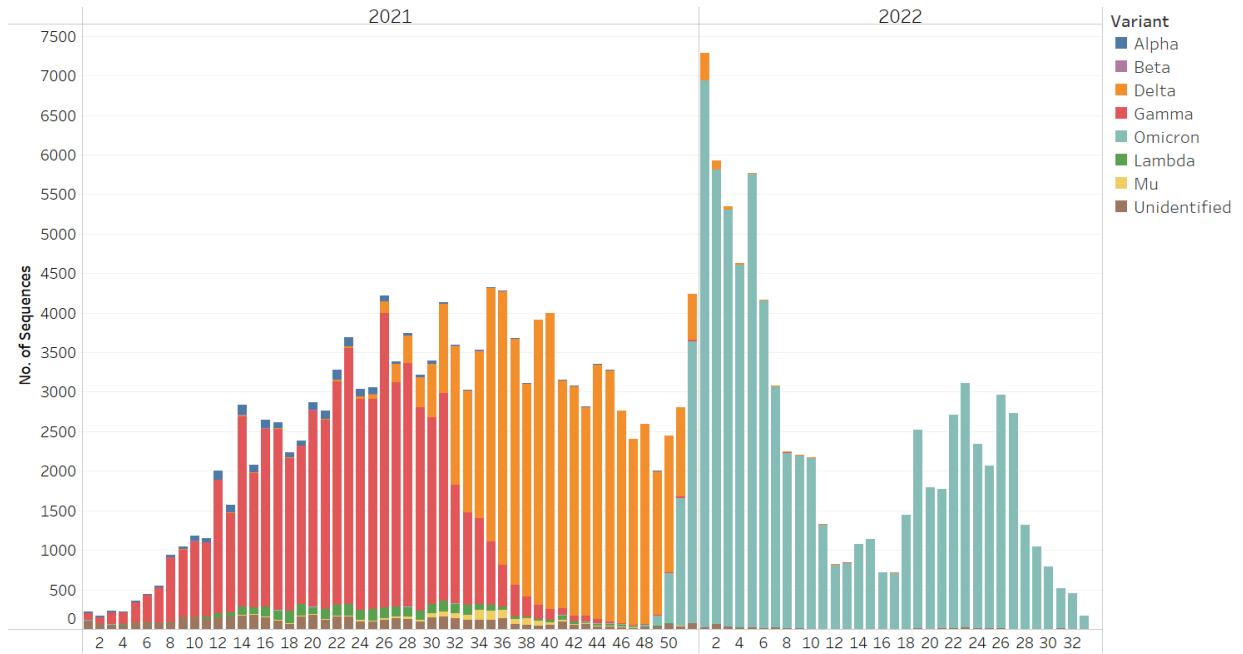
It is important that all countries at PAHO region continue the collection of representative samples for sequencing and to maintain COVID-19 appropriate genomic surveillance.

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



Source: GISAID

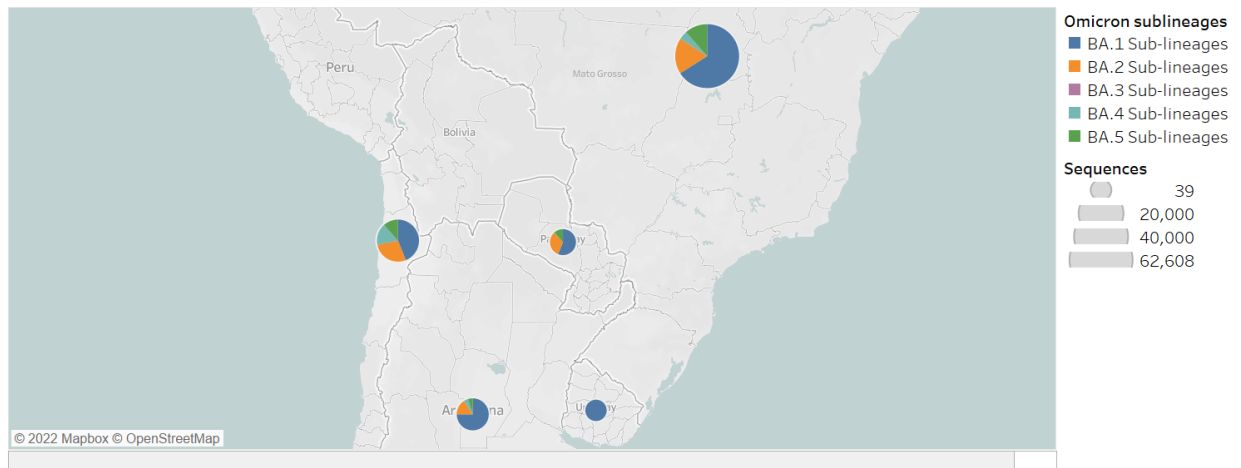
Figure 10. Variants detected and reported by the countries in the Southern Cone (January 2021-August 2022)



Source: GISAID

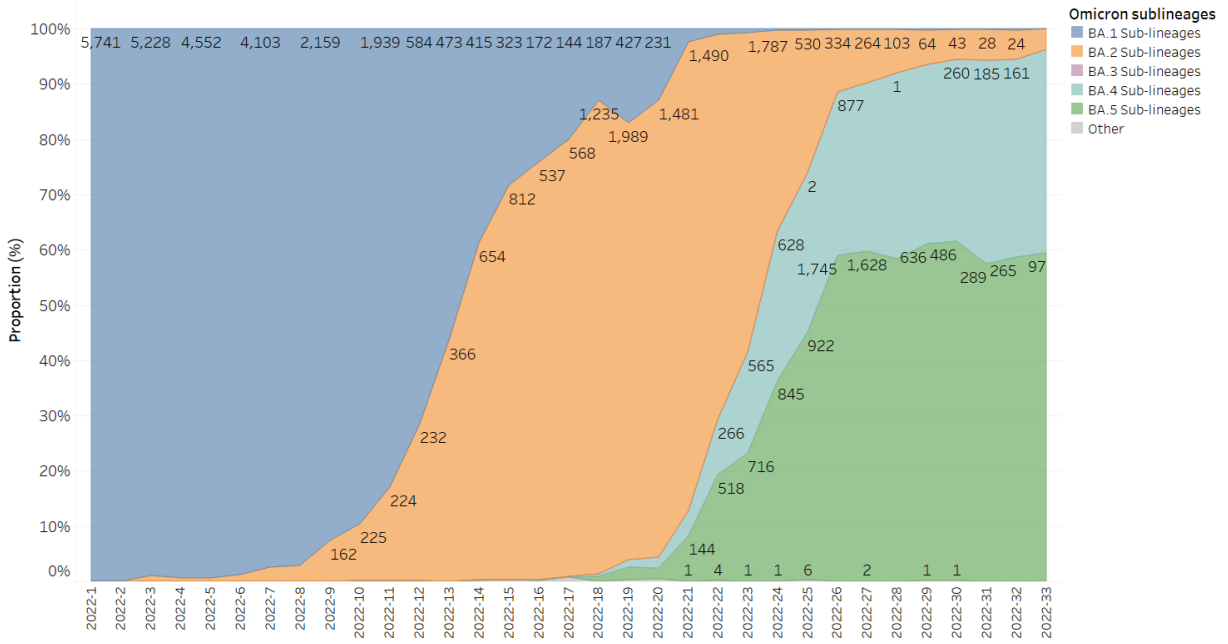
Country-specific data is available at: https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp

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



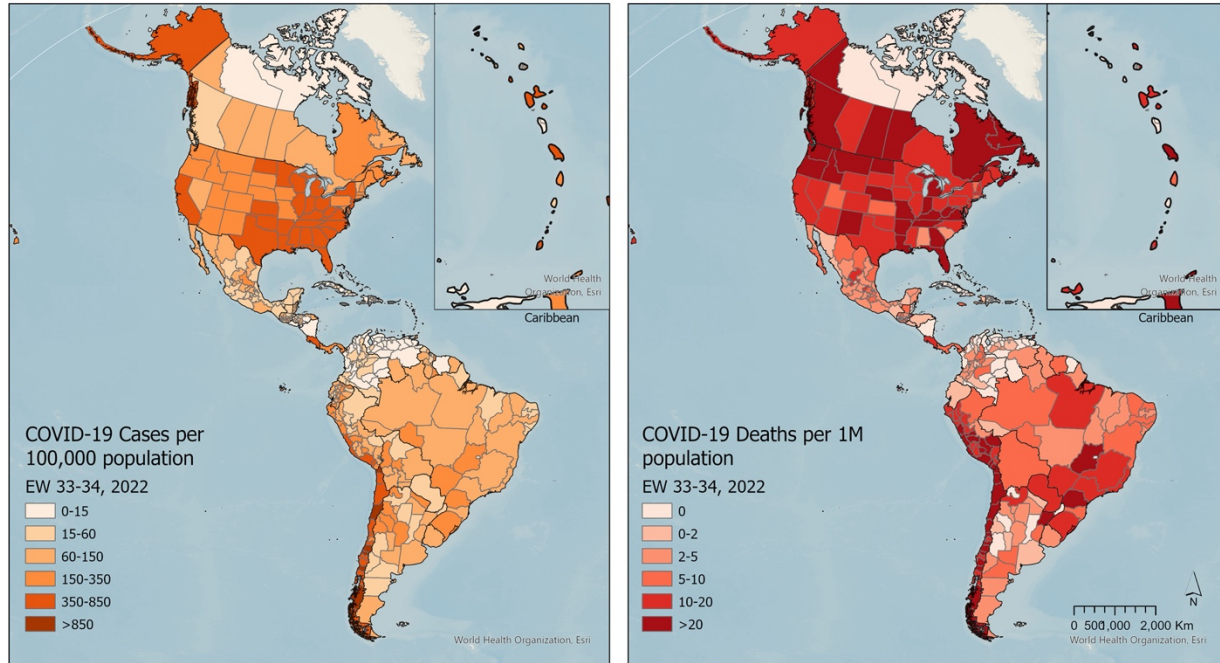
Source: GISAID

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



Source: GISAID

Annex 1. COVID-19 incidence rate per 100,000 population and COVID-19 mortality rate from per 1 million population. Region of the Americas. Between EW 33 and 34, 2022.



The maps (**Annex 1**) represent the COVID-19 incidence rates per 100,000 population and the mortality rates from COVID-19 per 1 million population in the Region of the Americas reported in EW 33 and 34, 2022. At the regional level, incidence and mortality have been decreasing in the past two weeks, compared to the previous two weeks.

At the sub regional level, trends in incidence have also been declining compared to the previous two weeks in all sub-regions. The largest relative decrease in incidence was observed in the South America region. The highest incidence rates in the past two weeks (>850 cases per 100,000) were observed in Chile, Puerto Rico, and Barbados. In the United States, about half the states reported between 350-850 cases per 100,000 population. Incidence rates declined in Canada and Mexico compared to the previous two weeks. In all Central American countries, incidence rates also declined except for Belize and Honduras where incidence remained stable. In South America, incidence rates were above 850 cases per 100,000 in a few regions in Chile but declined slightly compared to the previous two weeks. Incidence declined in all other countries of the sub-region except for Ecuador where incidence increased. In the Caribbean, most sub-national territories reported below 150 cases per 100,000 over the past 2 weeks.

The highest mortality rates (>20 deaths per million population) were observed in Canada, the United States, Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Puerto Rico, and Martinique. While mortality rates decreased in North and South America, they slightly increased in the Caribbean compared to the previous two weeks.

Data are retro-adjusted every week and the numbers and percent changes of COVID-19 cumulative cases and deaths may not match with the previous COVID-19 weekly situational reports.