



Omicron

Description

Theme:

- Omicron variant of coronavirus disease was detected in November 2021 and now has spread to nearly 50 countries.

Points to speak:

- Omicron is a highly mutated coronavirus variant and its fast spread is causing a rapid increase in the number of cases.
- This variant was detected by the researchers of South Africa using genome sequencing to track the genetic structure of the virus. And it is named after the 15th letter in the Greek alphabet – Omicron.
- As per the present data, it is less deadly than other variants.
- It is not yet known that whether Omicron is vaccine-resistant or not. But as per the present data, vaccinated people have mild cases when compared with unvaccinated people. Most of the severe cases are seen in unvaccinated people.
- The Omicron variant has a higher risk of reinfection.
- More data is needed to know more about this coronavirus variant's severity.
- Experts are recommending booster shots to improve immunity.
- The detection of Omicron is reiterating the importance of increasing the availability of vaccines to low-income countries. At present, only 3% of people in low-income countries received two vaccine doses, compared with more than 60% in high-income countries. Even though World Health Organization (WHO) started the COVAX program to guarantee fair and equitable access to vaccines for every country, it is failing its promise to vaccinate the entire world. The goal to vaccinate at least 40% of the population in every country by the end of 2021 is unlikely to happen. Many high-income countries are hoarding vaccines more than required.
- Some people are not willing to take vaccines. Awareness programs are needed to remove vaccine hesitancy.

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- Vaccine distribution is facing logistics challenges too. Receiving vaccines with short shelf lives with little notice is causing unpredictability.
 - To prevent the spread of the virus, sick pay should be provided, which will allow people to self-isolate without having to worry about the salary.
 - India along with South Africa proposed suspending Intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines temporarily to ensure affordable and universal access to covid vaccines.

Conclusion:

As per the present data, the Omicron variant is spreading faster than the previous variants but is less deadly than the Delta variant. There is a need to increase the availability of vaccines in low-income countries to vaccinate everyone. No one is safe until everyone is vaccinated.

Your Turn...

What are your thoughts on the Omicron variant? Do let us know your point of view through the comment section below. And subscribe to our blog to read answers to the trending GD topics.

Image by [Alexandra Koch](#) from [Pixabay](#)

References:

- [A measured response: On the Omicron threat](#)
- [Omicron: the global response is making it worse](#)
- [The Observer view on the Omicron variant](#)

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