COVID-19 recovery

26th November 2021

**Title:** What next for the Valneva vaccine?

BMJ | 2021; 375: n2839 | 23rd November 2021

Valneva’s covid-19 vaccine looked set to be another effective tool in the fight to end the pandemic. But the UK’s sudden decision to cancel the company’s main order of 100 million doses threw a major spanner in the works. This BMJ Feature asks what this means for the company and the vaccine.

Full detail: [What next for the Valneva vaccine?](https://www.bmj.com/content/375/bmj.n2839)

**Title:** Understanding vaccine hesitancy through communities of place

Institute for Community Studies | 19th November 2021

This UK-US collaborative study highlights the importance of tapping into local knowledge and leadership in efforts to improve Covid-19 vaccine take-up. The report explores levels of vaccine engagement in four locations: Oldham and Tower Hamlets in the UK, and the cities of Boston and Hartford in the US.

In all four localities, the survey finds the authorities’ ‘top-down’ approach to vaccine distribution and education has been ineffective, and that applying a ‘community engagement approach’ instead –involving community groups and trusted leaders in vaccine distribution and education – can improve take-up rates.

Press release: [New research highlights power of local engagement to increase Covid-19 vaccine take-up](https://icstudies.org.uk/insights/insight/new-research-finds-local-knowledge-and-engagement-could-be-key-covid-vaccine-take)

Full detail: [Understanding vaccine hesitancy through communities of place](https://icstudies.org.uk/repository/understanding-vaccine-hesitancy-through-communities-place)

**Title:** mRNA vaccines: hope beneath the hype

BMJ | 2021; 375: n2744 | 24th November 2021

mRNA vaccines have proven themselves as the most effective covid-19 vaccines, and their makers are now seeking to help conditions from cancer to HIV. This BMJ Feature piece investigates their promise and limitations.

Full detail: [mRNA vaccines: hope beneath the hype](https://www.bmj.com/content/375/bmj.n2744)

**Title:** Covid-19 and pregnancy: vaccine hesitancy and how to overcome it

BMJ | 2021; 375: n2862 | 22nd November 2021

This BMJ analysis explores the following questions:

* What’s the vaccine uptake in pregnancy?
* Why is it so low?
* What are the effects of low uptake?
* Will hospital admissions and deaths fall as more women are vaccinated?
* How have babies been affected by low vaccination rates in pregnancy?
* How can the NHS increase uptake?
* What role should clinicians be playing?
* What else could have made a difference?

Full detail: [Covid-19 and pregnancy: vaccine hesitancy and how to overcome it](https://www.bmj.com/content/375/bmj.n2862)

**Title:** COVID-19 Vaccine Makers Plan for Annual Boosters, but It’s Not Clear They’ll Be Needed

JAMA | 24th November 2021

This Medical News feature examines whether it’s likely that repeated COVID-19 vaccine boosters will be needed to maintain protection against SARS-CoV-2.

Full detail: [COVID-19 Vaccine makers plan for annual boosters, but it’s not clear they’ll be needed](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2786818)

**Title:** Nearly half a million lives saved by COVID-19 vaccination in less than a year

World Health Organisation [Regional Office of Europe] | 25th November 2021

A new study by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) estimates that 470 000 lives have been saved among those aged 60 years and over since the start of COVID-19 vaccination rollout in 33 countries across the WHO European Region.

This estimate does not include lives saved by vaccinating people under 60 nor lives saved from the indirect effect of vaccination because of a reduction in transmission.

Since December 2019, over 1.5 million COVID-19 confirmed fatalities have been recorded in the countries of the WHO European Region, with 90.2% in those aged 60 years and over. The rapid development and administration of COVID-19 vaccines has provided much-needed protection from severe disease and death for millions of the most vulnerable, but the speed and extent of rollout of these vaccines across countries of the Region is inequitable.

Further detail: [Nearly half a million lives saved by COVID-19 vaccination in less than a year](https://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/sections/press-releases/2021/who-regional-office-for-europe-nearly-half-a-million-lives-saved-by-covid-19-vaccination-in-less-than-a-year)

Full study: [Estimated number of deaths directly averted in people 60 years and older as a result of COVID-19 vaccination in the WHO European Region, December 2020 to November 2021](https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2021.26.47.2101021)

**Title:** Headlines play down the gravity of covid-19 in children

BMJ | 2021; 375: n2826 | 25th November 2021

Media coverage has been criticised for minimising the effect of covid-19 on children, implying that the lives of those with underlying health conditions are somehow less important than the lives of healthy individuals. This BMJ Feature reports.

Full detail: [Headlines play down the gravity of covid-19 in children](https://www.bmj.com/content/375/bmj.n2826)

**Title:** Interim statement on COVID-19 vaccination for children and adolescents

World Health Organization | 24th November 2021

WHO, with support of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization and its COVID-19 Vaccines Working Group, is reviewing the emerging evidence on the need for and timing of vaccinating children and adolescents with the currently available COVID-19 vaccines which have received Emergency Use Listing (EUL).  This interim statement was developed with additional support from the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group of Experts (STAGE) on maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health, and nutrition.

The statement concludes:

* Countries should consider the individual and population benefits of immunising children and adolescents in their specific epidemiological and social context when developing their COVID-19 immunisation policies and programs
* There are benefits of vaccinating children and adolescents that go beyond the direct health benefits. Vaccination that decreases COVID transmission in this age group may reduce transmission from children and adolescents to older adults, and may help reduce the need for mitigation measures in schools.
* Minimizing disruptions to education for children and maintenance of their overall well-being, health and safety are important considerations.  Countries’ strategies related to COVID-19 control should facilitate children’s participation in education and other aspects of social life, and minimize school closures, even without vaccinating children and adolescents
* As a matter of global equity, as long as many parts of the world are facing extreme vaccine shortages, countries that have achieved high vaccine coverage in their high-risk populations should prioritize global sharing of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX facility before proceeding to vaccination of children and adolescents who are at low risk for severe disease.

Full detail: [Interim statement on COVID-19 vaccination for children and adolescents](https://www.who.int/news/item/24-11-2021-interim-statement-on-covid-19-vaccination-for-children-and-adolescents)

**Title:** AstraZeneca says its antibody drug AZD7442 is effective for preventing and reducing severe illness

BMJ | 2021; 375: n2860 | 19th November 2021

AstraZeneca’s antibody treatment AZD7442 reduces the risk of developing symptomatic covid-19 when it is taken as a preventive measure, the company has said, and also reduces the risk of severe illness and death when taken shortly after symptoms start.

The drug is currently being tested in two separate trials, which reported that when taken as a prophylactic AZD7442 reduced the risk of symptomatic covid-19 by 83% and when taken three days after symptom onset it cut the risk of severe illness or death by 88%.

In both trials the antibody combination was generally well tolerated, with no new safety issues identified in the six month analysis of the prevention trial. The findings, issued through a company press release, will be submitted for publication in a peer reviewed medical journal.

Full detail: [AstraZeneca says its antibody drug AZD7442 is effective for preventing and reducing severe illness](https://www.bmj.com/content/375/bmj.n2860)

**Title:** Covid-19 and violence against women and children: time to mitigate the shadow pandemic

BMJ | 2021; 375: n2903 | 24th November 2021

Covid-19 has highlighted the urgency of addressing violence against women and children, which reports suggest has increased during the pandemic. Often referred to as a “shadow pandemic,” the rise in violence over the past two years has been linked to lockdowns and other restrictions on movement put in place due to covid-19, which force women and children to remain at home with their abusers.

Full detail: [Covid-19 and violence against women and children: time to mitigate the shadow pandemic](https://www.bmj.com/content/375/bmj.n2903)

**Title:** Timely access to care: Principles for recovery

National Voices | 18th November 2021

This publication by National Voices, the leading coalition of health and social care charities in England, highlights the factors currently affecting timely access to care for people living with ill health, disability or impairment. It calls for system leaders to prioritise rebuilding timely access to health and care, and to take an approach that considers the whole system and its context and the whole person and their circumstances.

* [Timely access to care: Principles for recovery](https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/sites/default/files/public/publications/timely_access_to_care_final.pdf)
* [Recommendations: Government and system leaders](https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/sites/default/files/public/publications/twitter-1200px_government_and_system_leaders_need_to_v02.pdf)
* [Recommendations: People planning and delivering services](https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/sites/default/files/public/publications/twitter-1200px_people_planning_and_delivering_services_need_to_v03.pdf)
* [Recommendations: The VCSE including National Voices](https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/sites/default/files/public/publications/twitter-1200px_the_vcse_including_national_voices_need_to_v03.pdf)

**Title:** Coronavirus and self-isolation after testing positive in England

Office for National Statistics | 24th November 2021

Behaviour of individuals required to self-isolate after testing positive for COVID-19, from the COVID Test and Trace Cases Insights Survey. Includes information on the impact of self-isolation on well-being and finances.

Main points:

* The data collected between 1 and 6 November 2021 show that the majority (75%) of all individuals who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) reported fully adhering to the requirements throughout their self-isolation period.
* The level of adherence with self-isolation requirements is broadly in line with the level reported for June, July and September 2021 (79% in June and July, and 78% in September) but is statistically significantly lower compared with adherence levels earlier in the year (84% in April and 86% in May 2021).
* Adherence with self-isolation requirements was statistically significantly lower between the onset of symptoms requiring self-isolation and receiving a positive test result (71%), compared with the 24 hours following a positive result (98%) and the remainder of the self-isolation period (93%).
* One in four people (25%) reported carrying out at least one activity during self-isolation that was not adherent to the requirements, for example, leaving the home or having visitors for reasons not permitted under legislation.
* The majority (73%) of all respondents who tested positive for COVID-19 reported having no contact with non-household members while they had any symptoms of illness or during the self-isolation period; of all respondents who lived with others, only 18% were able to keep themselves completely separate from those they lived with.
* Approximately a third (34%) of those who tested positive reported that self-isolation had a negative effect on their well-being and mental health.

Full detail: [Coronavirus and self-isolation after testing positive in England: 1 November to 6 November 2021](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandselfisolationaftertestingpositiveinengland/latest)

**Title:** Many people with mental illness did not seek help during the first lockdown; research highlights unmet need

National Institute for Health Research | 22nd November 2021

The number of people with mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and self-harm increased during the UK’s first lockdown. But a large study across England found that fewer people asked their GP or hospital for mental health support.

This is thought to be the first population-based study of help-seeking during the pandemic. It found that help-seeking fell most among adults of working age, women, younger people and those living in deprived areas. This suggests that existing inequalities in mental health grew wider in the pandemic.

Ensuring that people can promptly access mental health support, diagnosis, and treatment should be an urgent priority for the NHS, the researchers say. Public health messages need to address any long-term reluctance to seek help.  

Full detail: [Many people with mental illness did not seek help during the first lockdown; research highlights unmet need](https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/alert/people-mental-illness-did-not-seek-help-during-first-lockdown-unmet-need-increased/)

Full research:  [Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on primary care-recorded mental illness and self-harm episodes in the UK: a population-based cohort study](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30288-7/fulltext). | Lancet Public Health

**Title:** £5 million launched to support suicide prevention services

Department of Health and Social Care | 26th November 2021

People experiencing suicidal thoughts or approaching a crisis will be supported by a £5 million boost to suicide prevention charities, following increased demand during the pandemic.

The suicide prevention Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector saw an increase in the number of individuals seeking support - with some services seeing up to 20% more contacts over the last year, compared to previous years.

Recognising the increased pressures, the £4 million grant fund will open next week for applications from VCSE organisations that support suicide prevention.

The support will be targeted at high-risk groups who have struggled most during the pandemic, such as people with a pre-existing mental illness, children and young people, NHS and social care staff who’ve faced enormous pressure over the last 18 months, and people in contact with the criminal justice system.

The funding will provide organisations with additional resource that will enable them to either set up new projects or expand or sustain current services to ensure people are supported. The other £1 million of the funding has been set aside to support existing and ongoing voluntary sector suicide prevention programmes.

Full detail: [£5 million launched to support suicide prevention services](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/5-million-launched-to-support-suicide-prevention-services)

We

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