

Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

18th Aug 2020

Isolation Tips

Coronavirus: UK lockdown loneliness strikes women and younger workers most

Women and younger workers are the two groups most likely to have been adversely affected by feelings of loneliness while working remotely, according to a new study. Half of women and nearly three-quarters (74%) of younger workers said they had felt lonely in lockdown according to research conducted by Totaljobs. Social distancing, working from home and endless screen time has meant it is inevitable that experiences of loneliness will spike, the recruitment website said. The poll of 2,000 UK workers found that almost half (46%) of UK workers have experienced loneliness and social isolation during lockdown. More than half of workers agreed that the majority of their social interactions happened in the workplace. Employees are facing what Totaljobs calls a “social silence” when it comes to interactions with colleagues.

<https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/coronavirus-uk-lockdown-loneliness-strikes-women-and-younger-workers-most-082234733.html>

Coronavirus isolated LGBTQ students from community. Now they're going back to school.

Micah Lance graduated from St. Petersburg's Dixie Hollins High in 2015, but one of his strongest memories remains his first meeting with the school's GSA club. GSAs (the acronym stands for “Gay-Straight Alliance” or “Gender and Sexuality Alliance”) have existed at Tampa Bay high schools for nearly a decade, helping LGBTQ students and allies socialize, organize and support each other.

<https://www.tampabay.com/news/health/2020/08/17/coronavirus-isolated-lgbtq-students-from-community-now-theyre-going-back-to-school/>

Hygiene Helpers

Masks 'tremendously effective' at curbing Covid-19 spread

Wearing a face mask significantly cuts the risk of spreading Covid-19 through speaking and coughing, research suggests. A new study by scientists at the University of Edinburgh has found face coverings can block out 99.9 per cent of potentially lethal droplets expelled when an infected person coughs or talks. The findings show that a person is exposed to 10,000 times more particles from a person who coughs with their face uncovered while standing two metres away than from someone half a metre away who is wearing a mask.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/masks-tremendously-effective-curbing-covid-19-spread-2944566>

Coronavirus: Why face masks DO work, according to study

Droplets expelled by the mouth and nose are the main way Covid-19 can spread Scientists conducted experiments with real people and mannequins. They compared droplet levels on surfaces with and without the use of masks. 'Not a single droplet' was omitted by the participants wearing a face mask

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8636147/Why-masks-work-Coughing-sneezing-without-exposes-people-10-00-TIMES-droplets.html>

How can I help shielded trainees return to work?

Radha Sundaram, consultant in intensive care at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley, says, “Most shielding trainees, although physically removed from the workplace, have kept in touch with their peers and departments. “Encourage them to seek an occupational health appointment so that an

individual risk assessment can be carried out, along with getting tailored advice on risk mitigation at work. It's the employer's responsibility to ensure that these risk mitigation measures are put in place and, wherever possible, reasonable adjustments are made to support a return to work. "Welcome them for an informal chat with their supervisor, either face-to-face or virtual, ahead of their first day at work. Confirm that they are fit tested for the personal protective equipment currently available at the hospital. "Arrange shadowing shifts and a phased return. Recognise that along with their health vulnerabilities, these doctors will also have apprehensions around skill retention and team integration. Make sure that they have a mentor who they could meet for informal chats to discuss their experience. It also helps to prepare the team that they are joining so that insensitive remarks about a prolonged break are not made.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/370/bmj.m3188>

Poor housing linked to high Covid-19 death rate in London borough

Appalling housing conditions and crippling rents in one of the UK's poorest boroughs helped turn it into a hotspot of Covid-19 deaths, according to a poverty inquiry that examined links between local inequalities and the pandemic. The Brent Poverty Commission, which had been running for two months when Covid-19 struck, said chronic overcrowding and widespread poverty in the north-west London borough had created ideal conditions for the virus to thrive. Latest figures show Brent has the worst death rate of any local authority in England and Wales per 100,000 population, with 490 deaths to the end of July, including 36 deaths alone in one of its most deprived neighbourhoods, Church End. The chair of the commission, Lord Best, said there was a clear link between coronavirus deaths and poverty, inequality and poor housing. "It's definitely the case that those people who have had Covid-19 and died of it come from the poorest areas, the most deprived estates and parts of the borough. That's just a fact."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/17/poor-housing-linked-high-covid-19-death-rate-london-borough-brent>

Germany warns local coronavirus outbreaks are 'mostly connected with celebrations'

Health Minister Jens Spahn has warned stricter event bans could be put in place in Germany amid a rise in coronavirus outbreaks. Spahn attributed rising cases in Germany to holidaymakers returning to the country. But he said celebrations among people, such as weddings, were also causing problems. He urged people to only celebrate within a close family circle. "There are more infections in the country due to returning travellers, but there are also local outbreaks, which are mostly connected with celebrations, said Spahn to German broadcaster ZDF on Sunday night. "This is what we have to keep in mind beyond travel," the politician, who's a member of Angela Merkel's centre Christian Democrats (CDU), said. When asked about a possible new lockdown or stricter measures to contain the pandemic, Spahn said that in his view there was no point in closing retail stores or outlets like hairdressers again. With mandatory face masks and distance rules (1.5 metre from others not in your household) the situation could be managed, he said.

<https://www.thelocal.de/20200817/germany-warns-local-coronavirus-outbreaks-are-mostly-connected-with-celebrations>

Face masks, smaller classes and distanced desks: Europe's back-to-school plan

Across Europe, the start of the new school year was meant to signal a return to normality. Countries such as Italy kept pupils at home from March to the summer holidays, while others such as Denmark allowed schools to reopen for the remainder of the term after the worst of the pandemic's first wave had passed. All tried to reassure parents and children that in-person teaching would restart in the fall. Yet the planned reopening of schools could not come at a worse time: Many European countries, from Spain to Poland, are experiencing an uptick in coronavirus cases. Already the spike has forced some schools to close their doors again, including in the northern German state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern where four schools had to partly shut after reopening last week due to coronavirus cases.

Community Activities

Second wave Covid-19 spike in Oldham bigger than height of the pandemic

Oldham's second covid-19 spike is bigger than it was during the height of the pandemic. For the week ending August 11 there were 266 cases of coronavirus confirmed in the borough, according to government figures. This is an increase of 18 from the previous highest week's total of 248 which was recorded in the week to April 12. The borough is currently on the verge of a local lockdown being introduced to try and halt the numbers of new cases of the virus. But the town's MP Jim McMahon has confirmed that he would not back a borough-wide lockdown if the government decided more stringent lockdown measures were required. Cases of Covid-19 have been cropping up across many areas of the borough in recent weeks, but the biggest spikes have been seen in the Alexandra Park and Werneth areas around the town.

<http://oldham-chronicle.co.uk/news-features/139/main-news/136021/second-wave-covid19-spike-in-oldham-bigger-than-height-of-the-pandemic>

Concern over rise in Covid-19 cases in Northern Ireland after nearly 300 are diagnosed within a week

Almost 300 people have been diagnosed with Covid-19 in Northern Ireland over the last week, official figures have revealed. The Department of Health said yesterday that 27 cases had been confirmed over the previous 24 hours, bringing to 288 the number of people diagnosed over the last seven days. According to the official statistics, there were seven people with Covid-19 in hospital and one person with the virus fighting for their life in intensive care yesterday. It follows on from the diagnosis of a further 65 cases of Covid-19 on Saturday and 74 cases on Friday, and the news that the R number is likely to be 1.6. The majority of positive cases over the past week have been in Mid and East Antrim, with 74 people diagnosed, followed by Belfast where 60 people have tested positive, and a further 48 cases in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus/concern-over-rise-in-covid-19-cases-in-northern-ireland-after-nearly-300-are-diagnosed-within-a-week-39454086.html>

It's 'highly likely' fresh lockdown restrictions will be imposed in Milton Keynes if Covid-19 cases continue to rise, says council leader

Councillor Pete Marland said on Friday that 29 people had officially tested positive in the city over the previous two weeks. But the true figure of untested cases in the community will be higher, he said. Over the weekend seven more cases were confirmed. Pete said: "Most recent cases have been in young adults, particularly people in their 20s and 30s. And they've been spread across several areas of Milton Keynes, not just on one place. I must therefore say this: If people continue not to follow the guidance and if cases continue to rise, it is highly likely that restrictions will be reimposed here."

<https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/people/its-highly-likely-fresh-lockdown-restrictions-will-be-imposed-milton-keynes-if-covid-19-cases-continue-rise-says-council-leader-2944245>

Beijing art exhibition glorifies China's Covid-19 response

The world may be in the midst of a global pandemic, but visitors to a new Beijing exhibition could be forgiven for thinking the battle has already been won. A triumphant art show celebrating the "great spirit of the Chinese people" in fighting Covid-19 opened this month at the country's National Museum, near Tiananmen Square in the center of Beijing. Through a collection of almost 180 artworks, including sculptures, watercolors and dramatic oil paintings of heroic doctors, the exhibition aims to document the initial coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan and its aftermath.

<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/beijing-covid-art-exhibition/index.html>

Working Remotely

PwC expects majority of U.K. staff to work remotely after coronavirus

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP expects the majority of its 22,000 U.K. staff to spend some of their time working remotely, even after the coronavirus crisis passes. PwC, one of the so-called Big Four accounting firms, is predicting a more even split between office and home working in the medium-to-long term, spokesperson Richard Pain said. Usage of its offices has plunged during the crisis, with a little more than a quarter of its U.K. employees spending time in one of its 20 offices in the country last week, he added.

<https://www.accountingtoday.com/articles/pwc-expects-majority-of-u-k-staff-to-work-remotely-after-coronavirus>

Why NYC WON'T survive coronavirus: Entrepreneur outlines why the city is forever changed

They were wiped out by COVID-19, then a week of riots and looting sent other residents running for other cities. Now, crime and homelessness is on the rise which is stopping people from coming back. It means that the city is not likely to recover as it has from every other crisis. After 9/11, people were forced back to their office jobs because internet speed was too slow for people to work from home, he said. Now, businesses can function entirely through Zoom. Jamie Dimon, the CEO of JP Morgan Chase, said recently there was still a need to bring people back into offices. Facebook is also investing in New York City to try to ensure it will remain a global business center.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8635857/Why-NYC-WONT-survive-coronavirus-Entrepreneur-outlines-city-for-ever-changed.html>

Virtual Classrooms

UNC Chapel Hill to move undergraduate classes fully remote amid outbreaks of COVID-19

A week after its first day of classes, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill announced it will be shifting all undergraduate classes remotely amid several outbreaks of COVID-19 on campus. Starting Wednesday, all undergraduate in-person instruction will go digital for the rest of the fall semester, Chancellor Kevin M. Guskiewicz and Executive Vice Chancellor Robert A. Blouin said in a letter to the school on Monday. The school leaders said the "current data presents an untenable situation." In the past week, from Aug. 10-16, the campus' positivity rate increased nearly fivefold, from 2.8% to 13.6%, officials said. During that period, there were 130 new confirmed cases in students and five in employees, according to the school's COVID-19 dashboard.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/unc-chapel-hill-move-undergraduate-classes-fully-remote/story?id=72426531>

Lab-based teaching re-imagined using augmented reality

The Department of Chemical Engineering is transforming the delivery of lab-based teaching using Microsoft HoloLens technology and augmented reality. Chemical engineers at Imperial have been transforming how they teach practical lab skills to students based remotely, as part of the new multi-mode offering for students in the new academic year. New and returning chemical engineering undergraduates will have the opportunity to use augmented reality (AR) to complete lab-based experiments, using Microsoft HoloLens technology to connect and interact from wherever they are in the world.

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/202013/lab-based-teaching-re-imagined-using-augmented-reality>

'Who are we willing to sacrifice?': teachers' fears grow as US schools plan reopenings

During a school board meeting in July over school reopening plans, Louise Radloff, the county school board chair, was caught on a hot mic telling another member, "I could strangle him", in reference to another board member arguing in favor of starting school virtually. She has since apologized. Opponents' fears are justified. Gwinnett county has reported more than 20,000 Covid-19 cases, with local infections rising over the past few weeks. Worried teachers have been holding caravan protests against in-person school reopenings.

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/aug/17/us-schools-reopening-coronavirus-teachers>

After two delays, Zachary classrooms open to students; half the students are on virtual plan

After two delays, Zachary schools on Monday opened their doors to students for the first time since March, when facilities closed because of the coronavirus pandemic. The school year was originally slated to begin Aug. 6. The Zachary Community School Board decided to push that date back to Aug. 10 to give staff extra time to prepare for teaching with extra safety precautions in place. Then, when several teachers had to quarantine because of coronavirus exposure, the start date was postponed once again.

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/communities/zachary/article_77a74ea0-e0a2-11ea-836e-9b4075017862.html

CDC warns COVID-19 rates in children are 'steadily increasing' as they return to schools

Children accounted for 7.3 percent of all US coronavirus cases as of August 3 Officials said the juvenile transmission rate may have been low in the spring and early summer because of lockdowns and school closures. But that rate is expected to rise as more students return to schools this fall. More than 5.36 million coronavirus cases and 169,489 deaths have been reported in the US as of Sunday

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8632613/CDC-warns-COVID-19-rates-children-steadily-increasing-return-schools.html>

Public Policies

Covid-19: Future of public health to be revealed

The future of public health in England is set to be announced later by Health Secretary Matt Hancock. Mr Hancock is due to deliver a speech at the think tank Policy Exchange titled The Future of Public Health. It comes amid reports that Public Health England (PHE) is to be axed. The Government has faced criticism over the prospect of breaking up the health body in the middle of a pandemic. Ministers have also been accused of using PHE as a “scapegoat” for other failings in the crisis.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-08-17/covid-19-future-of-public-health-to-be-revealed>

Australia's Health Minister Believes A Covid-19 Vaccine Will Be Available In 2021

For months now, the world’s top scientists and laboratories across the world have been focused on one goal: the eradication of coronavirus. While countries across the globe have sought to enforce their own restrictions to flatten the curve, introducing widespread lockdowns and social distancing rules, inevitably the coronavirus remains waiting for us on the other side. And as those of us in Victoria have witnessed firsthand, the easing of restrictions was quick to see the number of coronavirus cases skyrocket. As many health officials have noted, the return to normal won’t happen until a vaccine has been developed and made accessible. With dozens of health organisations and companies all scrambling to find a way to immunise the wider population against Covid-19, Australia’s Health Minister, Greg Hunt, says he’s optimistic a vaccine will be ready by 2021.

<https://www.gq.com.au/fitness/health-nutrition/australias-health-minister-believes-a-covid19-vaccine-will-be-available-in-2021/image-gallery/9aba1602abe079ab9255c0257775d22a>

More cases among young people and a lower death rate: How the coronavirus epidemic has changed in Spain

If an expert was presented with data from the coronavirus epidemic in Spain in two blocks – from the start until June 21, when the lockdown ended, and from that date up until now – they would struggle to determine that they represented the same pathogen. The age of those being infected, the areas worst affected and the death rates are completely different between the two data sets. The change in behavior of Covid-19 has been achieved thanks to isolating those infected, and monitoring suspected cases – although the recent rise in new cases could reverse this trend. Here is an analysis

of the radical changes in the most frequently used indicators.

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-08-17/more-cases-among-young-people-and-a-lower-death-rate-how-the-coronavirus-epidemic-has-changed-in-spain.html>

Lebanon needs two-week lockdown after 'shocking' COVID-19 rise, minister says

Lebanon must shut down for two weeks after a surge in coronavirus infections, the caretaker health minister said on Monday, as the country reels from the massive Beirut port blast. The country's health ministry registered a record 456 new infections on Monday, with two deaths, taking the cumulative number of cases to 9,337 since February, with 105 fatalities. "We declare today a state of general alert and we need a brave decision to close (the country) for two weeks," Hamad Hassan told Voice of Lebanon radio. Lebanon, already deep in financial crisis, was struggling with a COVID-19 spike before the Aug. 4 blast that killed at least 178 people, wrecked swathes of the capital and pushed the government to resign

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-lebanon/lebanon-needs-two-week-lockdown-after-shocking-covid-19-rise-minister-says-idUKKCN25D0ID>

Coronavirus Australia: Victorian daily numbers shows lockdown is working

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews says the state's strategy to drive down community transmission is working after it recorded 279 cases in the past 24 hours. Sunday's COVID-19 figures follow a week of markedly lower daily infection numbers compared to earlier in the month, suggesting the harsh lockdown in Melbourne and tougher rules across the state appear to be having the desired effect.

<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/health/health-problems/coronavirus-australia-victorian-daily-numbers-shows-lockdown-is-working-says-daniel-andrews/news-story/e1576fc410b7f90fd8844a1c370f6f4a>

Scottish Government publishes testing strategy for Covid-19

The strategy focuses on a number of key areas of testing: whole population testing of anyone with symptoms (Test & Protect) - proactive case finding by testing contacts and testing in outbreaks - protecting the vulnerable and preventing outbreaks in high risk settings by routine testing - testing for direct patient care, to diagnose and to treat, and to support safe patient care as NHS services restart surveillance to understand the disease, track prevalence, understand transmission and monitor key sectors

<https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2020/08/scottish-government-publishes-testing-strategy-for-covid-19/>

Maintaining Services

Here's how many UK universities will offer in-person teaching when they reopen

With new coronavirus cases being diagnosed each day across the UK, and certain lockdown restrictions and measures still in place, will universities open as usual in September? Universities in the UK will open this year with many discussing and planning ways in which they can continue to work in regards to keeping both staff and students safe as the coronavirus pandemic continues. Some may choose to do virtual learning, stick with in person teaching, or do a mixture of both.

<https://www.southyorkshiretimes.co.uk/education/heres-how-many-uk-universities-will-offer-person-teaching-when-they-reopen-2944646>

Italy shuts nightclubs, mandates masks as coronavirus case numbers rise again

With daily coronavirus case numbers rising, Italy on Monday imposed its first new restrictions on daily life since coming out of lockdown nearly four months ago, ordering the closure of nightclubs and mandating mask-wearing, even outdoors, in areas with nightlife. The new measures come as Italy faces its most precarious moment of the summer. School is due to start in less than a month, Italians are moving en masse for their August holidays, and tourists are coming in from other European countries that have seen even greater increases.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/italy-shutters-nightclubs-mandates-masks-as-coronavirus-case-numb>

[ers-rise-again/2020/08/17/24e5e2e4-e066-11ea-82d8-5e55d47e90ca_story.html](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/urgent-warning-birmingham-on-road-18780609)

Urgent warning as Birmingham 'on road to lockdown' if Covid cases keep rising

Birmingham's infection rate has more than doubled in a week - with more than 300 new cases. Director of public health Dr Justin Varney said it was likely the city would feature in the national "watch list" of places most at risk of intervention within days, with no sign of the current rise in cases easing off. There have been 321 new cases in the past week. "We could very easily be in a situation like we have seen in Leicester and Greater Manchester," he said this morning. Both areas have had lockdown restrictions imposed by health secretary Matt Hancock after seeing sustained spikes in infection. His concern has been triggered by a rapidly rising rate of infections across the city.

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/urgent-warning-birmingham-on-road-18780609>

Will COVID-19 hasten the UK's transition to digital healthcare?

A significant barrier to remote consultation has been the lack of infrastructure to support it. Remote consults in general practice jumped to 85%,[10] but systems were not in place to sustain this. 50% of GPs struggled to work remotely secondary to technological barriers, including problems with VPN connectivity, and a lack of the necessary hardware and software to conduct video conferencing.[10] For remote consults to become a viable long-term method of patient care in the United Kingdom, the right infrastructure must be implemented. Privacy and safety concerns have hindered digitisation's progress, but little has been done to address these.[11-13] However, there is growing evidence that remote consults are well received by both physicians and patients alike in both primary and secondary care.[3, 6, 14-16] The concerns raised by physicians are legitimate. To help quell these worries, evidence-based guidance needs to be developed to mitigate risk and establish norms of practice. Best practice guidelines have already begun to take shape during the COVID-19 pandemic[17] but more needs to be done urgently.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/370/bmj.m2828/rr>

Coronavirus: Numbers eating out in UK surpass pre-lockdown levels by a quarter

The first two weeks of the UK government's Eat Out to Help Out dining scheme has seen the number of people eating in restaurants from Monday to Wednesday increase by an average 26.9% year-on-year. This compares to an average 21.3% year-on-year decline for Thursday to Sunday in the same period, according to data published by OpenTable, a restaurant booking service. One effect of the scheme is that it has encouraged some restaurant goers to eat out Monday to Wednesday, instead of during the other days, according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR). Looking at the annual change in diner numbers for the whole week commencing August 3, on average the total was down 7.1%, compared to a decrease of 28.2% for the week before the scheme started. Even accounting for the redistribution effect, the net impact of the scheme is a desirable one, says CEBR.

<https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/coronavirus-numbers-eating-out-surpass-prelockdown-quarter-050013500.html>

'Unprecedented': Los Angeles schools to test all 600,000 students for Covid-19

Los Angeles schools to test all 600,000 students for Covid-19 - In the most ambitious plan of its kind, Los Angeles Unified has announced plans to test its roughly 600,000 students and 75,000 employees as the nation's second-largest school district prepares for the eventual return to in-person instruction.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/unprecedented-los-angeles-schools-to-test-all-600000-students-for-covid-19/ar-BB184FZw>

Tech Week Humber heads online in response to Covid-19

Tech Week Humber is heading online. The digital festival will embrace what it represents as it responds to the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.business-live.co.uk/technology/tech-week-humber-heads-online-18783888>

Second Lockdown A Wakeup Call For Kiwi Businesses To “get Digital”

New Zealand website agency Zeald has had fresh interest in its free ecommerce websites, following the announcement of Covid 19's resurgence in the country last week. New enquiries add to the more than 600 free websites Zeald has already given away since the first lockdown, to help get struggling small businesses trading online. Founder and Chairman of Zeald, David Kelly, says getting online will help future-proof small businesses against ongoing uncertainty. “While this latest blow has come as a shock, it proves we simply can't be complacent, even when it looks like we're getting a handle on Covid 19. We will be operating in an uncertain trading environment for some time to come, and small businesses need to prepare digitally,” says Kelly.

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU2008/S00263/second-lockdown-a-wakeup-call-for-kiwi-businesses-to-get-digital.htm>

Italy's businesses enjoy 'better than expected' virus rebound

In the southern Italian town of Avellino, Salvatore Amitrano has been rushing to dispatch a backlog of deliveries since the country emerged from its strict coronavirus lockdown. Mr Amitrano and his two brothers run a multinational business producing components for household appliances with annual revenues of about €25m. His company Pasell Group, which has plants in Italy, Turkey, Slovakia and Poland, registered year-on-year sales drops of up to 50 per cent in March, April and May as Rome imposed some of the most stringent antivirus measures so far seen in a western democracy.

<https://www.ft.com/content/73a36f20-bbd4-4d99-a1e9-685788cb9cd9>

Fears overcrowding in Wetherspoon pubs may lead to Covid spike

Fears that relaxed summer socialising will lead to a surge in Covid-19 cases around the UK have been heightened after concerns that JD Wetherspoon is failing to prevent overcrowding in pubs in its 900-strong chain. Concerns about poor social distancing by customers in Wetherspoon pubs followed a surge in visitors during recent hot weather and after the publication of A-level results last Thursday. Customers in a south London pub run by the company said they had not been asked to provide personal details, including mobile phone numbers that can be used in the government's track and trace system. The Guardian found that in one of south London's most popular pubs with young people, customers were allowed to buy drinks directly from the bar and stood within 1 metre of others without any intervention by the staff

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/aug/16/fears-overcrowding-in-wetherspoon-pubs-may-lead-to-covid-19-spike>

China partygoers cram into Wuhan water park

Thousands of partygoers packed out a water park over the weekend in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus first emerged late last year, keen to party as the city edges back to normal life. The popular Wuhan Maya Beach Water Park was filled with people frolicking in swimsuits and goggles for an electronic music festival, many perched on rubber dinghies or wading up to their chest in water. The water park reopened in June after Wuhan gradually opened up after a 76-day lockdown and strict restrictions to try and control the spread of the virus. The park -- which local media says has capped attendance at 50 percent of normal capacity -- is offering half price discounts for female visitors.

<https://news.yahoo.com/china-partygoers-cram-wuhan-water-104413274.html>

Healthcare Innovations

Scientists See Signs of Lasting Immunity to Covid-19, Even After Mild Infections

To the immune system, not all germs are equally memorable. But our body's cells seem to be

seriously studying up on the coronavirus. Scientists who have been monitoring immune responses to the virus are now starting to see encouraging signs of strong, lasting immunity, even in people who developed only mild symptoms of Covid-19, a flurry of new studies suggests. Disease-fighting antibodies, as well as immune cells called B cells and T cells that are capable of recognizing the virus, appear to persist months after infections have resolved — an encouraging echo of the body's enduring response to other viruses. "Things are really working as they're supposed to," said Deepta Bhattacharya, an immunologist at the University of Arizona and an author on one of the new studies, which has not yet been peer-reviewed.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/16/health/coronavirus-immunity-antibodies.html>

The great gamble of COVID-19 vaccine development

My prediction is that vaccines indeed will become a reality, as in Russia, but they will be hurried to market only to be partially effective and the uptake and population benefit will remain uncertain given all the issues discussed. In the meantime, many doctors on the front lines and in clinics continue to press regulators for unrestricted use of any and all available medications to treat COVID-19 patients at home. Every day of vaccine development means more hospitalizations and deaths. Caregivers, unlike government officials and biotechnology executives, are terrible gamblers. They are trained to take calculated risks and prescribe drugs they know have a basis to work early with COVID-19. Vaccine stakeholders, including government agencies, should not hold up treatment now in the gamble for a future panacea - even if it comes at "warp speed."

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/the-great-gamble-of-covid-19-vaccine-development/ar-BB183Rxz?li=BBnbcA1>