

Belgium found four cases of UK COVID strain 'early December'

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Belgium recorded four cases of the mutant coronavirus variant sweeping Britain at the start of December, health officials told AFP Tuesday.

The four cases were uncovered at the start of the month in the country's northern Flemish regions that border the Netherlands, said Jan

Eyckmans, spokesman for Belgium's health minister.

A spokesman for the national virus crisis centre said the figure was conservative and that other infections by the strain could have gone undetected as Belgium screens for new mutations far less than Britain does.

"It's not much, but it is not impossible that there are more," Yves Van Laethem told AFP.

The new strain of the virus discovered in Britain appears to spread more easily than other types but there is no evidence it is more lethal or resistant to vaccines, according to experts.

Its discovery has led more than two dozen countries around the world, including Belgium, to suspend travel from the UK out of precaution since the weekend.

But [infectious diseases](#) expert Van Laethem warned that the decision to close borders could have come too late.

"Isn't the enemy already among us? I don't know, but it's not impossible," he said. "This closure was perhaps already too late since they started finding cases of this English strain in September."

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