

Over a dozen vaccinated doctors dead as Indonesia's virus cases surge

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Over a dozen fully vaccinated doctors have died of COVID-19 in Indonesia, a medical association said Friday, as the Southeast Asian country battles a rash of severe cases in inoculated medical workers and

highly infectious new virus strains.

Infections have surged in the nation of 270 million people in the past week, passing two million cases on Monday as hospital occupancy rates soared to over 75 percent in Jakarta and other hard-hit areas.

Nearly 1,000 Indonesian health workers have died from the virus since the pandemic started, with the country's medical association confirming Friday that 401 doctors were among the victims—14 of whom were fully vaccinated.

"We are still updating the data and confirming whether the other cases had been vaccinated or not," the association's COVID-19 mitigation head Mohammad Adib Khumaidi told journalists.

The rise of severe cases in inoculated [medical workers](#) has raised questions about the China-produced Sinovac jab, which Indonesia is heavily relying on to vaccinate more than 180 million people by early next year.

This month, more than 300 vaccinated doctors and [health care workers](#) in Central Java were found to have been infected with COVID-19, with about a dozen hospitalised.

The country is also grappling with new virus strains, including the highly infectious Delta variant first identified in India.

Clinical symptoms suggest that strain is responsible for a surge in cases in West Java, the medical association's spokesperson for the province, Eka Mulyana, said.

"In West Java, bed occupancy rates have exceeded 90 percent. Some hospitals' rates are even more than 100 percent," he told reporters. "At

this rate, our health system is close to collapse."

Dozens of communities in Central Java's Kudus regency were put under lockdown after the Delta variant was detected in local testing samples, causing a sudden spike in virus cases.

The surge has been partly blamed on millions travelling from that region across the Muslim-majority nation at the end of Ramadan last month, despite an official ban on the annual migration.

The Indonesian medical association's Kudus representative, Ahmad Ipul Syaifuddin, has said the mass movement of people had made it next to impossible to determine where the surge began.

"We have no clue on how to trace and find the first spreader of the Delta cases because the sampling test result came out around three weeks after the mass exodus," he said.

"My sample was among the tested sampling for the Delta variant. I have already recovered and (have) tested negative now, but I still have a cough."

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