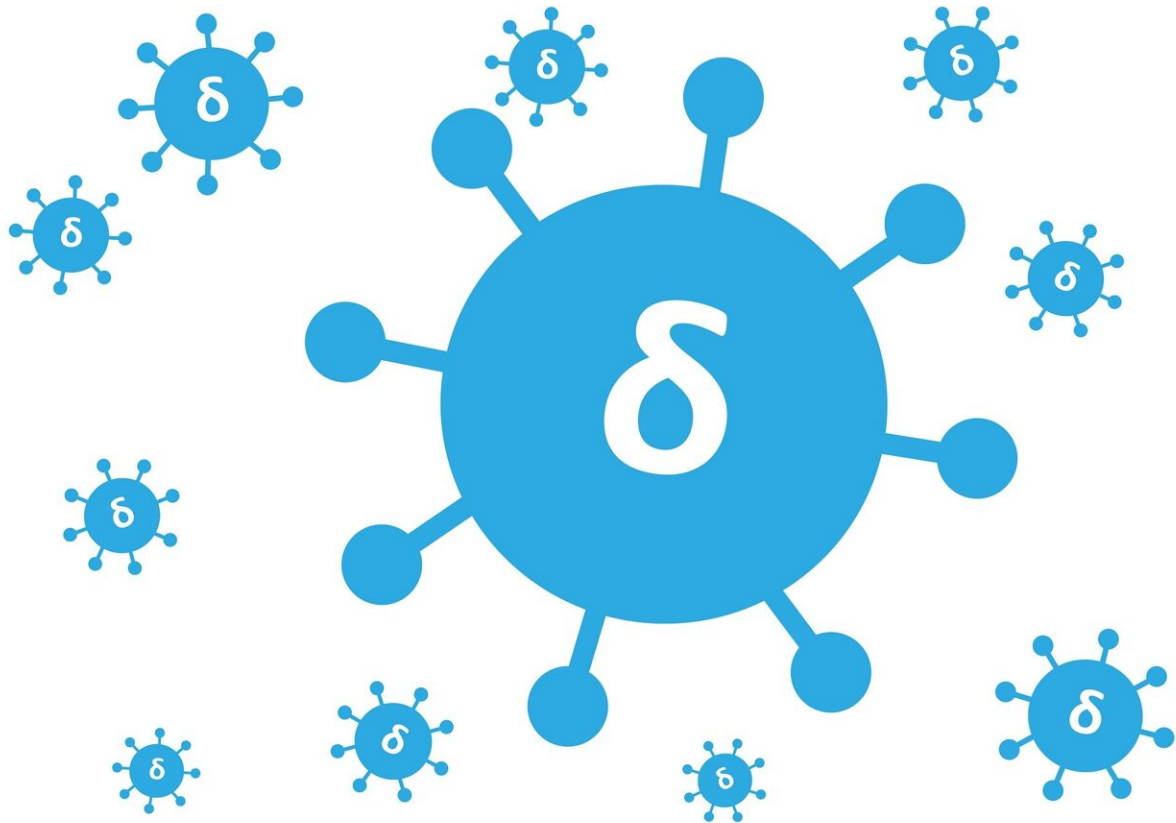


Delta variant circulating in Sao Paulo: health official

July 8 2021



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The highly contagious coronavirus Delta variant "is already circulating" in Brazil's most populated state, Sao Paulo, said authorities Wednesday

in the country with the world's second-highest death toll.

The variant, which has boosted infection numbers even in countries with [high vaccination rates](#), "is already indigenous, that is to say, it is already circulating in our environment in people who have not travelled or have had contact with someone who had been, for example, in India," said Sao Paulo's health secretary Jean Gorinchteyn.

The variant was first detected in India.

Brazil, where more than half a million people are recorded to have died of COVID-19, a toll second only to that of the United States, had until last week recorded just over a dozen isolated cases of Delta infections—all in people returning from India, or who had been in contact with people who had been there.

On Monday, however, the city of Sao Paulo reported the first case of a suspected local transmission, in a 45-year-old man who had not recently traveled abroad.

Two more cases were reported in the state of Rio de Janeiro the following day.

The World Health Organization on Wednesday announced the world had crossed the four-million threshold of coronavirus deaths.

Brazil, with 212 million inhabitants, experienced a particularly devastating second epidemic wave between January and April due, largely, to the Gamma variant first detected in Manaus in the northern Amazonas state.

To date, the South American giant has recorded more than 526,000 coronavirus deaths. But the daily mortality rate has flattened in recent

weeks—from about 2,000 in mid-June to 1,600 last week.

The Delta variant, more transmissible than any previous strain, has already been found in some 100 countries.

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