

Germany to base COVID restrictions on more than case numbers

July 12 2021, by Frank Jordans



A student of a graduating class is vaccinated at the vaccination center at Messe Munich, Germany, Monday, July 12, 2021. Credit: Sven Hoppe/dpa via AP

With COVID-19 cases again on the rise, German officials said on Monday said that authorities need a "broader focus" beyond the country's infection rate to fully gauge the impact the pandemic is having

on the health system and the kind of measures that should be taken.

For much of the past year the incidence rate—how many COVID-19 cases are confirmed per 100,000 people each week—has been key to the government's decisions over what restrictive measures to impose.

The relevance of that figure is increasingly being called into question by those who argue that a sharp rise in new cases—already seen in other European countries such as Britain and the Netherlands—doesn't necessarily mean many more seriously ill patients.

"Because the at-risk groups are vaccinated, a high incidence doesn't automatically mean an equally high burden on intensive care beds," Health Minister Jens Spahn said on Twitter. "The incidence is increasingly losing significance, we now need more detailed information on the situation in clinics."

His ministry said that as of Tuesday, hospitals will need to transmit more data on their COVID-19 patients, including names, the type of treatment and their vaccination status.

The government says 58.5% of the population have received at least one dose of vaccine, and 42.6 % are fully vaccinated. The number of shots administered daily has dipped slightly in recent days, raising concerns that 'vaccine lethargy' or even outright refusal to get vaccinated could hamper efforts to achieve so-called 'herd immunity.'

Germany's disease control agency said last week that the country should aim to vaccinate 85% of people ages 12-59 and 90% of people over 60 to prevent the delta variant causing a strong resurgence of coronavirus cases this autumn and winter.

The Robert Koch Institute on Monday reported 324 new coronavirus

cases and two deaths in the past day, taking the death toll since the start of the pandemic to 91,233.

Government spokesman Steffen Seibert said tracking case numbers was still important and Germany is closely watching the situation in countries such as Britain, Spain and the Netherlands, which have eased restrictions only to see infections shoot up.

"(The vaccine campaign in Germany) is luckily progressing well, but we're not sufficiently protected yet against the possibility that the numbers really rise strongly again," he said.

Seibert added that it was important to curb new cases in order to prevent the rise of a new virus variant against which current vaccines would be less effective.

© 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Germany to base COVID restrictions on more than case numbers (2021, July 12)
retrieved 15 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-07-germany-covid-case.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.