

Moscow reports surge in deaths last month due to coronavirus

August 13 2021, by Vladimir Isachenkov



A medical worker measures the temperature of a homeless man prior to giving a shot of the one-dose Sputnik Light vaccine at a mobile vaccination station in St. Petersburg, Russia, Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2021. Russia has faced a surge in new infections blamed on the growing prevalence of the more contagious delta variant and low vaccine uptake. Credit: AP Photo/Elena Ignatyeva

Deaths in Moscow increased 60% in July compared to the same month a year earlier, health officials in Russia's capital said as the country reported a new daily record for COVID-19 fatalities.

Moscow's Health Department said Friday that 17,237 people died of all causes last month. The number included 6,583 coronavirus-related deaths, which corresponded to a COVID-19 mortality rate of 3.95%.

Health officials blamed the increase on COVID-19 deaths on the more contagious delta variant and unusually hot weather that exacerbated coronavirus-induced complications.

The Russian government's coronavirus task force on Friday reported 22,277 new confirmed cases and 815 deaths, the highest daily toll of the pandemic.

Russia has been struggling with a surge of infections since early June. New confirmed cases went from about 9,000 a day at the beginning of the summer to over 23,000 a day in early July.

Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova, who leads the coronavirus task force, said last week that Russia saw a year-on-year increase in July mortality of 17.9%, which she blamed on swelling COVID-19 infections.

Overall in the pandemic, Russia has reported 168,864 deaths. However, retroactive tallies of coronavirus-linked deaths by state statistics agency Rosstat say 316,793 people who had COVID-19 died from April 2020 to June 2021.



Eduard, a homeless man gets a shot of the one-dose Sputnik Light vaccine at a mobile vaccination station in St. Petersburg, Russia, Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2021. Russia has faced a surge in new infections blamed on the growing prevalence of the more contagious delta variant and low vaccine uptake. Credit: AP Photo/Elena Ignatyeva



A homeless man reacts as he gets a shot of the one-dose Sputnik Light vaccine at a mobile vaccination station in St. Petersburg, Russia, Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2021. Russia has faced a surge in new infections blamed on the growing prevalence of the more contagious delta variant and low vaccine uptake. Credit: AP Photo/Elena Ignatyeva

Russian officials ascribe the difference to varying counting methods. They note that the government task force only includes deaths in which COVID-19 was the main cause and uses data from medical facilities, while Rosstat counts all deaths of people infected with the coronavirus and gets its information from civil registry offices where deaths are finalized.

Russia's vaccination drive against COVID-19 has lagged behind other

nations. As of a week ago, some 39 million Russians—or 26.7% of the country's 146 million people, had received at least one vaccine dose, while 20% had been fully vaccinated.

Authorities in many regions have made vaccines mandatory for certain groups of workers, including those employed in health care, education, retail, public transportation and government offices.

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