

World tops two million new daily COVID cases

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The world recorded more than two million daily coronavirus cases on average between January 1 and 7 with figures doubling in 10 days, an AFP tally showed on Saturday.

An average of 2,106,118 new daily infections were reported over the

seven-day period, shortly after the one million case threshold was passed in the week of December 23-29, 2021.

New global case numbers have soared by 270 percent since the highly contagious Omicron variant was discovered in South Africa in late November.

But COVID-related deaths were at their lowest level since October 2020, with an average of 6,237 per day recorded in the period between January 1 and 7.

Although [early studies](#) suggest Omicron causes less [severe illness](#), experts have warned the sheer volume of cases fuelled by the strain could still overwhelm [health systems](#).

Countries around the world have reintroduced restrictions and ramped up vaccination programmes in a bid to stem the spread of the virus.

Europe, as well as the United States and Canada, are the world's infection hotspots. The two regions respectively represented 49 percent and 33 percent of global COVID cases in the past week.

COVID cases skyrocketed by 47 percent in Europe and 76 percent in the United States and Canada compared with the previous week.

In the same period, COVID infections increased by 224 percent in Oceania, 148 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 116 percent in the Middle East and 145 percent in Asia.

The number of new cases reported in Africa remained stable but, as elsewhere, were at their highest level since the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

The figures are based on official statistics produced by national health authorities.

A significant proportion of less severe or asymptomatic cases go undetected despite intensified testing regimes since the beginning of the pandemic.

Testing policies also vary from one country to another.

Taking into account excess mortality linked to COVID-19, the World Health Organization estimates the overall death toll could be two to three times higher.

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