

Many community outbreaks of COVID traced to restaurants, bars

August 12 2020, by Robin Foster and E.j. Mundell, Healthday Reporters



(HealthDay)—New data shows that many of the community outbreaks

of coronavirus that have cropped up in the United States this summer have originated in restaurants and bars.

In Louisiana, roughly a quarter of the state's 2,360 cases since March that were outside of places like nursing homes and prisons had their origins in bars and restaurants, *The New York Times* reported.

Meanwhile, 12% of new [coronavirus](#) cases in Maryland last month were traced to restaurants, while 9% of cases in Colorado have been traced to bars and restaurants, the newspaper said.

Whether the infections started among workers or patrons is unclear, but the clusters concern health officials because many restaurant and bar employees are in their 20s and can silently fuel household transmissions, which have soared in recent weeks through the Sun Belt and the West, the *Times* reported.

This summer, scores of restaurants, including ones in Nashville, Las Vegas, Atlanta and Milwaukee, have had to close temporarily because of COVID-19 cases among employees, the *Times* reported. Texas and Florida also had to shut down bars following surges in new cases in those states. In a recent week in San Diego, 15 of the 39 new community cases were traced to restaurants. And in Washington, D.C., cases have climbed since the city reopened indoor dining, the newspaper reported.

Indoor dining remains banned in New York City and other places because it has proved far more dangerous than outdoor eating. Public health experts agree that indoor dining, especially in bars, is far more likely to spawn outbreaks than outdoor settings.

"As of recently, we still hadn't traced a major U.S. outbreak of any sort to an outdoor exposure," Lindsey Leininger, a health policy researcher and a clinical professor at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth in New Hampshire, told the *Times*.

Meanwhile, Russia on Tuesday became the first country to approve a coronavirus vaccine, even though large-scale testing of the vaccine is still incomplete, the *Washington Post* reported. Russian officials have pledged to vaccinate millions of citizens, raising global alarm that the country is jumping dangerously ahead of final testing that would determine if the vaccine is safe and effective.

"Of course, what counts most is for us to be able to ensure the unconditional safety of the use of this vaccine and its efficiency in the future. I hope that this will be accomplished," Putin said at a meeting with government members, adding that his own daughter had already been given the vaccine, the *Post* reported.

As schools reopen, COVID cases among kids on the rise

With millions of American children soon returning to school, a new study shows that at least 97,000 kids were infected with COVID-19 during the last two weeks of July.

According to the new report from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association, at least 338,000 U.S. children had tested positive through July 30, the *Times* reported. That means that more than a quarter of those cases had come up positive in the second half of July alone.

Already, some schools have tried to reopen and then had to order quarantines or close after COVID-19 cases were reported among students and staff, the *Times* reported. North Paulding High School in Georgia, which gained national attention last week after videos of crowded hallways made their way onto social media, temporarily switched to online instruction this week after at least nine coronavirus

cases were reported there.

In the new report, states in the South and West accounted for more than 7 of 10 infections. The count could be higher because the report did not include complete data from Texas and parts of New York State outside of New York City.

Missouri, Oklahoma, Alaska, Nevada, Idaho and Montana were among the states with the highest percentage increase of child infections during that period, the report found.

There were differences in how states classified children: Most places cited in the report considered children to be no older than 17 or 19. But in Alabama, the age limit was 24, while it was only 14 in Florida and Utah, the *Times* reported.

Though public health officials say that most children do not get severe illness, a new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that a new, more dangerous COVID-19 condition known as Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children has struck children of color far more often than whites.

From early March through late July, the CDC received reports of 570 [young people](#)—ranging from infants to age 20 with the condition, the *Times* reported. Of those, 40 percent were Hispanic or Latino, 33 percent were Black and 13 percent were white. Ten died and nearly two-thirds were admitted to intensive care units, the report found.

New model shows 300,000 dead

Meanwhile, a new model predicted that nearly 300,000 Americans could die of COVID-19 by December if more people don't wear masks or practice better social distancing.

However, if 95 percent of people were to wear a face mask in public, some 66,000 lives could be saved, they added.

"We're seeing a rollercoaster in the United States," institute director Christopher Murray said in a statement. "It appears that people are wearing masks and socially distancing more frequently as infections increase, then after a while as infections drop, people let their guard down and stop taking these measures to protect themselves and others which, of course, leads to more infections. And the potentially deadly cycle starts over again."

In other pandemic news, the U.S. State Department has lifted its 5-month-old blanket warning against international travel for Americans. Instead, the department will now issue travel recommendations by country.

Why the change? "Health and safety conditions improving in some countries and potentially deteriorating in others" influenced its decision, the state department said in a statement.

"We continue to recommend U.S. citizens exercise caution when traveling abroad due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic," the agency's statement said.

Despite the lifting of the travel warning, many other countries are currently restricting American citizens from entry because the United States has far more coronavirus cases than any other nation in the world, the *Post* reported.

By Wednesday, the U.S. coronavirus case count surpassed 5.1 million as the death toll exceeded 164,400, according to a *Times* tally.

According to the same tally, the top five states in coronavirus cases as of

Wednesday were: California with over 586,000; Florida with nearly 543,000; Texas with over 522,600; New York with over 426,700; and Georgia with nearly 206,000.

Nations grapple with pandemic

Elsewhere in the world, the situation remains challenging.

Things continue to worsen in India.

On Wednesday, the country passed 2.3 million infections and over 46,000 deaths, a Johns Hopkins tally showed. The surge comes weeks after a national lockdown was lifted, and it's prompted some parts of the country to revert back to stricter social distancing measures.

Brazil is also a hotspot in the coronavirus pandemic, with over 3.1 million confirmed infections by Wednesday, according to the Hopkins tally. It has the second-highest number of cases, behind only the United States.

Cases are also spiking wildly in Russia: As of Wednesday, that country reported the world's fourth-highest number of COVID-19 cases, at over 900,700, the Hopkins tally showed.

Worldwide, the number of reported infections passed 20.3 million on Wednesday, with over 742,000 deaths, according to the Hopkins tally.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [new coronavirus](#).

Citation: Many community outbreaks of COVID traced to restaurants, bars (2020, August 12) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-08-outbreaks-covid-restaurants-bars.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.