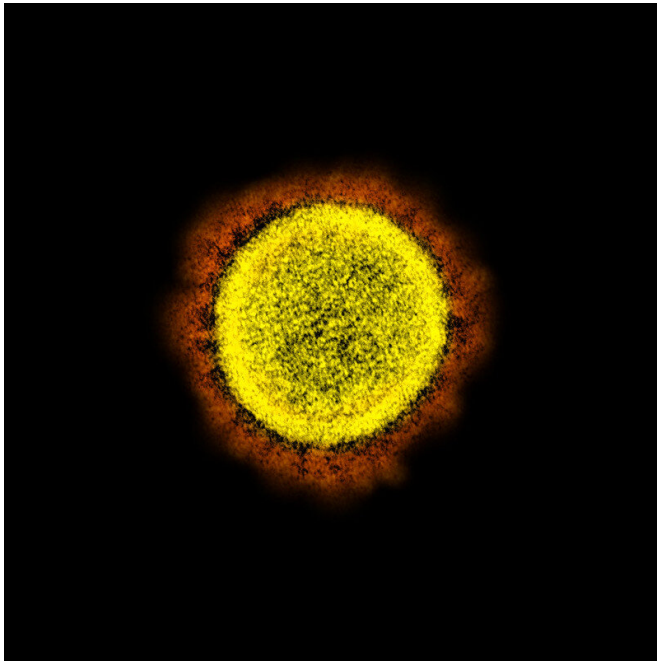


Argentina detects first case of British virus variant

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Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 Transmission electron micrograph of SARS-CoV-2 virus particles, isolated from a patient. Image captured and color-enhanced at the NIAID Integrated Research Facility (IRF) in Fort Detrick, Maryland. Credit: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, NIH

Argentina has detected its first case of a British-identified coronavirus variant that appears to be more infectious, authorities said Saturday.

The infection was discovered in a man who arrived from Britain in Argentina in late December without symptoms of the disease.

Authorities "detected the variant of SARS-CoV-2 from the United Kingdom in a traveler," science minister Roberto Salvarezza said wrote Twitter, identifying the strain as "VOC202012/01"

Since first being reported to the World Health

Organization in mid-December, the British-identified variant has been found in dozens of countries.

This strain is believed to be more easily transmissible because of a mutation of the spike protein, the part of the virus which latches on to [human cells](#).

Argentina, with a population of 44 million, has seen 1.78 million cases of COVID-19 and 45,227 deaths since March.

Last week, authorities warned of a surge of cases and banned night-time activities and gatherings of more than 10 people.

Direct flights from Britain have been prohibited.

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