

# OMICRON BA.2 IS BAD NEWS: EXPERT EXPLAINS 3 REASONS WHY SUBVARIANT CAN BE AS LETHAL AS DELTA. READ HERE

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

As new lab studies have revealed that Omicron subvariant BA.2 could cause severe illness like Delta and previously identified COVID variants, epidemiologist Eric Fang voiced that it needs to be upgraded to Variant of Concern.

The three crucial things about the subvariant BA,2, also known as stealth Omicron, that the Japanese team has identified are - BA.2 may have features that make it capable of causing serious illness, it shows immune escape properties just like sub-variant BA.1. Further stealth Omicron is resistant to treatments like sotrovimab, the monoclonal antibody. The study has been posted on the preprint repository BioRxiv, however, it is yet to be peer-reviewed.

The researchers said although BA.2 is considered as an Omicron variant, its genomic sequence is heavily different from BA.1. "And, this suggests that the virological characteristics of BA.2 are different from that of BA.1," they added.

Calling this worrisome, Fang appealed that with Omicron BA2 surging globally, it needs to be upgraded to VOC. He also explains more about the subvariant in a series of tweets.

BA2 is seriously bad news. It's both faster transmission than BA2 and if it's truly more severe and as evasive against prior immunity including BA1 old Omicron immunity— then it'd be the worse of 4 worlds, he said in a tweet.

He also pointed out that being infected with BA.1 creates immunity against the subvariant, but not BA.2.

Fang also said that studies have that there are two versions of BA.2 itself.

*Find all the tweets here:*

Worrisome—New lab experiments from Japan show that [#BA2](#) may have features that make it as capable of causing serious illness as older variants—including Delta! And yet as evasive as old [#Omicron](#) cousin BA1. [#BA2](#) surging—needs upgrade to VOC asap [@WHO!https://t.co/j6P3gwxMTk](#)

Earlier this week, World Health Organisation also warned that the BA.2 is surging faster than the previously identified strain. And in case there is another Omicron wave, then we could see further infections of BA.2.

Though the subvariant is more transmissible than BA.1, WHO officials said that there is not much difference in their severity.

Echoing similar views, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said as quoted by CNN, "There is no evidence that the BA.2 lineage is more severe than the BA.1 lineage." However, they are keeping a close eye on BA.2.

Time and again WHO has warned that Omicron is not mild. "It is less severe than Delta but we are still seeing significant numbers of hospitalisations of Omicron."

WHO also pointed out that all other coronavirus variants, including alpha, beta and delta, continue to decline globally as omicron crowds them out. Among the more than 400,000 COVID-19 virus sequences uploaded to the world's biggest virus database in the last week, more than 98% were omicron.

Meanwhile, the subvariant BA.2 appears to be "steadily increasing" and its prevalence has risen in South Africa, Denmark, the UK and other countries.

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