

Coronavirus second wave at 'critical' stage with 100,000 cases a day, experts warn

The second wave of coronavirus in England has reached a "critical stage", with infections doubling approximately every nine days, experts have said.

Researchers say they are detecting early signs areas that previously had low rates of infection are following trends observed in the country's worst-affected regions.

They add that there has to be change before Christmas, and if more stringent measures are to be implemented, it needs to be sooner rather than later as the current measures are "not sufficient".

The interim data from round six of the React study uses data and swab results from 86,000 people between October 16-25, and estimates there are around 96,000 new infections per day.

According to the study, the overall prevalence of infection in the community in England was 1.28% - or 128 people per 10,000, up from 60 per 10,000 in the previous round which took place between September 18 and October 5.

Infections were doubling every nine days with a national reproduction number (R) estimated at 1.56, compared to 1.16 in the previous round, according to the Imperial College London study.

The report suggests interim estimates of R were above 2.0 in the South East, East of England, London and South West, but there is a greater degree of uncertainty around these figures.

The experts warn: "The co-occurrence of high prevalence and rapid growth means that the second wave of the epidemic in England has now reached a critical stage.

"Whether via regional or national measures, it is now time-critical to control the virus and turn R below one if further hospital admissions and deaths from Covid-19 are to be avoided."

They add that the pandemic is growing exponentially, but say the effect of some of the most recent measures may not have filtered through to the numbers.

The experts found the prevalence of infection was highest in Yorkshire and The Humber at 2.72%, up from 0.84%.

In the North West it was at 2.27%, up from 1.21%, and lowest in the East of England at 0.55%, up from 0.29%.

Source:

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