



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Wednesday 20210915

Data shows booster shots 'not appropriate' for public: Lancet

Data shows booster shots 'not appropriate' for public: Lancet (The Tribune: 20210915)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/data-shows-booster-shots-not-appropriate-for-public-lancet-311000>

Data shows booster shots 'not appropriate' for public: Lancet

For representation. Reuters file photo

Vaccine efficacy against severe Covid-19 is so high, even for the Delta variant, that booster doses for the general population are "not appropriate" at this stage in the pandemic, an international group of scientists argued in a review published in The Lancet.

The review, which includes scientists from the World Health Organization (WHO) and two from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), who will leave the agency, comes even as the latter is currently reviewing evidence for booster doses for Americans; and many other countries including Israel, Italy, France and Russia who have already rolled out the third dose of Covid jabs.

It summarises the currently available evidence from randomised controlled trials and observational studies published in peer-reviewed journals and pre-print servers and asserts that the benefits of the first shots are clear.

It added that vaccination had 95 per cent efficacy against severe disease both from the Delta variant and from the Alpha variant, and over 80 per cent efficacy at protecting against any infection from these variants.

Although vaccines are less effective against asymptomatic disease or against transmission than against severe disease, the unvaccinated minority are still the major drivers of transmission, the scientists argued in the review published on Monday.

"Taken as a whole, the currently available studies do not provide credible evidence of substantially declining protection against severe disease, which is the primary goal of vaccination. Even if some gain can ultimately be obtained from boosting, it will not outweigh the benefits of providing initial protection to the unvaccinated," said lead author Ana-Maria Henao-Restrepo from the WHO.

Last week, Pascal Soriot, CEO of AstraZeneca, also said that a third dose of vaccines against Covid-19 may not be needed for everyone.

Writing in the Telegraph, he stated that the decision to jab the entire population must be based on "real world clinical effectiveness data, not simply antibody measurements".

The WHO has, meanwhile, called for an extension of a global moratorium on Covid-19 booster doses, with an aim to enable every country to vaccinate at least 40 per cent of its population.

According to the WHO, globally 5.5 billion vaccine doses have been administered, but 80 per cent have been administered in high- and upper-middle income countries.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus reiterated that third doses may be necessary for the most at-risk populations, but for now, "we do not want to see widespread use of boosters for healthy people who are fully vaccinated".

"The vaccines that are currently available are safe, effective, and save lives. Although the idea of further reducing the number of Covid-19 cases by enhancing immunity in vaccinated people is appealing, any decision to do so should be evidence-based and consider the benefits and risks for individuals and society.

"These high-stakes decisions should be based on robust evidence and international scientific discussion," adds co-author Soumya Swaminathan, WHO Chief Scientist.

Delta variant

Second Chinese city sees outbreak of delta variant (The Tribune: 20210915)

59 new cases had been identified in the latest 24-hour period, more than doubling the total to

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/second-chinese-city-sees-outbreak-of-delta-variant-310997>

A second city in southeastern China has seen a jump in Covid-19 cases in a delta variant outbreak that started late last week.

The National Health Commission said on Tuesday that 59 new cases had been identified in the latest 24-hour period, more than doubling the total to 102. All are in Fujian province on China's east coast.

The port city of Xiamen has confirmed 33 cases in the past two days. Another 59 cases have been found in Putian, about 150 km (90 miles) north on the coast, where the outbreak was first detected.

Xiamen locked down affected neighbourhoods, closed entertainment and fitness venues and cancelled group activities including those for the upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival holiday. Long-distance bus service to other parts of the province has been suspended.

China has largely stopped the spread of Covid but has sporadic outbreaks. A delta variant outbreak in July and August spread to several provinces, raising concern about new and more contagious variants. — AP

Covaxin

WHO nod likely for Covaxin this week (The Tribune: 20210915)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/who-nod-likely-for-covaxin-this-week-310756>

PM scheduled to visit US later this month

Photo for representational purpose only.

India's first indigenous Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin is likely to receive WHO approval for emergency use listing (EUL) this week.

Vax for US children below 12 may be ready by Oct 31

ICMR: 2 doses give 97.5% protection against death

Sources in the government indicated that the process of WHO approval was "in the final stages". Bharat Biotech had on July 3 announced Phase 3 trial results of Covaxin, showing the vaccine to be 78 per cent effective against the overall Covid disease and 93 per cent effective against severe infections.

75 cr doses given

As India crossed the milestone of administering 75 crore Covid vaccine doses nationally, the WHO congratulated India for scaling up the vaccination drive at an "unprecedented pace".

Inclusion process

For any vaccine to be included in the WHO EUL, the manufacturing firm should have completed Phase 3 trials and submitted its entire data to the regulatory department of the WHO, which then examines the application.

The safety and efficacy analysis data from Phase 3 clinical trials of Covaxin, developed in partnership with the ICMR-National Institute of Virology Pune, revealed that the vaccine significantly cut hospitalisations and showed potential to limit infection and transmission. The data was submitted to the national regulatory authority and also to the WHO, which assesses safety, immunogenicity and efficacy of vaccines before notifying these in the EUL.

Such EUL would enable Indians inoculated with Covaxin to travel abroad without restrictions. Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist of the WHO, had said on July 9 that the EUL for Covaxin was close. “The EUL can come within 4 to 6 weeks,” Swaminathan had said on July 9.

Importantly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has been inoculated with Covaxin, will be in the United States on September 25 to address the UN General Assembly.

For any vaccine to be included in the WHO EUL, the manufacturing firm should have completed Phase 3 trials and submitted its entire data to the regulatory department of the WHO, which then examines the application.

The World Health Organisation EUL currently includes six vaccines — Pfizer/BioNTech, Astrazeneca/Serum Institute of India, AstraZeneca EU, Johnson and Johnson’s Janssen, Moderna and Chinese Sinopharm.

Covid violations

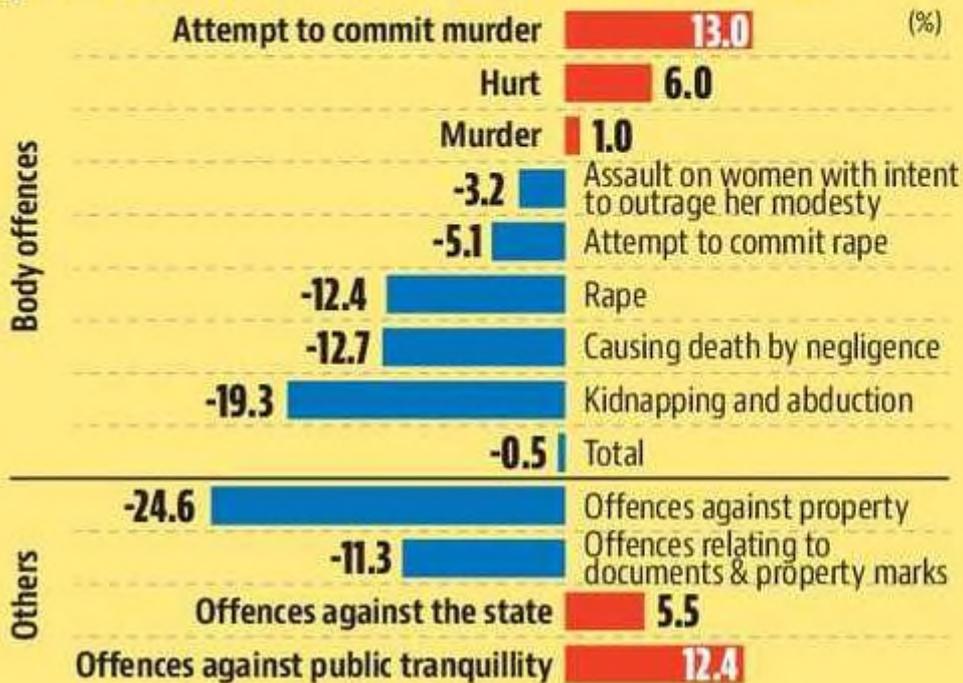
Covid violations led to rise in total cases filed in 2020 (Hindustan: 20210915)

<https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ArticleView>

Crime in the year of Covid

↑28% annual change in incidents of crime in 2020. The report explains the sharp increase in the number of cases filed due to increase in cases related to Covid-19 norms

Growth in major crimes other than pandemic-related offences in 2020



Growth in pandemic-related offences



Source: Crime in India Report 2020

For a year with over two months in a hard lockdown for the country, 2020 logged a sharp increase in the number of criminal cases registered, according to the National Crime Records Bureau's Crime in India report released on Tuesday.

Total number of criminal cases registered rose by 28%, the highest since 2002, which is the earliest year for which the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) has data. The 2020 crime statistics have to be read in the context of the pandemic and any comparison with past or future reports should be done with adequate caution.

Overall, cognizable crimes went up by 28% -- from 5.16 million to 6.60 million. Of these Indian Penal Code (IPC) crimes (they make up about two-thirds of all crimes) went up by 31.9% and Special and Local Laws (SLL) crimes went up by 21.6%.

However, if possible Covid-19-related violations are left out, the figures decrease – backing anecdotal evidence that Covid-19 triggered lockdowns in reality led to a drop in crime.

According to the Crime in India report, Covid-19 related violations are covered under three sub-headings in the total figures: “Disobedience to order duly promulgated by Public Servant”, “Other IPC Crimes” among IPC crimes, and “Other SLL Crimes” under SLL crimes. Disobedience crimes increased 21 times from 29,469 in 2019 to 612,179. Other IPC crimes

increased four times from 0.25 million to 1.06 million, and other SLL crimes also increased by a similar degree from 0.08 million to 0.34 million.

Once these categories are excluded from the total number of cases, instances of crime go down from 4.79 million to 4.59 million between 2019 and 2020. This means total instances of alleged crime – excluding pandemic-related crimes --went down by 4.3% with IPC crimes reducing by 12.4% and SLL going up by 8.6%.

Among major IPC heads, offences against property and those relating to documents registered the biggest decrease: of 25% and 11%.

“Offences against body” decreased only 0.5%. This category includes crimes that registered the biggest decrease: kidnapping (down 19%), death by negligence (down 13%), rape (down 12%), assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty (down 3%).

Hurt, which makes up half of body crimes, registered a 6% increase. Attempt to culpable homicide (up 15%) and attempt to commit murder (up 13%) – these two crimes make up about 5% of body crimes -- registered the biggest increase. Murder cases grew the least at 1%.

To be sure, not all kinds of IPC crimes decreased. Apart from pandemic-related violations those against public tranquillity (includes unlawful assembly, riots, promoting enmity between groups, affray) also increased 12.4% from 63,262 to 71,107.

Riot cases, which make up about 3/4th of public tranquillity cases, increased 12.2%: from 45,985 in 2019 to 51,606 in 2020.

The closing of courts due to the pandemic also resulted in increasing pendency of cases. The total pendency percentage of IPC cases rose by around 5 percentage points from 88.9% in 2019 to 93.8% in 2020. This was 88.1% in 2018. For SLL cases the pendency percentage rose by 8 percentage points to 91.3% in 2020. This was 82.6% in 2018.

However, police’s rate of filing charge sheets in IPC cases in 2020 was 75.8%, the highest since 2015, when it was 77.7%. This rate was 93.8% for SLL cases, the highest since 2016, when it was 95.42%.

Pollution combat plans

Agencies told to make pollution combat plans (Hindustan Times: 20210915)

<https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ArticleView>

In the winter, local emissions and adverse weather conditions cause high air pollution. ht archive

The Delhi government on Tuesday asked several agencies to submit by September 21 a detailed plan on managing various factors responsible for the spike in air pollution during winter in the city.

The exercise is part of the government’s plan to formulate a 10-point winter action plan to combat pollution from internal as well as external factors, and set up specific strategies to prevent the air quality from going into the dangerous zone, like every year.

Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai on Tuesday organised a meeting of various agencies in the Capital, to set targets for winter. The recommendations by each agency will form a part of the final plan which is expected to be released by September 30. Rai said the effort is aimed at checking pollution sources within Delhi, as well as those in the neighbouring states.

Addressing a press conference, Rai said in the Tuesday's stakeholders' meeting, agencies were tasked with controlling and managing various aspects of pollution control. The environment minister and chief minister Arvind Kejriwal have also sought a meeting with the Union environment minister to discuss the contribution of pollution from the neighbouring states, and talk about ways in which this can be tackled.

Representatives from the three municipal corporations (north, south and east), Delhi Pollution Control Committee, environment department, transport department, Delhi traffic police, Public Works Department (PWD), Delhi Development Authority, Delhi Cantonment Board attended the meeting.

"Each agency has been tasked to formulate a detailed plan, which needs to be submitted by September 21. Based on these individual plans, a holistic winter action plan will be released by September 30," Rai said.

Senior environment department officials said they have identified some of the major factors that contribute to the poor air quality in the city such as stubble burning, vehicular emissions, road and construction dust, waste burning and poor management of pollution hot spots.

Despite several action plans, including the Supreme Court directed Graded Response Action Plan (Grap), being in place, every year during winters, Delhi's air slip into emergency zone, turning the Capital's air hazy and a public health hazard.

Meteorological factors such as low temperatures, low wind speed and unfavourable wind directions, along with unchecked local pollution sources such as road dust, garbage burning, and vehicular emissions contribute to turn the national capital into a gas chamber.

An analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) showed that in 2020, there were 23 days when Delhi's particulate matter 2.5 concentration (PM 2.5) was in the 'severe' or worse categories.

On Tuesday, the environment minister said to monitor the effective implementation of the winter action plan, the environment department has been assigned the task of coordinating with all other agencies.

Explaining what tasks each agency will have to undertake, Rai said, "The work of controlling garbage burning has been assigned to the municipalities. They will have to come up with a plan to ensure that this garbage reaches the proper disposal sites."

Similarly, he said, the Delhi Traffic Police have also been asked to come up with steps for smooth traffic at congestion hot spots, and also repair traffic signals.

“When vehicles are stuck at a spot for several minutes, it leads to an increase in pollution levels in the area. We have asked the traffic police to make a list of the congestion hot spots and try to come up with solutions to fix them,” Rai said.

Environment experts, however, said the true test of this winter action plan will be in its implementation. “While the direction that they have taken with identifying the sources contributing to Delhi’s air is right, but the true test of this action plan will be how well this is implemented,” said Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director (research and advocacy), Centre for Science and Environment.

NCRB

City reported dip in crime in Covid year 2020: NCRB(Hindustan: 20210915)

<https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ArticleView>

Overall crimes in Delhi dipped by 16% in 2020 compared to 2019, according to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report that was released on Tuesday. In 2019, the capital recorded nearly 20% rise in crime compared to 2018.

NCRB statistics show that 249,192 cases were registered in the national capital under various sections of the IPC in 2020, which is 50,283 less than those reported in 2019. In 2018, the total IPC cases in Delhi stood at 249,012. The total IPC cases registered in 28 states and eight Union Territories (UTs) in 2020 was 4,254,356 compared to 3,225,597 in 2019. Across the country, crime cases registered under various IPC sections rose by just 3% in 2019 over 2018, the data shows.

An analysis of the NCRB’s data for Delhi shows that serious crimes such as murder and kidnapping as well as crimes against women dipped in 2020 as compared to 2019. Murder cases saw a decrease of nearly 9% in 2020 compared to the previous year, whereas this crime increased by over 1% in 2019 from 2018.

Delhi recorded 472 murder cases in 2020 compared to 521 in 2019. As far as the motives behind the murders in 2020 are concerned, 106 murders took place over various disputes such as family, property and petty quarrels. A total of 53 murders took place over communal or religion issues and 67 were related to personal enmity. Love affairs were cited behind 17 cases, shows the NCRB data.

To be sure, Delhi witnessed a strict lockdown, spread across various months, to contain the spread of Covid 19 pandemic last year, when movement of people across the city was highly curtailed. Activities and businesses were opened only in a phased manner.

The statistics also showed that the city witnessed 4,062 cases of kidnapping and abduction in 2020 -- 1,839 cases less than those reported in 2019. There were 5,901 such cases in 2019, which means that the year 2020 saw a decrease of over 31% in such crimes.

As far as the crimes against women are concerned, an area of concern for the Delhi Police, the city saw a decrease of around 25% in 2020 compared to the previous year. The total registered crimes against women in 2019 were 13,395, in 2020 10,093 such cases were reported in the city, shows the NCRB data.

Among the total crimes against women in 2020, there was one case of murder with gang rape, two cases of acid attack and three acid attack attempt cases. Total 997 rape cases were registered, 1,840 of molestation cases and 416 sexual harassment incidents were reported to the police in 2020, the data shows.

Under the crimes against children category, 5,362 cases were registered in 2020 -- 2,400 cases less than 7,783 cases reported in 2019. Of these total cases, 29 children were murdered in 24 reported cases.

Delhi Police officers refused to comment on the city's crime trends in 2020, saying that they have not seen and analysed the NCRB data as it was released late on Tuesday.

Medical Education (The Asian Age: 20210915)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/article/detailpage.aspx?id=15835481>

■ Move draws flak, academicians call it 'impractical'

Medical courses to be taught in Hindi in colleges: MP mantri

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, SEPT. 14

Undergraduate and post-graduate medical courses will be taught in Hindi in Madhya Pradesh medical colleges soon. This was announced by state medical education minister Vishwas Sarang here on Tuesday.

Mr Sarang said that a committee was being set up to prepare the module for teaching undergraduate and postgraduate medical courses in Hindi.

"The proposed committee will examine the impediments in teaching

▶ THE MINISTER said that students' future and their interests would be taken into consideration while preparing the medical courses in Hindi

medical courses in Hindi and recommend measures to eradicate them. Based on the recommendations by the committee, the undergraduate and postgraduate medical courses will be prepared in Hindi," Mr Sarang said.

He made the announcement on the occasion of Hindi Divas, observed on Tuesday.

The minister said that students' future and their interests would be taken into consideration while preparing the medical courses in Hindi.

The decision to teach medical courses in Hindi has, however, drawn severe flak from academicians here. "It is impractical. Allopathy was developed in Europe and many terminologies in medical education are in European languages which have no parallel texts in Indian languages," Dr Udayan Vajpayee, a professor in Gandhi Medical College and Hospital here, told this newspaper.

Eye infections

Tips to protect yourself from eye infections this monsoon (Indian Express: 20210915)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/tips-eye-infections-monsoon-prevention-7503042/>

"Using over-the-counter products is not recommended at all. Be careful, and take care of your eyes," said Dr Raaj kumar Jain, ophthalmologist

eye infections Ensure your eyes are protected this monsoon. (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

Just like skin problems and allergies, eye infections too are a common occurrence during the rainy season as the air gets filled with bacteria and viruses.

“You may get conjunctivitis (pink eye), which is an inflammation or swelling of the conjunctiva. It can spread from one individual to another owing to the increase in the amount of moisture content in the air. Some red flags include redness of the eye, swelling, discharge, itching, and pain,” said Dr Raaj kumar Jain, ophthalmologist, House of Doctors.

Another bacterial infection which can trouble you during the rainy season is stye. However, instead of neglecting eye infection, it is advisable to seek prompt treatment, he advised.

Below, Dr Jain shares some foolproof tricks to take care of your eyes.

eye infection You can also use eye drops suggested by a doctor. (Source: Express Photo by Praveen Khanna)

*Don't forget to wash your hands, and avoid hand-to-eye contact to keep eye infections at bay. Avoid rubbing the eyes with fingers as they contain germs and can lead to an infection.

*Do not share your towels, napkins, or handkerchiefs with anyone.

*Eye make-up is a strict no-no when you have an eye allergy or infection.

*Do not use any chemical products in your eyes that can do more harm than good.

*Blinking can allow you to manage dry eyes. Drink plenty of water, and follow the 20-20-20 rule — that is after every 20 minutes, you need to take a 20-second break to focus your eyes on something placed 20 feet away to relax your eyes, and calm you down.

*Use sunglasses when you venture out of the house. Avoid exposing your eyes to rainwater as it is loaded with germs, and bacteria and can set a stage for infections.

*Do not touch your eyes immediately after touching any contaminated surfaces such as door handles, faucets, furniture, or countertops.

*Use eye drops or lubricants as prescribed by the doctor.

“Using over-the-counter products is not recommended at all. Be careful, and take care of your eyes,” Dr Jain said.

Gut health

This powerful age-old Indian probiotic will help improve your gut health (Indian Express: 20210915)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/improve-your-gut-health-with-this-age-old-indian-food-7506432/>

Lifestyle coach Luke Coutinho recently shared a gut-friendly food that you must try.

gut health Try this simple and quick recipe for an improved gut health. (Source: Pixabay)

While people have finally started focusing on building their immunity, not many realise that the secret to good health lies in the gut. It is believed that a healthy gut invariably means a healthy mind and body. Hence, it is extremely important to keep the gut healthy and working with proper dietary measures.

As such, lifestyle coach Luke Coutinho recently shared an age-old effective Indian probiotic and gut-friendly food that you must try. Take a look at what he had to say.

Effective natural remedies

Effective natural remedies for long, lustrous hair(Indian Express: 20210915)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/life-style/shahnaz-husain-home-remedies-hair-growth-haircare-tips-7502161/>

Count on these effective tips from herbal beauty care practitioner Shahnaz Husain for hair growth

haircare Here are some tips to consider for hair growth. (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

Blame it on the changing weather, hard water, or the lack of a hair care routine, thinning and hair loss can be a problem for many. If you too have tried numerous remedies, but none have worked for you, it is time you refer to the expert. Herbal beauty care professional Shahnaz Husain's Instagram is a treasure trove of simple tips and tricks to enhance hair growth.

According to Husain, the most important aspect of improving hair growth is to "pay attention to your diet". "It should contain adequate protein, vitamins, and minerals like iron and zinc. Vitamin B7, also known as biotin, is very important for hair growth. Have a small bowl of sprouts daily. It contains amino acids, which promote the growth of healthy hair," she mentioned in a post.

It is also well-known that biotin boosts the production of amino acids, which helps produce proteins that are important for hair growth. Sources of biotin include egg yolk, avocados, almonds, cauliflower, mushrooms, and sweet potatoes.

Vaccine mandates

Cracking the whip: On Joe Biden's vaccine mandates (The Hindu: 20210915)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/cracking-the-whip-the-hindu-editorial-on-joe-bidens-vaccine-mandates/article36462499.ece>

U.S. President Biden should not buckle to pressure from irate anti-vaccine campaigners

President Joe Biden's sweeping vaccine mandates, aimed at improving the

Immunity against COVID-19

Latest debate: How long does immunity against COVID-19 last after vaccination? (The Hindu: 20210915)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/latest-debate-how-long-does-immunity-against-covid-19-last-after-vaccination/article36467208.ece>

Health agencies in some parts of the world are considering a booster dose against fading immunity, particularly among the elderly

How long does immunity against COVID-19 last after vaccination? Does one need a booster dose?

COVID-19 vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination | Longer inter-dosage interval may offer better immunity (The Hindu: 20210915)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/longer-inter-dosage-interval-may-offer-better-immunity/article36462548.ece>

Study finds stronger response with dose gap of 10-14 weeks

COVID-19 vaccination with an inter-dosage interval of 10-14 weeks elicits a stronger immune response than when the vaccine is delivered at an interval of

Coronavirus variants

Coronavirus variants Mu, C.1.2 not found in India, says genome consortium INSACOG(The Hindu: 20210915)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/coronavirus-variants-mu-c12-not-found-in-india-says-genome-consortium-insacog/article36458755.ece>

Two strains are labelled as Variants of Interest by WHO

Neither of the two recent coronavirus variants identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) that may pose an international threat, have been found in

Self-attacking antibodies

Severe Covid can increase self-attacking antibodies: Study (New Kerala: 20210915)

Hospitalised Covid-19 patients are substantially more likely to harbour autoantibodies -- antibodies directed at their own tissues or at substances their immune cells secrete

<https://www.newkerala.com/news/2021/133098.htm>

Insulin

Researchers observe standing may help with insulin sensitivity (New Kerala: 20210915)

In a Finnish collaborative study of Turku PET Centre and UKK institute, the researchers noticed that standing is associated with better insulin sensitivity. Increasing

<https://www.newkerala.com/news/2021/133069.htm>

Breastfeeding

Research finds breastfeeding is being overtly discouraged by infant formula websites (New Kerala: 20210915)

Despite public health efforts to support breastfeeding and informed choice, during a news study, an analysis of websites for baby formula m

<https://www.newkerala.com/news/2021/133031.htm>