

Exponential rise in Germany of new coronavirus infections

Gregor Link
23 July 2021

The number of reported new coronavirus infections is again rising dramatically in Germany. On Thursday, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI)—the German federal government agency and research institute responsible for disease control and prevention—reported almost 2,000 new cases and the nationwide seven-day incidence rate rose to over 12 per 100,000. The reproductive number (R) is 1.19, which means a strong exponential increase.

The development reflects the perilous dynamics of the highly contagious delta variant. According to the RKI figures, active cases nationwide have increased by more than 42 percent compared to the previous week. The seven-day average of new infections was already around 67 percent higher on Tuesday than the previous week—the relative increase is thus higher than at any time during the so-called “third wave.”

As an analysis by the newspaper *Die Welt* shows, the doubling period of active coronavirus cases, averaging 12 days, is only one-fifth of the previous week’s figure.

It is thus only a matter of time before the infection rates in this country will also be at the level of the most affected countries in Europe currently. In Britain, Spain and France, tens of thousands are being infected with the virus every day. On Thursday, there were 43,907 new infections in the UK, 30,587 in Spain, 21,539 in France. The seven-day incidence rate rose to 496 in Britain, 378 in Spain and 122 in France.

On Thursday, at her annual summer press conference in Berlin, Chancellor Angela Merkel (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) warned that Germany was on its way to a fourth coronavirus wave. Earlier, Federal Health Minister Jens Spahn (CDU) told the press that 400 new weekly infections per 100,000 inhabitants could be exceeded as early as September, followed by a seven-day incidence of 800 in October.

German governments at federal and state levels are pursuing a deliberate herd immunity policy that puts profits before lives. In order not to curtail the orgy of enrichment on the stock exchanges, representatives of all the establishment parties fervently declare that there must be no more lockdown measures and that one must “live with the virus.” By doing so, as happened last autumn, they are helping to produce a massive new coronavirus wave with hundreds of thousands of infected and dead.

According to a report by the group around mobility researcher Kai Nagel, presented to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, “an exponential increase in hospital numbers will start in October,” which, at the current rate of development, “will start even earlier and then intensify again in October.” The high relative increase in the number of cases is considered “worrying” by the researchers, reports *Der Spiegel*.

“Under all conditions that currently appear realistic,” the model results in “a fourth wave among adults, which will be intensified with the shift of activities indoors in autumn.” Such a wave of infection among adults will in turn result in contagions among students, the report says. “If schools were to open after the summer holidays without protective measures,” there would then be “a wave of infection among students,” which would “lead to a wave among adults,” a vicious circle.

The current “two rapid tests per week” were, in any case, “far from sufficient” to reduce the infection dynamic, the scientists conclude.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* has reported, according to federal education minister Anja Karliczek, children and their parents are to be screened after the end of the summer holidays on the basis of a “phased plan.” Such a plan means abusing children as human

laboratories for breeding new, even more dangerous viral strains while exposing hundreds of thousands of working class families in Germany and Europe to deadly risk.

“Classroom attendance at any price means accepting the contamination of schools,” Heinz-Peter Meidinger, president of the Teachers’ Association, told *Die Welt* on Wednesday. According to random surveys, the willingness to be vaccinated among teachers is 85 to 90 percent and is also relatively high among the over-16s, Meidinger said. However, since hardly any vaccine was being made available to these groups, the delta variant “can spread unhindered among the largely unvaccinated pupils.”

Adolescents and young adults are already particularly affected by infections. On Monday, the proportion of 15–34-year-olds among the newly infected reached 56 per cent, the highest level so far in the entire course of the pandemic, although this age group only comprises 23 percent of the total population.

Social Democratic (SPD) member of parliament Karl Lauterbach warned on Tuesday of the consequences of the aggressive herd immunity policy his own party is pursuing in government. “It may yet prove to be a huge mistake if we now let the case numbers explode among children and young people. Because then, variants can emerge that can make those already vaccinated much more severely ill than delta,” he wrote on Twitter.

While governments in Germany and countless other countries are intent on systematically spreading the coronavirus and its increasingly dangerous variants into the population, new studies are appearing almost daily on the long-term consequences of COVID-19, which can deeply scar patients for years and decades.

For example, in a recent research project, Ulm University Hospital found organ damage in one in five of its long COVID patients. Dominik Buckert, a senior physician in charge of the hospital’s special outpatient clinics for the late effects of COVID-19, told *Der Spiegel* that his patients suffer from heart muscle inflammation and consequences such as cardiac insufficiency and arrhythmia, as well as shortness of breath due to an altered lung structure. Most of the remaining patients felt less able to work than before the disease, Buckert said. In June, a survey by the Barmer health insurance company among its clients showed that about 17 percent of COVID-19 cases were on sick

leave for more than four weeks.

In Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as in neighbouring Belgium and the Netherlands, the spread of the Delta variant coincides with the devastating floods that have killed more than 200 people and uprooted countless others in recent weeks.

Professor Uwe Janssens, speaking to broadcaster n-tv from the site of his flooded university clinic, warned that masks and other hygiene supplies were not available in sufficient quantities in emergency shelters. “We have many [medical] practices in the area that are no longer operational,” the intensive care physician stressed, speaking of a “bitter blow to the vaccination campaign,” given the destruction of public infrastructure in western Germany.

Only 60.2 percent of the population have received at least one vaccination dose, and a total of 47.3 percent have so far been vaccinated twice. While the number of daily vaccinations has dropped rapidly over the last six weeks, the risk of vaccine-resistant variants and so-called “breakthrough infections” is growing at the same time, even among fully vaccinated people.

According to a new study from Israel published in the journal *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*, such vaccine breakthroughs occur “especially in people with pre-existing conditions.” In the country of 9 million inhabitants, a total of 397 fully vaccinated had to be hospitalised with COVID-19 by the end of April, of whom 234 became “severely” ill and 90 died.

The researchers at the Samson Assuta Ashdod University Hospital examined 152 patients who had been double immunised with Biontech, most of whom suffered from hypertension, diabetes, cancer, dementia or chronic organ diseases in various constellations, or were immunosuppressed. Overall, the prognosis of these patients was similar to that of the unvaccinated: 61 percent developed a severe course of the disease, 22 percent died from the infection, according to the doctors.



To contact the WSW and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact