

COVID deaths and hospital admissions on the rise in Germany

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While the federal and state governments claim there is a “break in the Omicron wave” and continue to ease protective measures, hospitalisations and deaths are on the rise in Germany. On Friday alone, more than 220,000 people became infected. The 7-day incidence rate remains huge, at 1,347 per 100,000 inhabitants. Some 329 out of 411 districts have an incidence rate of over 1,000; 52 districts have a rate of over 2,000 and the Regen district even has an incidence level of over 3,000.

The adjusted hospitalisation rate is around 12 (per 100,000), and has recently risen again. On Friday alone, 1,836 people had to be hospitalised and 243 were transferred to intensive care. The number of coronavirus patients receiving intensive care also rose again recently and now stands at 2,466. The proportion of vacant intensive care beds is at 10 percent, which is the national average and is considered the limit of hospital response capacity.

Data show a significant increase in physician visits for acute respiratory illnesses with a COVID-19 diagnosis in all age groups since the turn of the year. The values clearly exceed the level of the preceding waves. The number of active outbreaks in medical treatment facilities last week was 175, with at least 1,253 new infections.

A key driver of the pandemic remains schools and kindergartens. In both cases, the number of outbreaks has increased rapidly since the beginning of the year. In mid-January, there were even about twice as many kindergarten outbreaks reported per week as in the peak phases of the third and fourth waves. For the last four weeks, a total of 1,201 outbreaks have been reported so far. However, due to late reporting, the actual number is even higher.

At schools, the number of outbreaks is about six

times higher than the same time a year ago. In the last four weeks, 2,013 outbreaks have been reported. Again, the actual number is even higher due to late reporting and the scaling back of PCR testing in schools.

The number of deaths is particularly alarming. Since last year’s federal election, more than 25,000 people have died from the virus. In particular, the death toll among children and young people is higher than ever before in the pandemic. Since last October alone, at least one child has died from COVID-19 every week on average. However, the actual number could be even higher, as the Robert Koch Institute does not provide an exact figure per week in this age group for reasons of data protection.

Despite these figures, Federal Health Minister Karl Lauterbach (Social Democratic Party, SPD) declared at a press conference on Friday that the peak of the Omicron wave had passed and that the pandemic had been weathered well: “So far, we have managed the Omicron wave and also the Delta wave reasonably well. We have managed to protect the large number of unvaccinated among the elderly and avert a significant increase in deaths. We have the opportunity to come into Spring with a good overall record.”

Statements like these underline the criminality of the ruling class. More than 120,000 coronavirus deaths in Germany alone are considered a “good overall record.” The claim that the elderly population has been protected is also an outright lie. Last week alone, there were 414 active outbreaks in old people’s and nursing homes—41 more than in the previous week. This resulted in 5,226 new infections.

The number of deaths in Germany is high. At the Federal Press Conference, Professor Michael Meyer-Hermann, head of the Department of Systems Immunology at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection

Research, explained: “We have 1,400 deaths per million people, which is a frighteningly high number, I think. ... If you look at South Korea, it is only 140. So, you have countries that have managed better, and those are mostly the countries that have pursued a low-incidence strategy.”

The comparison with China is even clearer: the country with a population of 1.4 billion was able to limit the number of deaths to under 4,700 thanks to its Zero-Covid strategy. That would correspond to four deaths per million people.

At the press conference, Meyer-Hermann also addressed the great danger of long-term consequences of a coronavirus infection: “There are a large number of people who suffer long-term if they have a COVID infection and this is not only an economic problem, but also a psychological and mental problem in society. Just yesterday, there was a large-scale study in America showing that people who had a COVID infection have massively higher secondary consequences of a long-term nature. Periods of one year were examined.”

This book compiles the most critical programmatic statements, polemics, scientific analyses, interviews, and news articles published by the World Socialist Web Site on the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a social and political chronology of this world historic event based on a Marxist and Trotskyist perspective.

Despite the disastrous consequences of its coronavirus policy, the German government is not willing to change it, but on the contrary plans to perpetuate it for years to come. Thus, Lauterbach outlined a perspective for next autumn which could “in the best case,” assume that an Omicron variant will come again. “But it can also happen again that variants arise that penetrate deeper into the tissue than is the case with Omicron and then we would have a much more dangerous situation.”

The herd immunity policy now being implemented by almost every government in the world is not leading to an “endemic” or milder version of the virus. On the contrary, more infectious and vaccine-resistant mutations are forming. Just a few months after the emergence of the Omicron strain, the even more infectious Omicron sub-variant BA.2 is now spreading and is responsible for 15 percent of all infections in Germany.

The lifting of the last protective measures is meeting

with widespread rejection. According to a recent poll by the Insa opinion research institute for *Bild am Sonntag*, a majority are in favour of keeping the mask requirement after 20 March. Even if it were to be abolished anyway, a majority still wanted to wear a mask for protection. Recent protests by schoolchildren against the spread of infections in schools have also met with widespread support.

A struggle against the pandemic and for the elimination of the virus requires the building of independent rank-and-file committees and a struggle against the capitalist profit system. The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) recently stated:

A social system that walks over corpses for profits and destroys the health and future of entire generations must be abolished and replaced by a system that gives priority to life over profits. The struggle against the pandemic, like the struggle against social inequality and war, is at its core a struggle against capitalism and for socialism.



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