



COVID-19 Survey Summary: January 7, 2022

The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

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As the Omicron variant fuels an unprecedented rise in cases, another poll finds heightened concern about catching the coronavirus, albeit primarily among the vaccinated. Worry among vaccine-hesitant Americans remains low, with uptake intentions largely locked in place.

Other pandemic-related polls this week find broad bipartisan concern about false information surrounding the coronavirus and vaccines, although with a sharp partisan gap specifically on the reliability of information from the federal government. As in previous data, outright endorsement of coronavirus conspiracy theories is relatively rare.

Among other results, amid a high level of job-quitting, many small businesses report hiring challenges and shrunken payrolls. And foregone health care among Medicare beneficiaries rose sharply last June but has subsided since.

CDC studies add evidence to the safety and efficacy of coronavirus vaccines for children and find no greater risk of preterm birth or low birth weight among women who were vaccinated during pregnancy. Another new study finds no effect of state-sponsored lotteries on vaccine uptake; previous results have been mixed.

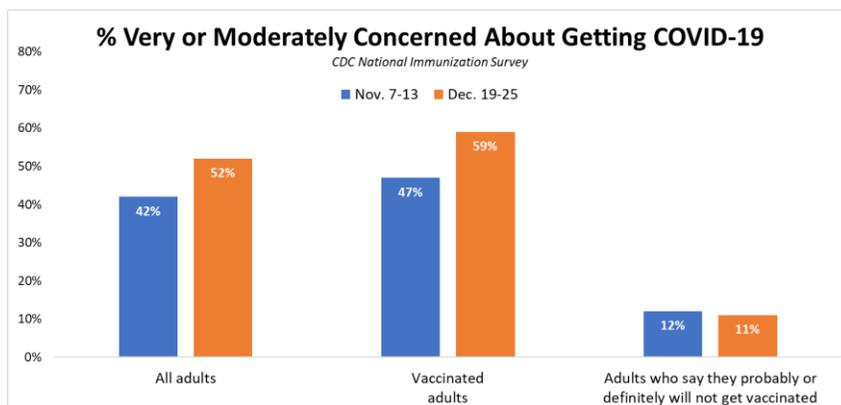
A report from the United Kingdom finds lower risk of hospitalization from Omicron compared with the Delta strain. Another from South Africa similarly finds reduced hospitalization risk and less severe outcomes. Surveys from Chile, Mexico and Kenya also are included this week.

Concerns & Outlooks

The United States has averaged more than [580,000](#) new daily coronavirus cases in the past week, more than double the peak during last winter's surge. The Omicron variant accounted for [95 percent](#) of new cases in the week ending Jan. 1. Deaths have held roughly steady, averaging about 1,200 per day.

More than 325,00 cases were reported among U.S. children in the week ending Dec. 30, a record high and nearly double the number two weeks prior ([American Academy of Pediatrics 12/30](#)).

Fifty-two percent of Americans are personally concerned about catching the coronavirus, up 10 percentage points since early November to a high in data since late April. The rise occurred among vaccinated adults, up 12 points to 59 percent, with essentially no change among those who say they definitely or probably won't get vaccinated, steady at about one in 10 ([CDC 12/19-12/25](#)). Another mid-December poll, covered [previously](#), also found an overall rise in concern.



In early December, before the transmissibility of the Omicron variant became apparent, three in 10 said the coronavirus was one of the most worrying topics out of a list of 18 items, similar to three other top concerns – the spread of false information, political extremism and crime/gun violence ([Ipsos 12/3-12/7](#)).

Vaccines

Eighty-six percent of adults in the United States have received at least one vaccine dose, according to the latest [CDC estimates](#). Uptake is estimated at 83 percent in a poll that uses jurisdiction-level vaccine data as a weighting adjustment ([CDC 12/19-12/25](#)). It was 78 percent in an early December poll, in which 34 percent of all adults reported having received a booster shot ([Ipsos 12/3-12/7](#)). The CDC estimates booster uptake lower, at 38 percent among fully vaccinated adults, which is about 28 percent of adults overall ([CDC](#)).

Relatively few people plan to get vaccinated against the coronavirus for the first time. One poll finds that 1 percent definitely plan to get vaccinated and 5 percent probably will do so or are unsure ([CDC 12/19-12/25](#)). Four percent in another poll planned to get a shot ([Ipsos 12/3-12/7](#)).

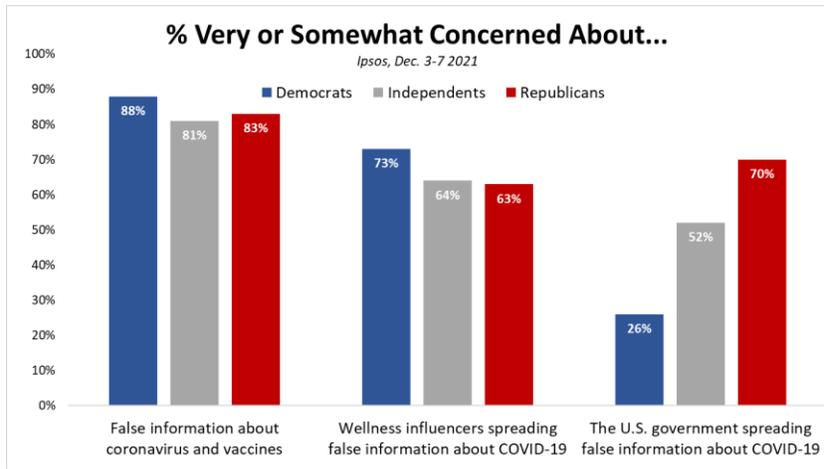
Eleven percent say they definitely or probably won't get vaccinated, steady the past month ([CDC 12/19-12/25](#)). In another estimate, earlier last month, 17 percent did not plan to get a shot ([Ipsos 12/3-12/7](#)).

Safety, Masks & Misinformation

Sixty-six percent of Americans think the coronavirus vaccines are completely or very safe for them personally, steady in recent months and up 6 points since late April ([CDC 12/19-12/25](#)).

Most, 69 percent, agree that masks are an effective tool to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, but that is down 5 points since last asked in December 2020. It's 88 percent among Democrats and 70 percent among independents, vs. 48 percent among Republicans.

Eighty-two percent overall are very or somewhat concerned about false information about the coronavirus and vaccines, including 88 percent of Democrats and 83 percent of Republicans. Two-thirds overall are concerned about “wellness influencers” spreading false information about the virus. Forty-nine percent say the same about the U.S. government, with sharp partisan gaps – 70 percent of Republicans, 52 percent of independents and 26 percent of Democrats ([Ipsos 12/3-12/7](#)).

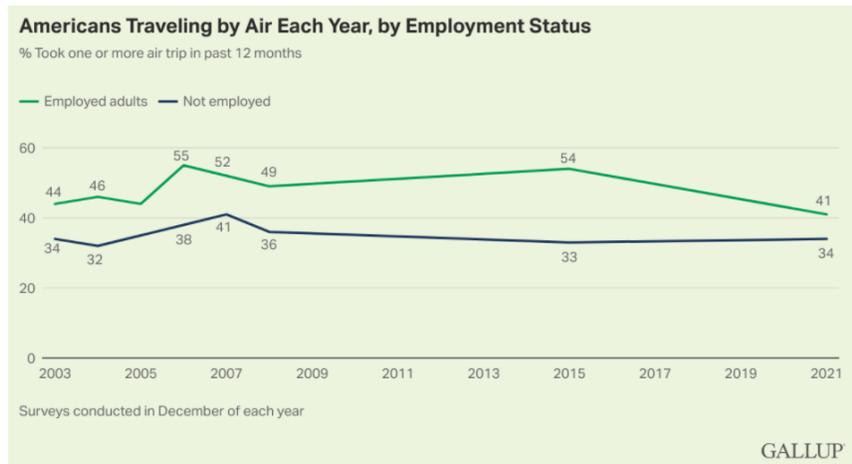


In an early August survey, 30 percent of adults considered spreading misinformation online about coronavirus vaccines as a legitimate example of people expressing their First Amendment rights, while 68 percent did not see this as a legitimate use of free speech ([Knight Foundation 7/30-8/16](#)).

As in previous [polling](#), few endorse coronavirus conspiracy theories: Seven percent about vaccine microchips, 13 percent about a plan among “global elites” to control the population. Sixty-eight and 59 percent, respectively, reject these, with the rest unsure ([Ipsos 12/3-12/7](#)).

Air Travel

In data from the first half of December, 38 percent reported traveling on an airplane in the previous year, down from 44 percent in 2015. The decline came among employed adults, from 54 to 41 percent. ([Gallup 12/1-12/16](#)).



Vaccine Safety and Efficacy Among Children

The CDC and FDA’s vaccine safety surveillance system finds few reports of serious adverse events in children age 5-11 after receiving the Pfizer vaccine. Among approximately 8.7 million children in this age group vaccinated from Nov. 3-Dec. 19, 100 of 4,149 voluntarily submitted

reports were for serious events, including 11 verified cases of myocarditis. Separately, more than 42,000 children age 5-11 were enrolled in a voluntary smartphone-based monitoring system after vaccination. Reported side effects were common but mostly mild and temporary, including injection site pain, fatigue and headache ([CDC 11/3-12/19](#)).

Another study analyzes admissions in six children's hospitals in Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Texas and Washington, D.C. during July-August 2021, when Delta was the dominant strain. Fewer than 1 percent of the 272 vaccine-eligible children hospitalized for the coronavirus were fully vaccinated ([CDC 7/1-8/31](#)). A third study tested 243 adolescents age 12-17 in Arizona by nasal swab for 19 consecutive weeks, finding that the Pfizer vaccine was 92 percent effective at preventing infection ([CDC 7/25-12/4](#)).

Vaccination During Pregnancy

A CDC study finds that pregnant women who received a coronavirus vaccination were at no greater risk of preterm birth (less than 37 weeks of gestation) or low birth weight than those who were not vaccinated, regardless of whether they received a shot in their second or third trimester. (Too few received a vaccine in their first trimester for analysis.) The study followed more than 40,000 women in eight health care organizations from Dec. 15, 2020, to July 22, 2021, including 10,064 who received at least one vaccine dose during pregnancy ([CDC 12/15/20-7/22/21](#)).

Employment

Four and a half million workers quit their jobs in November, a high in two decades of tracking. The largest increases from the previous month occurred in the accommodation and food services industry (+159,000), health care and social assistance (+52,000) and transportation, warehousing and utilities (+33,000). Job openings decreased from 11.1 million in October to 10.6 million, still historically high; this compares with about 7 million in the months before the pandemic ([Bureau of Labor Statistics 1/4](#)).

Job growth slowed in December, with payroll up 199,000 in preliminary estimates vs. a revised 249,000 in November. At the same time, the unemployment rate fell from 4.2 to 3.9 percent, down from a record 14.7 percent in April 2020. The U.S. economy has added 18.8 million jobs since April 2020, though remains 3.6 million jobs short of pre-pandemic level ([Bureau of Labor Statistics 1/7](#)).

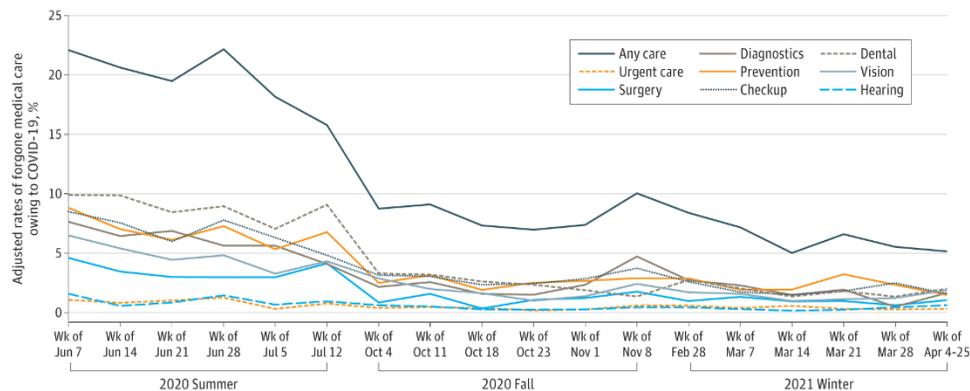
Thirty percent of small business report difficulties hiring employees in the past week, rising to 56 percent in the accommodation and food services industry and about four in 10 apiece in the manufacturing and healthcare/social assistance sectors. Thirty percent overall say the number of employees on their payroll has decreased since before the pandemic, vs. 10 percent reporting an increase. Six in 10 say there's been no change ([U.S. Census Bureau 12/27-1/2](#)).

Forgone Medical Care

Nearly a quarter of Medicare beneficiaries reported delayed or forgone medical care in June 2020, declining sharply to 5 percent in April 2021. Dental care, preventative care visits and

checkups were the most common types of forgone care, with seven in 10 citing physician-driven factors such as office closures or limited appointments.

Further, across three waves of data from June 2020 to April 2021, four in 10 said they felt more stressed or anxious, 37 percent felt less socially connected and 22 percent reported feeling more lonely or sad. A regression



analysis found that forgone medical care was associated with these problems, with the likelihood of forgone care 4 points higher among those who reported more stress or anxiety and 3 points higher among those who felt more lonely or sad compared with others. Results were similar for feelings of less social connection ([Park & Stimpson, 2021](#); [Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey COVID-19 Supplement](#)).

Vaccine Lotteries

A study assessing lottery-based vaccine incentives in 15 states finds that the programs did not significantly increase the daily rate of vaccinations. Moreover, a comparison with 31 non-lottery states finds similar vaccination rate trends before and after lottery announcements. The authors analyzed CDC data from May 17-July 26, 2021 ([Law et al., 2022](#)). (One study [covered previously](#) found evidence that cash lotteries increased uptake in six states, though with mixed results in others; [another](#) found no evidence of a rise in uptake.)

Omicron Severity

An analysis of 528,176 Omicron cases and 573,012 Delta cases in the United Kingdom from Nov. 22-Dec. 26 finds that the risk of emergency care visits or hospital admission with Omicron was approximately half that for the Delta strain. The risk of hospital admission alone from Omicron was about a third of that for Delta ([UK Health Security Agency 12/31](#)).

Another study compares outcomes at 49 South African hospitals with other waves of the outbreak in which community positivity rates reached at least 26 percent. During the Omicron surge (Nov. 15-Dec. 7), 41 percent of patients presenting to emergency departments with the coronavirus were admitted. That compares with 68 or 69 percent in three previous waves (June 14-July 6, 2020; Dec. 1-23, 2020; and June 1-23 last year). There also were sharp declines in duration of stay, oxygen therapy or ventilation, ICU admissions and deaths ([Maslo et al., 2021](#)).

Other International Results

In Chile, the share of adults who are highly worried about catching the coronavirus has jumped 8 points in a week to 44 percent, returning to its early December level after falling to a near-pandemic low last week. Seventy-seven percent approve of the government's job handling the pandemic, essentially unchanged from a peak of 79 percent last week ([Cadem 12/28-12/30](#)).

Four in 10 Mexicans say they've lost a loved one because of the pandemic in the past year, up from 25 percent in December 2020. Other measures improved: Fifty-three percent describe 2021 as mostly bad, down from 80 percent a year prior; 60 percent say they suffered financially because of the pandemic in the past year, compared with 71 percent in December 2020; and 56 percent went through moments of despair, down from 63 percent. Eighty-five percent say they've been vaccinated and three-quarters say President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's government has done well managing vaccinations ([El Financiero 12/10-12/12; 12/17-12/19](#)).

In Kenya, 55 percent in a mid-November survey thought the country was going in the wrong direction, down from 65 percent in March. Thirty-eight percent cited the high cost of living; 17 percent, unemployment; and 11 percent, corruption. The coronavirus no longer registered as one of the main drivers, as it did in March. That said, asked what's most responsible for economic difficulties faced by Kenyans, 20 percent blamed the coronavirus, surpassed only by government mismanagement (35 percent) and corruption (32 percent) ([Infotrak 11/9-11/22](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).