



LETTER TO EDITOR

Third wave of COVID -19 in Pakistan: New Variants with new travellers?

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ABSTRACT

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In Wuhan City, China, Corona or COVID-19's first case was reported in late December 2019 [1]. It is caused by SARS-CoV-2 also called as corona virus. This disease has now spread in all countries and territories of the world including Pakistan. According to World Health Organization (WHO), 125,425,270 confirmed cases with 2,756,679 deaths have been reported till date with highest positive cases encountered in USA followed by Brazil and India [2]. Pakistan, a developing country in the Asia, faces a big challenge with COVID-19. Ministry of Health in

Karachi, Sindh Pakistan, reported first case of corona on February 26, 2020 [3]. The positive cases reported from Pakistan had travel history from Iran, London and Syria. The rapid rise of the positive cases of COVID-19 in first wave in Pakistan is attributed to mishandling of the pilgrims coming from Iran through Taftan, one of Pakistan's border crossings with Iran. Also, the students in China were returning back to Pakistan especially from the Wuhan, which is the site of the origin of the COVID-19 [4](Figure 1, 2).

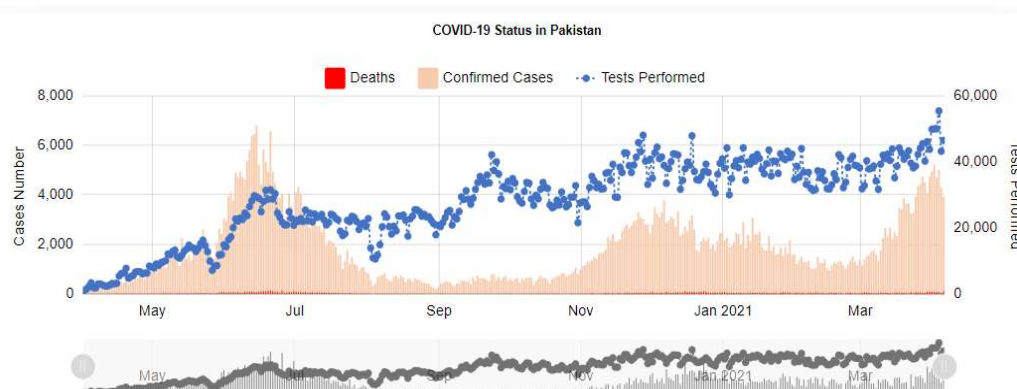


Figure 1: Pakistan COVID-19 Cases Details (<https://covid.gov.pk/stats/pakistan>)

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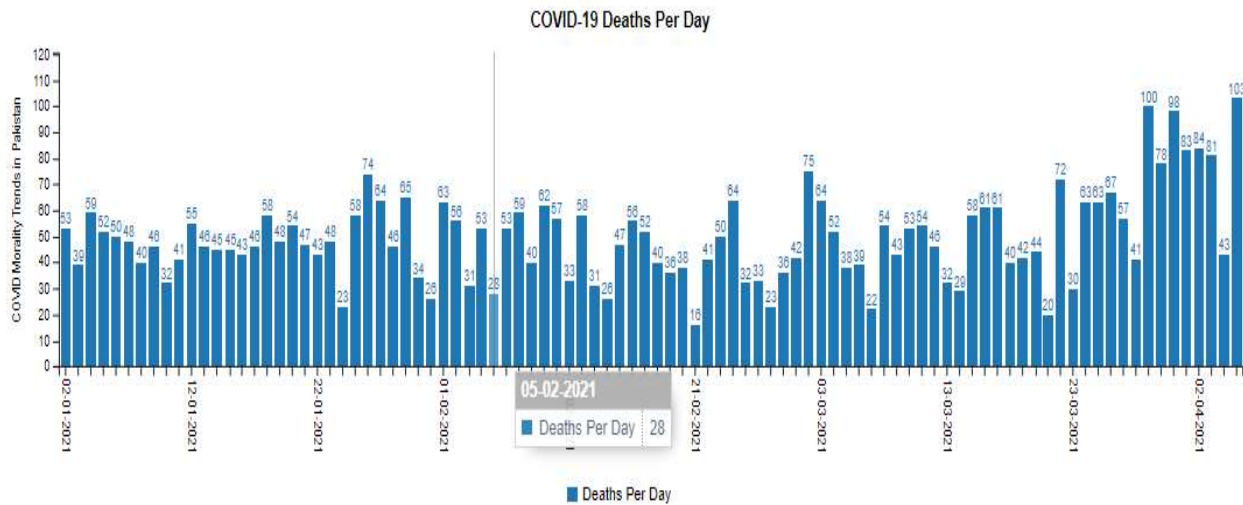


Figure 2: Daily COVID-19 deaths per day in Pakistan (<https://covid.gov.pk/stats/pakistan>)

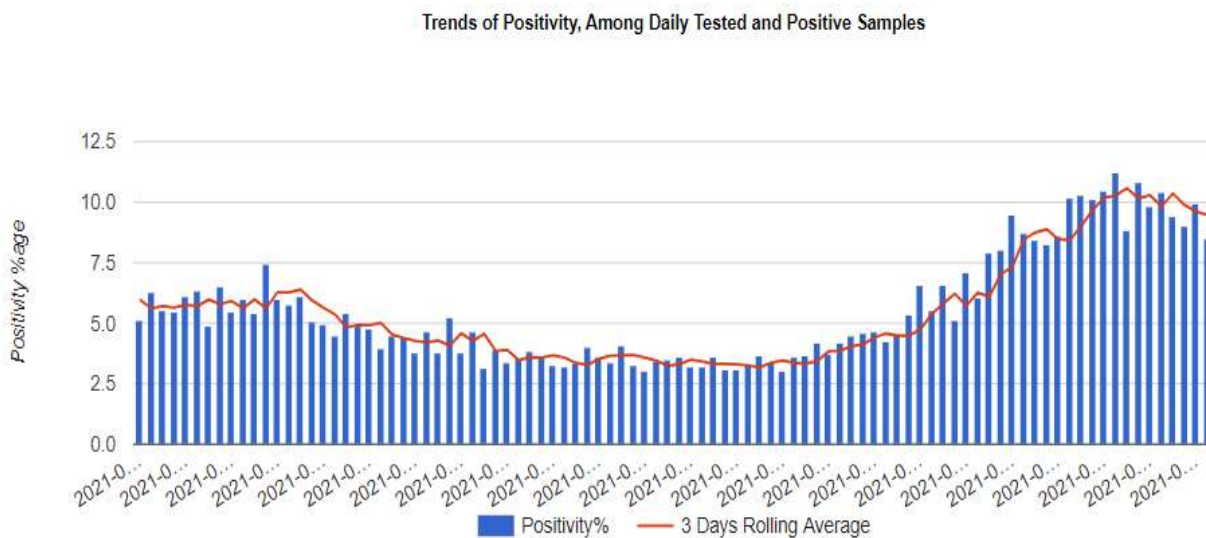


Figure 3: Trends of positive cases among daily basis testing

With the emergence of the COVID-19, multiple variants of the virus are circulating globally especially by SARS-CoV-2 virus which is considered more contagious. Interagency Group (SIG) developed the Centre for Disease Control and prevention (CDC), After one year, COVID-19's third wave has been rising throughout the country with maximum positive cases of UK variant of coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2 (Figure 3). During this third wave, first case of corona with new variant was reported in Pakistan on December 28, 2020 from passengers returning back to Pakistan

from United Kingdom [5]. At least three COVID-19 cases were detected among returnees from the UK, in the southern port city of Karachi, as reported by the provincial Health Ministry of Pakistan [6]. The UK strain cases were mostly being found among people returning from abroad. The current outbreak of cases is centred around Punjab province, where the tested-positive rate was 17 % in the provincial capital Lahore and 15 % in Rawalpindi and Faisalabad, according to official data [7]. Due to poor health infrastructure and slow vaccination administration in developing

countries, there is ample need of policies re-examined especially for international travelling to find the loopholes contributing to next wave of COVID-19 in Pakistan [8].

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