

- Virus**LONG-TERM IMPACTS: WHY COVID AFFECTS SOME MORE THAN OTHERS**

The Chronicle · 20 Apr 2022 · 09

NEW research has revealed why some people get sicker than others from Covid-19, and has offered a potential solution to further protect vulnerable groups from the worst symptoms.

Scientists from the Sydney Children's Hospital revealed that a growing percentage of otherwise healthy people may have an undiagnosed faulty immune system that makes them more susceptible to severe symptoms of the virus.

Immune-system-related antibodies that stop the body from effectively fighting off Covid-19 were found in around 20 per cent of all severe cases in those under the age of 70, and in 20 per cent of patients who had died from the disease.

Researchers also found that genetic defects that compromise the immune system in patients with life-threatening symptoms could account for between 3 and 5 per cent of all severe Covid-19 cases under 70 years old. The report highlighted the need for continued social distancing and vaccination as protection measures, with most healthy people not aware of their defective immunity.

Additionally, therapies targeting immunodeficiencies, including plasma exchange, could also be the key to stopping the virus from becoming severe in patients with these issues.

It comes as the Darling Downs Health region recorded 64 active cases of Covid-19, taking the total number of cases up to 16,108.

Across the state 6467 new cases were recorded.

The continuous decline in total active cases comes as chief health officer Dr John Gerrard confirmed on April 5 that the state had passed the second peak of the Omicron wave, which was linked to the outbreak of the BA. 2 subvariant.

The newest Covid-19 variant known as Omicron XE, was just recently detected in Australia and is concerningly believed to be 10 per cent more transmissible than BA. 2, which is currently the dominant strain present in the country.

However a Queensland Health spokeswoman has confirmed that the state is yet to detect a case of the new variant.

"Genomic sequencing is not done on every sample, but we undertake random and priority group sampling to understand the current variant/s or sublineages circulating in the community," she said.