- Variation (Biology) / Virus

# WHO: More evidence emerging that Omicron causes milder symptoms

The Times of India (New Delhi edition) · 5 Jan 2022 · 26

Geneva: More evidence is emerging that the Omicron variant is affecting the upper respiratory tract, causing milder symptoms than previous variants and resulting in a "decoupling" in some places between soaring case numbers and low death rates, a WHO official said on Tuesday. "We are seeing more and more studies pointing out that Omicron is infecting the upper part of the body. Unlike other ones, the lungs who would be causing severe pneumonia," WHO Incident Manager Abdi Mahamud told journalists. "It can be a good news, but we really require more studies to prove that."

However, also sounding a note of caution, Mahamud said Omicron's high transmissibility meant it would become dominant within weeks in many places, posing a threat to medical systems in countries where a high proportion of the population remains unvaccinated. While Omicron seemed to be slipping past antibodies, evidence was emerging that vaccines still provided some protection, by eliciting a second pillar of the immune response from T-cells, he said. "Our prediction is protection against severe hospitalisation and death will be maintained. The challenge has not been the vaccine but the vaccination and reaching the vulnerable."