

New Dominant Strain of Coronavirus is More Contagious but Doesn't Make People Sicker

A new, more-infectious strain of the novel coronavirus is moving from Europe to the U.S., according to a new study in the journal *Cell*. This mutation of the COVID-19 virus is called G614, and it spreads more quickly than the previous mutation, D614.

Our global tracking data show that the G614 variant in Spike has spread faster than D614...We interpret this to mean that the virus is likely to be more infectious. Interestingly, we did not find evidence of G614 impact on disease severity...Through March 1, 2020, the G614 variant was rare outside of Europe, but the end of March it had increased in frequency worldwide...The increase in G614 frequency often continues well after stay-at-home orders are in place and past the subsequent two-week incubation period."

Tracking changes in SARS-CoV-2

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The G614 first emerged in Europe in February, and gradually spread to become the dominant strain of COVID-19 by April. G614 multiplies faster in the upper respiratory tract, and that facilitates the spread of the virus. Scientists have not seen a corresponding increase in the death rate. There are many factors involved in the recent uptick in coronavirus cases in the United States, but it's possible that the increased presence of a more contagious strain of the virus has played a

part in that.

Sources:

- *Tracking changes in SARS-CoV-2 Spike: evidence that D614G increases infectivity of the COVID-19 virus – Cell*
- *Study confirms new version of coronavirus spreads faster, but doesn't make people sicker – CNN*