

# *Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 is present throughout Cuba*

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**Dr. Maria Guadalupe Guzmán.**

Havana, August 16 (RHC)-- The Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2, considered of concern by the World Health Organization, is present throughout Cuba and has replaced the previously predominant Beta variant, a scientific authority said.

According to Dr. Maria Guadalupe Guzman, head of the Research, Diagnosis and Reference Center of the Pedro Kouri Institute of Tropical Medicine (IPK), this modification of the coronavirus, which causes Covid-19, began to be detected in May and spread rapidly until it had a greater incidence this month.

Delta has already reached every province of the country. In those territories where cases are increasing exponentially, with more than one thousand cases per day, this variant is currently influencing. This was the case in Matanzas and now in Pinar del Río', explained the specialist.

Identified for the first time in October 2020 in India, in May, it was found in 1.4 percent of Cuban cases, and in June, it was at 26 percent.

By the first week of July, the samples processed in Holguin, Villa Clara, and Matanzas showed 64 percent correspondence with Delta, which indicated that the percentages had increased a lot, she detailed.

She stressed that this variant has a viral load a thousand times higher than that reported at the beginning of the pandemic in Wuhan, China. Unlike other viruses whose transmission time ranges between six and eight days, Delta only needs four days to spread.

Dr. Guzman warned that it is necessary to reach vaccination rates above 85 percent to face Delta effectively, but immunizers alone will not solve the situation.

It is necessary to vaccinate the entire population as soon as possible to avoid further mutations of SARS-CoV-2. Still, at the same time, to accompany these processes with sanitary measures and thus, cut transmission,' Guzman said.

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