

Dozens of ICU medics test positive for COVID-19 after Christmas party in Spain

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Ambulances outside the Malaga Regional University Hospital, in Malaga, Spain. Photo: © Reuters/Jon Nazca

Madrid, December 8 (RHC)-- Dozens of hospital workers have tested positive for COVID-19 in Spain after hanging out at a Christmas party, officials have said. Extra shifts and additional staff have been arranged to ensure the ICU continues to operate.

More than 170 staffers from the University Regional Hospital in Malaga, a city on Spain's southern Mediterranean coast, attended a Christmas party on December 1st. Regional health authorities confirmed that 68 have since tested positive for COVID-19.

Spanish media reported that doctors and nurses working at an intensive care unit (ICU) had a meal together at a restaurant. Reports said they all showed either mild or no symptoms and were quarantined. Several other planned gatherings for Christmas meals have been cancelled, news website elDiario.es said.

Authorities said all those infected had antigen tests or their booster vaccination before attending the party. Carlos Bueno, a spokesperson for the hospital, told RNE radio that extra shifts and additional staff will ensure the ICU continues its work.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez urged the public not to "lower [their] guard" during the Christmas season, as quoted by Reuters. Officials are currently preparing to tackle the Omicron variant of the virus, a first domestic case of which was detected in Spain last week.

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