

WHO says over 50% of Europeans on track to contracting Omicron

Image not found or type unknown



In this file photo, patients are seen waiting to be tested for COVID-19 in Paris, France. (By AFP)

Geneva, January 12 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization has warned that over half of the people in Europe are on track to contracting the fast-moving Omicron variant of the coronavirus in the next two months.

Speaking at a press conference in Geneva, WHO regional director Hans Kluge said that there had been more than seven million new cases of Omicron across Europe in the first week of January. "At this rate,

the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) forecasts that more than 50 percent of the population in the region will be infected with Omicron in the next six to eight weeks," the WHO official said. The WHO's European region comprises 53 countries and territories, including several in Central Asia.

Kluge said that 50 of the cases had been confirmed as those of the Omicron variant, and 26 of those countries reported that over one percent of their populations were "catching COVID-19 each week" as of January 10.

The WHO official further said that the variant was confirmed to be more transmissible and "the mutations it has enable it to adhere to human cells more easily, and it can infect even those who have been previously infected or vaccinated." Kluge voiced concern that the variant would take a much higher toll on countries with lower vaccination coverage rates.

The UN health agency has pleaded with rich countries not to offer booster doses and to donate them instead to poorer countries, where vulnerable groups have yet to be immunized. European officials have already warned that the highly-transmissible variant is spreading like "lightning" and causing "chaos" across the region.

The new variant has so far been detected in 89 countries, and the cases of infections caused by Omicron are doubling every 1.5 to 3 days in places with community transmission. The resurgent variant has forced Europe to reimpose tougher measures such as mandatory vaccinations and lockdowns.

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen last month warned that the Omicron variant could be dominant in Europe by mid-January.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/282562-who-says-over-50-of-europeans-on-track-to-contracting-omicron>



Radio Habana Cuba