

~ Lesser Reported Facts on the Delta Variant's Severity¹ ~

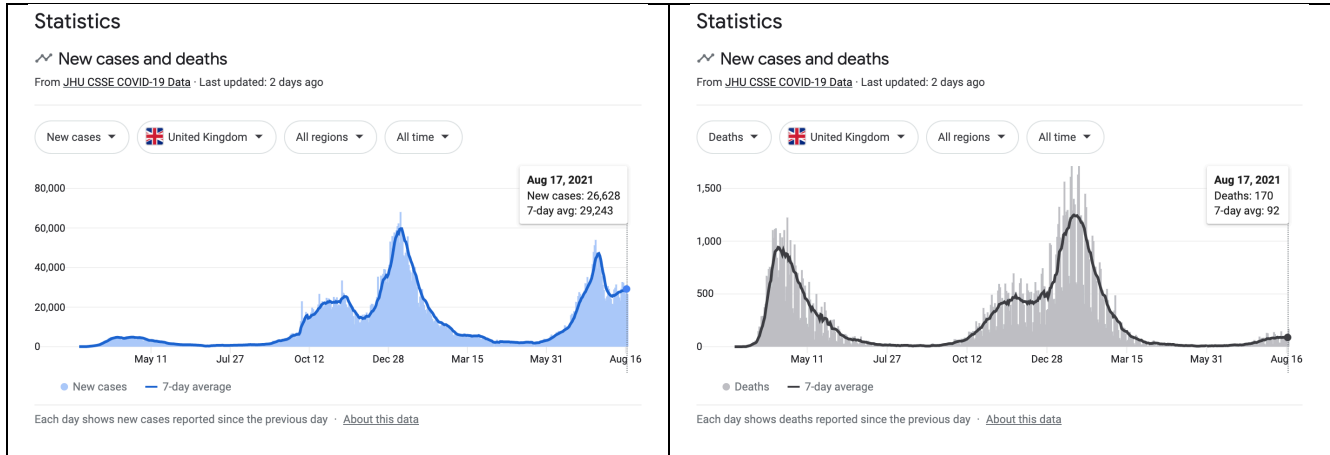
- **The Problem with Focusing on Cases:** we first note that this is the first pandemic where we have focused on asymptomatic cases. A 2014 study published in *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine* found that 77% of laboratory confirmed influenza cases were asymptomatic.² In the absence of widespread testing, therefore, we regularly conclude that influenza is much less prevalent than it actually is. Vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals who contract influenza with no symptoms are not even noticed. This skews our perspective on COVID-19 cases, especially amongst the vaccinated, because often they have no symptoms but are now being noticed only because of widespread testing. Cases are not a problem. Illness is, and that is where our focus should be – illness and not “cases.”
- **New York Times:** article from July 15, 2021 explains that the Delta variant is much more contagious, but it does not appear to be more deadly.³
- **Data from the U.K.:** The U.K. is just now exiting their Delta wave. The cases were high, but the deaths were very low compared to their previous waves, as is seen below. This could be due to the relatively high vaccination rate in the U.K. (which lessens severity of symptoms), better treatment protocols, the fact the Delta appears to infect a younger (and healthier) populations, etc. It certainly does not, however, support the claim that the Delta variant is more deadly.

¹ In this essay, I am speaking in a personal capacity as a mathematician and do not intend to represent the views of Winona State University. These documents began as my attempt to organize for myself information which complements and even challenges the dominant narrative on COVID-19. It was not my intent to make them publicly available, but enough people have found them helpful that I decided to do that. Unlike government bureaucrats and social media fact-checkers, I do not claim to be infallible. I am simply a classical liberal who is quite concerned at the lack of robust conversation around such an important topic.

² See <https://www.clinicaladvisor.com/home/web-exclusives/most-flu-cases-asymptomatic/> and <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600%2814%2970034-7/fulltext>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/15/briefing/delta-variant-spread-contagious.html>

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- The Latest Government Report from the U.K.:** The numbers on the Delta variant from U.K. ⁴ report appear to support the view that the Delta variant is not more deadly. You can see in the chart below that the rates for death and hospitalizations with Delta were much lower than with the original strain (death rate was only 9% of what it was for the Alpha variant, and hospitalization rates were half to a third of what they were for the Alpha variant).

SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern and variants under investigation

Table 3. Attendance to emergency care and deaths among all COVID-19 cases (sequencing and genotyping) in England, 1 February 2021 to 14 June 2021

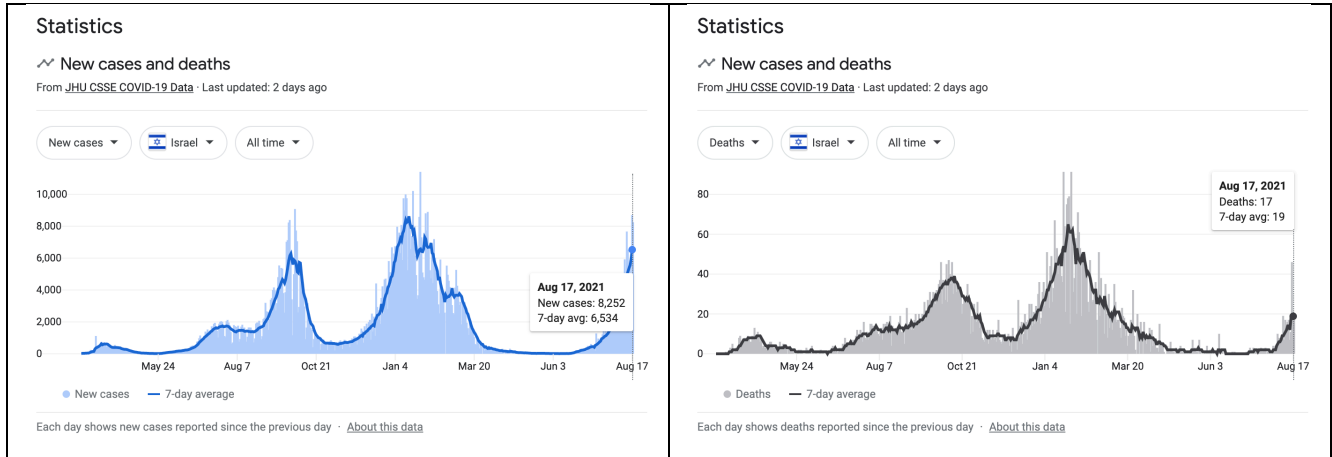
Variant	Cases since 1 Feb 2021 [¶]	Cases with specimen date in past 28 days [*]		Cases with an A&E visit [§] (excluding cases with the same specimen and attendance dates) [‡]		Cases with an A&E visit [§] (including cases with the same specimen and attendance dates)		Cases where presentation to A&E resulted in overnight inpatient admission [§] (excluding cases with the same specimen and admission dates) [‡]		Cases where presentation to A&E resulted in overnight inpatient admission [§] (including cases with the same specimen and admission dates)		Deaths [^]	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Alpha	148,513	5,584	3.8	7,929	5.3	10,228	6.9	2,929	1.9	4,447	3.0	1,614	1.1
Beta	721	56	7.8	37	5.1	47	6.5	12	1.7	23	3.2	8	1.1
Gamma	212	51	24.1	8	3.8	8	3.8	1	0.5	1	0.5	0	NA
Delta	60,624	53,177	87.7	1,555	2.6	2,176	3.6	488	0.8	806	1.3	73	0.1
Zeta	24	0	NA	1	4.2	1	4.2	1	4.2	1	4.2	0	NA
Eta	387	9	2.3	15	3.9	20	5.2	6	1.6	9	2.3	6	1.6
VUI-21FEB-04	259	30	11.6	7	2.7	11	4.2	1	0.4	3	1.2	1	0.4
Theta	7	1	14.3	1	14.3	1	14.3	0	NA	0	NA	0	NA
Kappa	422	11	2.6	14	3.3	15	3.6	3	0.7	4	1.0	1	0.2

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1001359/Variants_of_Concern_VOC_Technical_Briefing_16.pdf

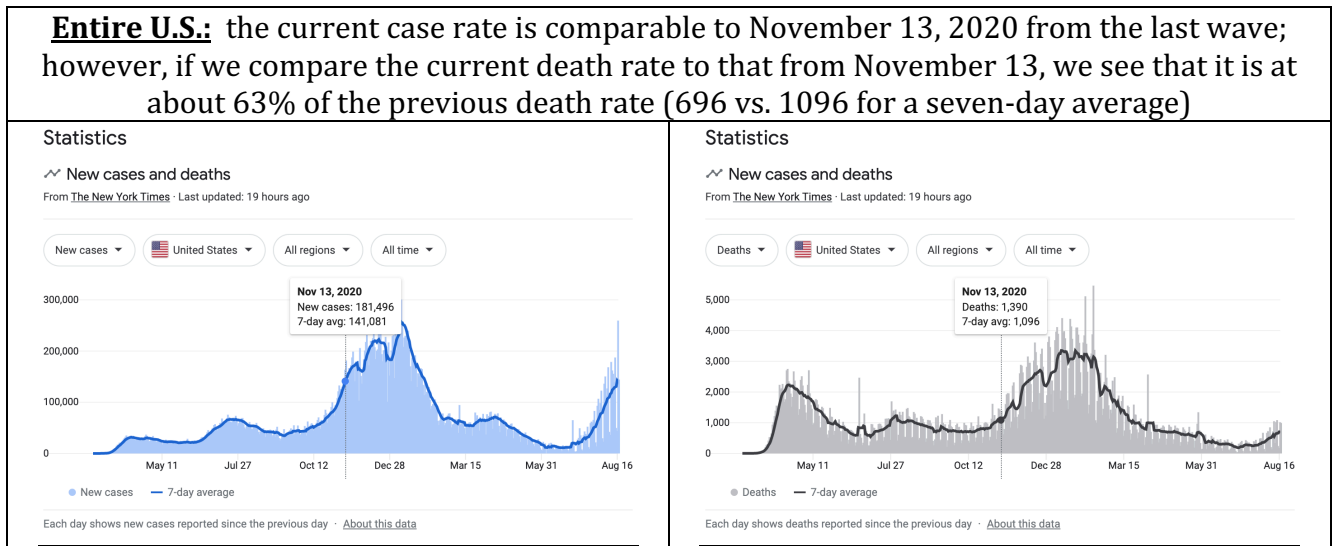
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- **Data from Israel:** Shows a similar pattern of very high case numbers but very low deaths, compared with previous waves.



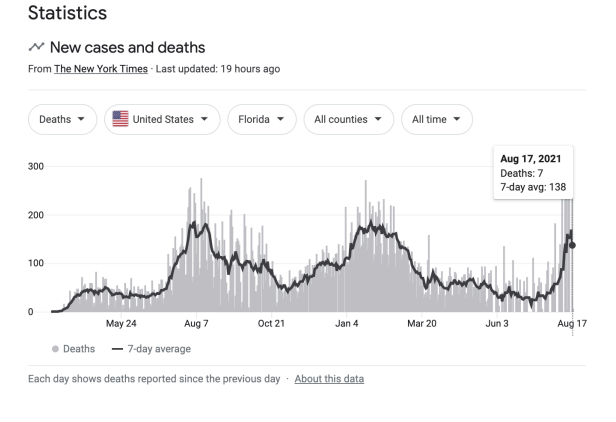
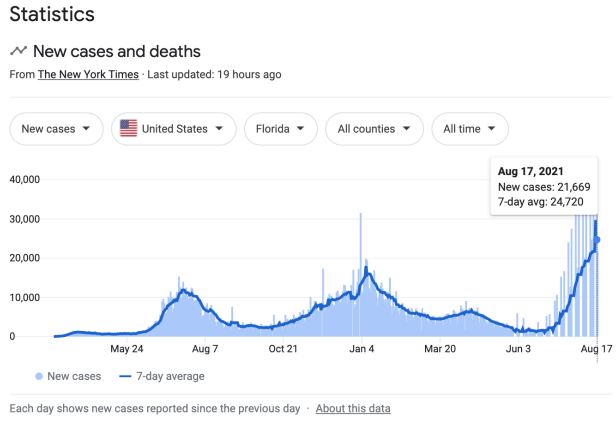
- **Similar Observations in the United States:** portions of the U.S. who are experiencing a wave driven by the Delta variant appear to show, similarly, that cases are high but deaths are not proportionally as high as they were with previous waves. See the charts below.

Entire U.S.: the current case rate is comparable to November 13, 2020 from the last wave; however, if we compare the current death rate to that from November 13, we see that it is at about 63% of the previous death rate (696 vs. 1096 for a seven-day average)

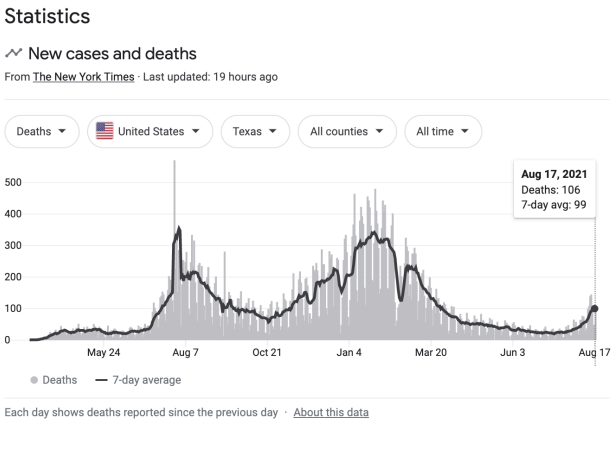
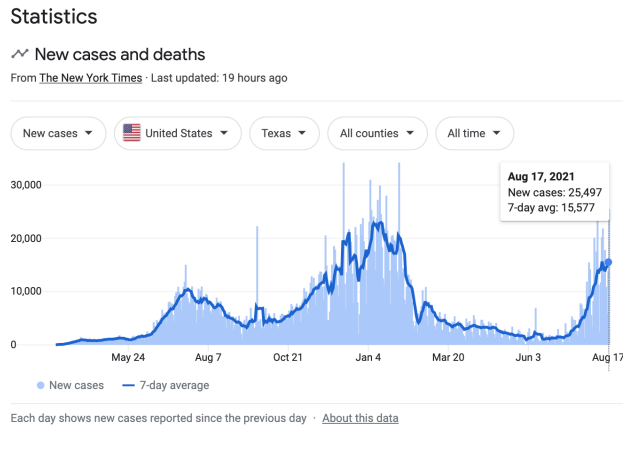


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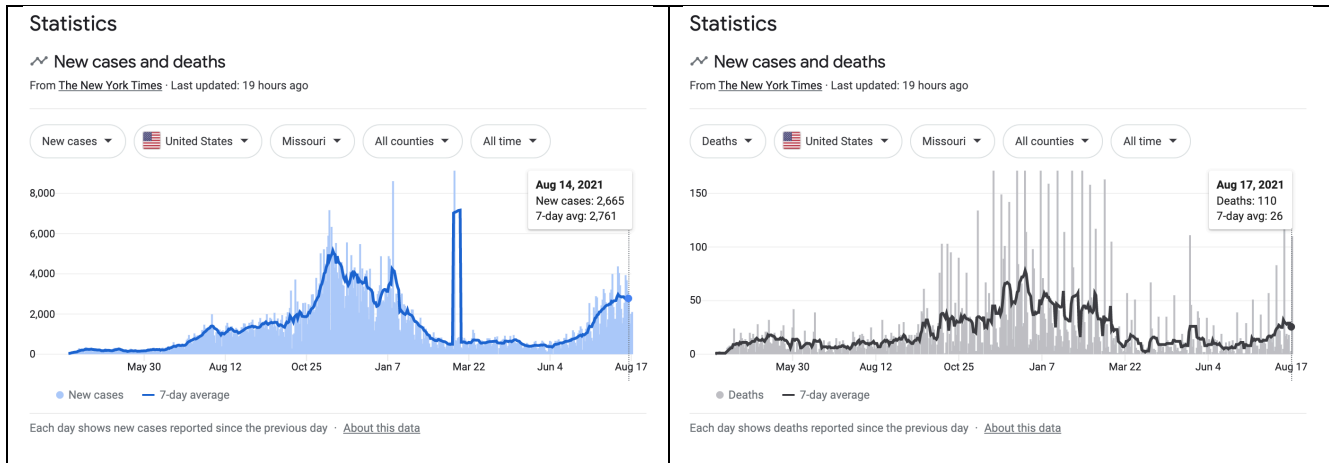
Florida: below note the current peak of cases far exceeds the two previous peaks, while the death rate remains comparable to past waves.



Texas: the pattern is even more pronounced in Texas, even keeping in mind that deaths lag behind cases by about 2 weeks.



Missouri: we see a similar pattern here. At the very least, we can say the deaths do not appear to be proportionally higher with the Delta variant.



- Atlantic Article on Delta and Children:** The Atlantic ran an article on August 10, 2021 entitled, “Why Delta is Bad News for Kids.”⁵ After a lot of panic porn about how horribly dangerous the Delta variant is for kids, and how this could not have come at a worse time – hand-wringing, despair, etc., there is this very important paragraph, which indicates that the *only* reason we are seeing more severe cases in kids is because there are more cases, period, since the Delta variant spreads so quickly. We will see a larger number of cases in a shorter amount of time and therefore a short-term rise in all phenomena, including the (very rare) severe cases in children. There is NO indication that it is more deadly to kids.

“Amid all the chaos is perhaps one tentative silver lining for children. The new variant appears to be following the long-standing trend that kids are, on average, more resistant to the coronavirus’s effects. Although Delta is a more cantankerous version of the virus than its predecessors, researchers don’t yet have evidence that it is specifically worse for children, who are still getting seriously sick only a small fraction of the time. Less than 2 percent of known pediatric COVID-19 cases, for instance, result in hospitalization, sometimes far less. The alarming rise of pediatric cases seems to reflect the grimness of

⁵ <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2021/08/delta-variant-covid-children/619712/>

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infectious arithmetic: More kids are falling ill because more children are being infected..."