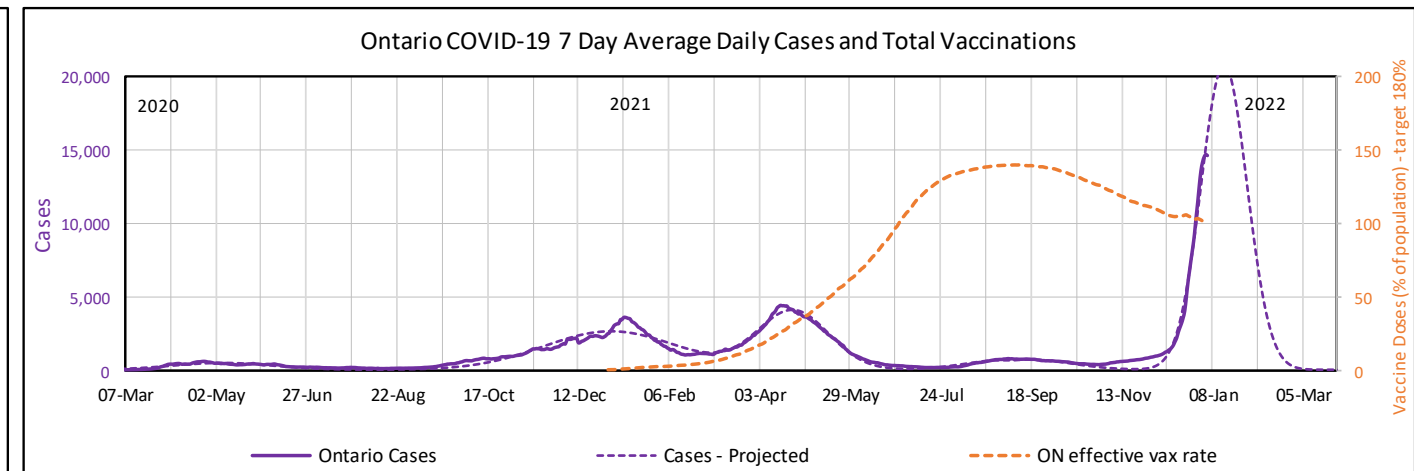
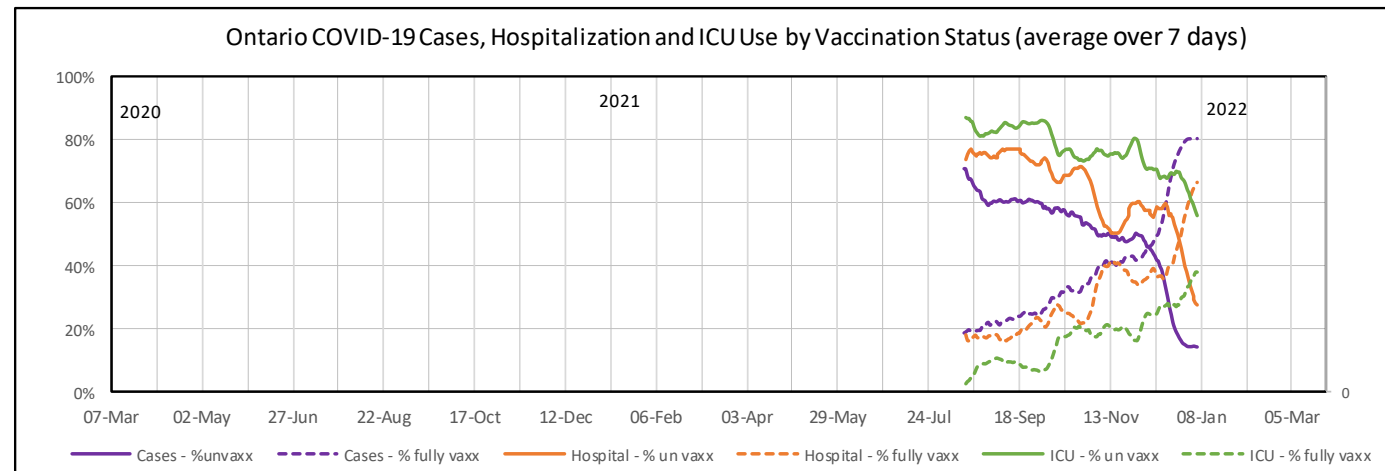
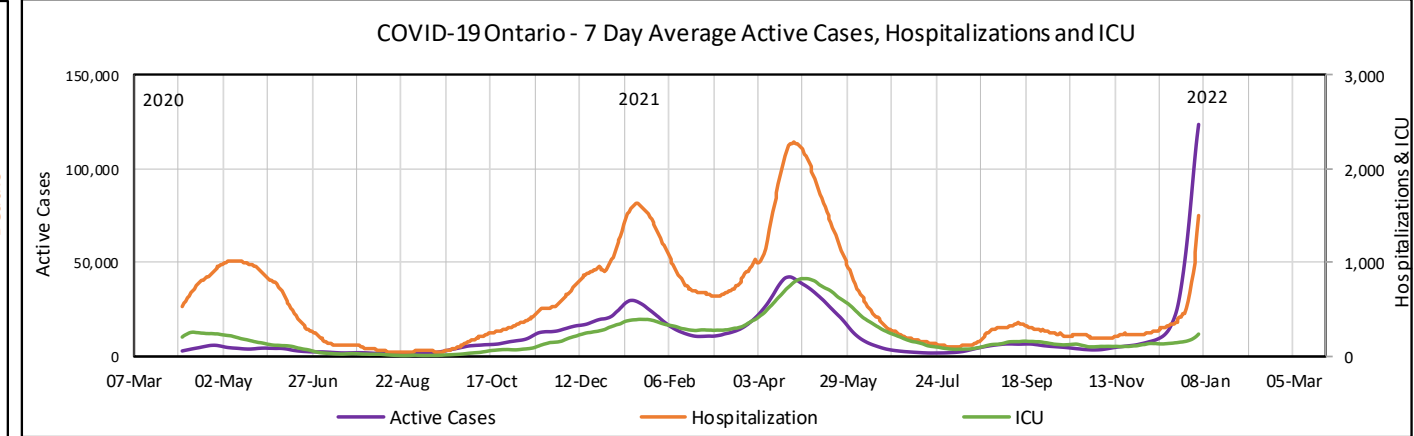
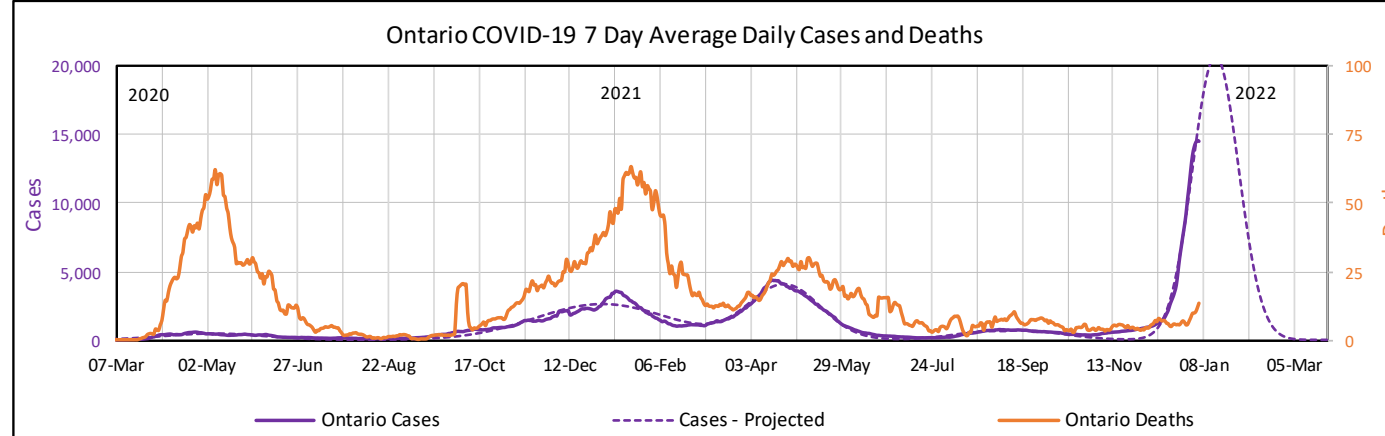
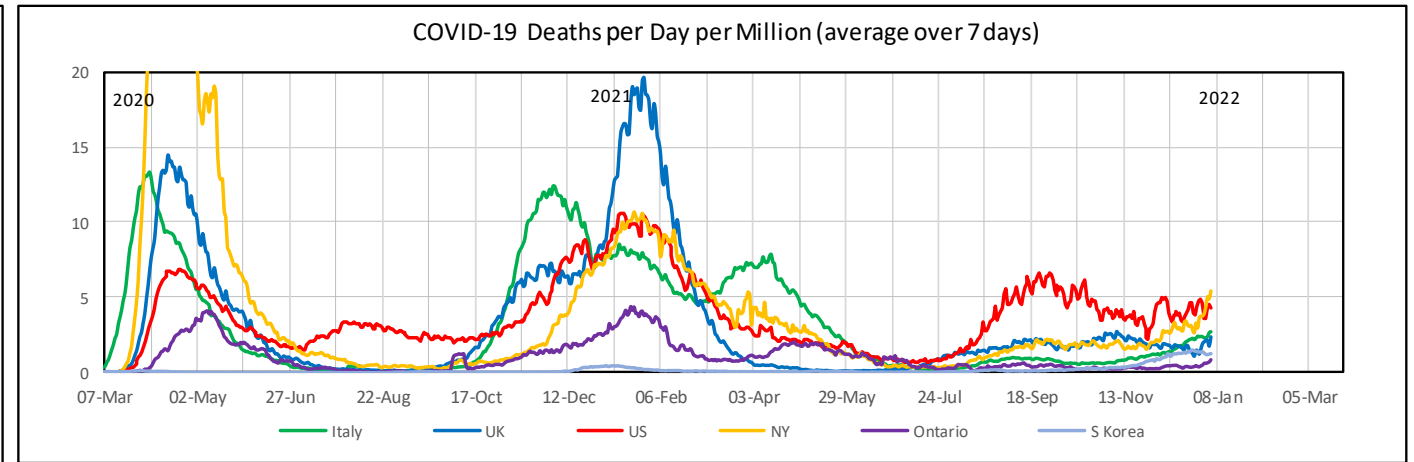
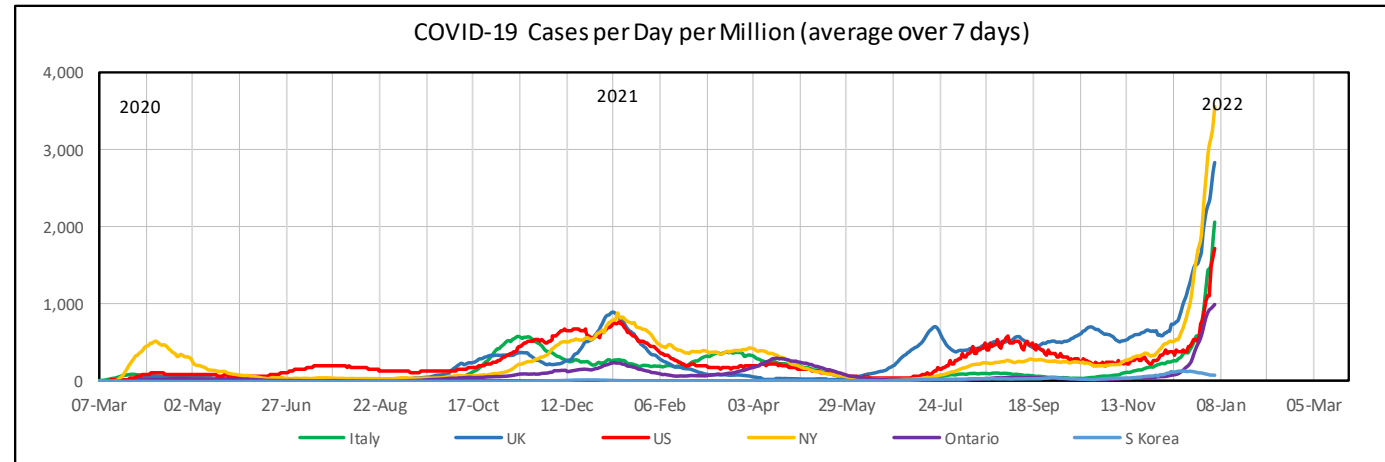
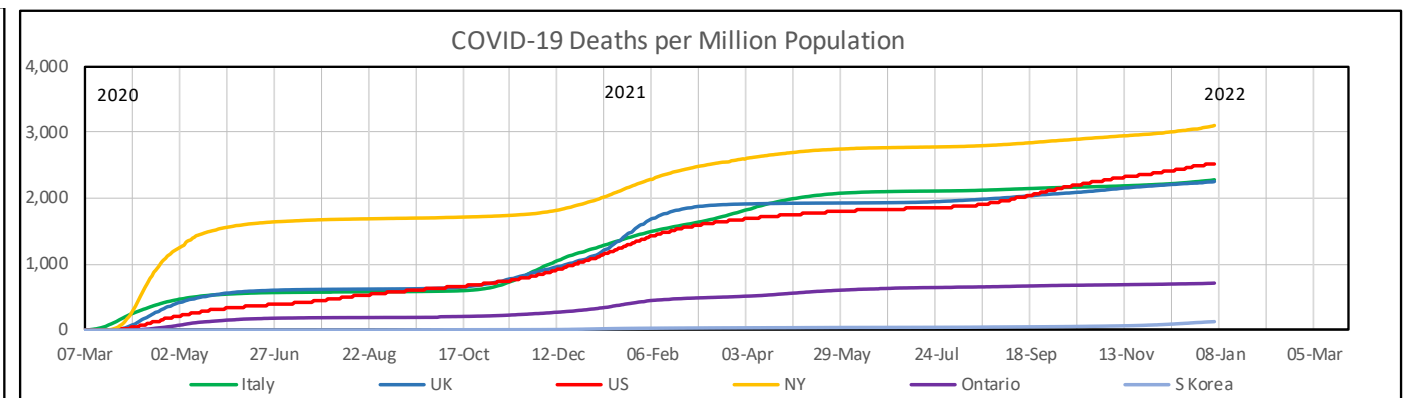
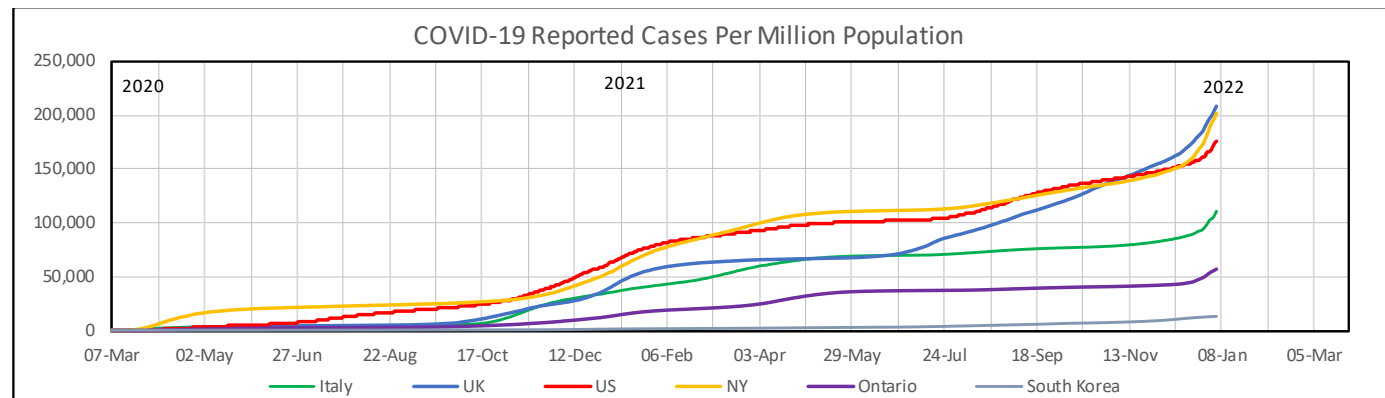


COVID-19 Observations – 06 January, 2022 – by Alex Harrington



Guess they must have read my last update and decided to shut things down. Looks like we're pretty well back to square one for January. Of course, many are jumping all over the latest restrictions.

I've read several times in the newspapers that hospitalizations are 87% lower for the vaccinated than the unvaccinated. That used to be true, but now it's totally misleading. It's a nice number to keep throwing out, but it's out of date and reflects how quickly the omicron variant has changed things. It's like saying the Toronto Maple Leafs are Stanley Cup Champions. Fifty years ago, but not today. Same with the vaccines – they were great getting us through the last surge but right now we're almost at no difference in hospitalizations between the vaccinated and unvaccinated. Things have changed, and 50 years of Maple Leaf misery is only a month in virus time. Look at the data (fourth row, left). Things changed, and it happened quickly, and people are quoting you outdated numbers to make an argument that does not reflect the reality we now face.

Unlike a very few vaccines used to eradicate the diseases they were developed to fight (smallpox is the best example), the covid vaccine only reduces rather than eliminates the risk of contracting, transmitting and becoming really sick with covid. The vaccination status chart (above, fourth row, left), shows the effect of vaccination status on the number of cases, hospitalizations and ICU cases. We were in pretty good shape towards the end of the summer, when vaccinated folks (solid lines) were clearly at much lower risk of getting covid and/or being admitted to hospital. But the comfort of being double vaccinated has now disappeared; by the end of December, vaccinated and unvaccinated were equally likely to contract covid, and in a week or two, both groups will be equally likely to be hospitalized. Unvaccinated still take up the majority of ICU space, but that too seems likely to change soon. The vaccinated group has less severe symptoms and outcomes in almost all cases, but the risk of getting covid has changed significantly.

What's the problem? Well, the vaccine seems to have a limited effective life span, and we need a lot more people to get their booster shots in order to regain the edge we clearly had at the end of the summer. Plus, omicron has evolved to be more resistant to our immunizations. The federal government claims that we have enough vaccines to get everyone in the country vaccinated, so it's up to the population to get out there and get what may be the first of several boosters. Even if we double or triple our vaccination rate, we have little hope of catching up to omicron before this wave is over. The best we can hope for is that vaccinations keep ICU use controlled. Hospitals and medical workers are already strained almost to capacity, and people suffering from non-covid related illnesses and issues are paying the price. We've already lost the race with cases and we're about to lose the race with hospitalizations. Unpleasant facts, but that's where we are.

I can just repeat what I always say – the smartest things you can do are vaxx, mask and distance.

Meanwhile, I'm stuck here with this stupid cold, coughing and hacking like some old fart – wait, that's what I am. And my covid test came back negative.

Take care of yourselves and don't endanger others.

COVID-19 Summary Data										
	Tests per Million	Tests per Day		Tests per Reported Case		Cases per Million		Deaths per Million		Deaths Per Case
	Total to Date	Average over Last 7 days		Total	Last 7 days	Total to date	Average per day Last 7 days	Total to date	Average per day Last 7 days	Total to date (%)
		Total	Per Million							
South Korea	307,090	41,914	818	43	26	12,763	80	115	1.2	0.9%
Italy	2,333,086	875,777	14,464	23	10	111,578	2,064	2,284	2.7	2.0%
UK	5,551,711	1,405,210	21,150	29	10	208,702	2,829	2,249	2.4	1.1%
US	2,182,261	1,317,326	4,003	13	3	175,353	1,717	2,529	4.3	1.4%
Ontario	1,483,066	61,332	4,209	26	4	57,747	991	705	0.9	1.2%

South Korea and Canada report people tested. The others report total tests. Total tests can be 10-50% higher than people tested

