

Global Consultation on SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern and their Impact on Public Health Interventions

10 June, 13:00-16:30 CEST

Zoom (Please register in advance [here](#))

Concept Note

Background

On 29 March 2021, WHO convened the Global Consultation on a Decision Framework for Assessing the Impact of SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern (VOCs) on Public Health Interventions. This was the first global forum for WHO and stakeholders to outline a global risk monitoring and assessment framework, including critical steps for the detection, monitoring, and assessment of SARS-CoV-2 variants, and to provide an overview of the available evidence on current VOCs and their impact on public health interventions. WHO and partners reviewed potential decision-making processes with respect to analyzing the impact of VOCs, evaluating and modifying vaccines, and issuing policy recommendations. At the time of the consultation, no changes to public health interventions due to the VOCs were recommended.

However, noting the upsurge in COVID-19 cases in parts of the world and the emergence of the B.1.617 VOC, there is an urgent need for the global community to come together again to review and synthesize the available evidence of the impact of VOCs on public health interventions. This will ensure continued coordination and harmonization for interpreting results, issuing recommendations, and communicating to the public.

WHO will convene this second consultation, which is scheduled for 10 June 2021 from 13:00-16:30 CEST, with all stakeholders to continue implementing the global risk monitoring and assessment framework. The consultation will also be an opportunity for WHO to outline decision-making processes for COVID-19 vaccine composition, if needed.¹

The consultation will be guided by the following key questions:

- How are data on VOCs and evidence of their impact on public health interventions being generated?
- Based on the current VOC data and evidence, what decisions, if any, need to be made by policymakers with respect to COVID-19 prevention and control?
- How can global decision-making processes be further clarified and strengthened?

Objectives:

1. Review and summarize the existing evidence of the impact of VOCs on public health interventions
2. Engage global stakeholders to outline the information needs and decision-making processes for assessing the impact of VOCs on public health interventions
3. Outline decision-making processes for COVID-19 vaccine composition, if needed

Outcomes:

1. Synthesis of the current evidence, challenges, and solutions for VOCs and their impact on public health interventions, including current COVID-19 vaccines
2. Common understanding of the current triggers, roles and responsibilities, and information needs and standards to guide policy recommendations for VOCs

If you have any questions regarding this consultation, please contact [Christopher Chadwick](#), [Marie-Ange Wambo](#), and [Josine Umugwaneza](#).

¹ Please note that the consultation will not be the forum for making evidence-based recommendations on COVID-19 vaccine composition but will address how such a recommendation, if needed, will be made in the future.