

All about 'Omicron'

December 25, 2021

In news—Cases of Omicron, a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 have been increasing across the world.

About Omicron-

- The variant known **scientifically as B.1.1.529** is believed to have shown many mutations and has been **declared as a Variant of Concern (VoC) by the World Health Organization (WHO)**.
- It is the latest of the five VoC and is far **more transmissible than its predecessor delta and has the ability to evade immunity**.
- Omicron has been declared as a VoC based on observed mutations, their predicted features of increased transmission, immune evasion and risk of re-infections.
- But its origin remains unclear (though the cases reported in South Africa initially), much like the one found in Wuhan.
- **Currently, there are three popular theories of omicron's genesis. They are:**
 - The virus persisted in an immunocompromised person who suffered from COVID-19 for a long period.
 - A “reverse zoonotic event” could be behind an omicron, where it may have evolved in an animal host, possibly a rodent and thereafter jumped onto humans, triggering another wave of COVID-19 infections.
 - The variant evolved in a population where genome sequencing is extremely sparse or non-existent.
 - Its 50 mutations, 32 of which are on the spike protein alone, is worrisome as this is where the variant gets its vaccine-evading and high transmission characteristics from.

More

information -

<https://journalsofindia.com/classification-of-corona-variants/>