

Lambda Covid variant

July 8, 2021

In news- A new COVID-19 strain called 'Lambda' which is claimed to be much more dangerous than the Delta variant has been detected in more than 30 countries.

Key updates-

- The first case of this variant, earlier known as **C.37**, was reported in December 2020.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Lambda as a **"variant of interest"** on June 14, 2021.
- The WHO designates a variant as a "variant of interest" **when its genetic changes are predicted or known to affect important characteristics**, including transmissibility, disease severity, immune escape, diagnostic or therapeutic escape.
- The WHO also says that a variant becomes a "variant of interest" **when it is identified as a cause for significant community transmission** or multiple COVID-19 clusters, in multiple countries.
- Such a variant also shows signs of other apparent **"epidemiological impacts"** to suggest an emerging risk to global public health.
- The United Kingdom health body, **Public Health England (PHE)**, designated Lambda as a "variant under investigation" on June 23, 2021.
- Data at **GISAID**, a global science initiative, shows that at least 31 countries have reported the latest variant including the United States, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland etc...
- According to the research, mutations present in the spike protein of the Lambda variant of interest confer increased infectivity and immune escape from neutralizing antibodies triggered by CoronaVac, the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine.

- However, the study was limited to just one vaccine and there is no evidence corroborating the Lambda variant caused more severe disease or reduced the effectiveness of current vaccines.
- The Lambda variant **has not been recorded in India so far.**

More information- Global Influenza Data Initiative (GISAIID) – JournalsOfIndia