

## **Omicron reported in 57 countries, hospitalizations set to rise-WHO**

Updated: 08 Dec 2021, 03:41 PM IST

The Omicron variant has been reported in 57 nations, with Covid cases rising in southern Africa including Zimbabwe, and the number of patients needing hospitalisation is likely to rise as it spreads, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday.

The WHO, in its weekly epidemiological report, said more data was needed to assess the severity of disease caused by the Omicron variant and whether its mutations may reduce protection from vaccine-derived immunity.

"Even if the severity is equal or potentially even lower than for Delta variant, it is expected that hospitalizations will increase if more people become infected and that there will be a time lag between an increase in the incidence of cases and an increase in the incidence of deaths," it said.

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