

## Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Nov. 29, 2021

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Read *AMA Morning Rounds*®' most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of Nov. 29–Dec. 3.

### **Health experts worldwide raise concerns over Omicron coronavirus variant**

The New York Times (11/26, A1, Zimmer) reported “scientific experts at the World Health Organization warned on Friday that a new coronavirus variant discovered in southern Africa was a ‘variant of concern,’” and “said the new version, named Omicron, carries a number of genetic mutations that may allow it to spread quickly, perhaps even among the vaccinated.” The Times added, “Independent scientists agreed that Omicron warranted urgent attention, but also pointed out that it would take more research to determine the extent of the threat.”

Bloomberg (11/28, Saraiva) reports the “Omicron variant appears to be more transmissible, reinforcing the need for Americans to get vaccinations or booster shots, U.S. health officials said.”

### **Having STIs associated with higher risk of giving birth prematurely, study finds**

CNN (11/29, Rogers) reports, “Having chlamydia, gonorrhea or syphilis – sometimes called ‘silent’ infections due to a dearth of apparent symptoms in the early stages – has been associated with a higher risk of giving birth too early, according to” findings from an observational study published in *JAMA Network Open*. Researchers found that “mothers with chlamydia, gonorrhea or syphilis were 1.04, 1.10 and 1.17 times more likely to have a moderately preterm birth – meaning between 32 and 36 weeks of gestation – than women without STIs, respectively.”

MedPage Today (11/29, Hamza) reports researchers “examined birth certificate data from the National Vital Statistics System on 14,373,023 mothers from 2016 to 2019.”

## **Data show higher HIV infection rates among Latino MSM, only slight drop among Black MSM**

USA Today (11/30, Miranda) reports new CDC data show “HIV infection rates in gay and bisexual Latino men increased from 6,800 new cases in 2010 to 7,900 new cases reported in 2019,” while “the number of new cases decreased only slightly from 9,000 in 2010 to 8,900 in 2019 for gay and bisexual Black men.” The data also show that “gay and bisexual white men experienced a decrease in rates of new HIV cases from 7,500 in 2010 to 5,100 in 2019.”

MedPage Today (11/30, Firth) says, “The new report showed that age was a factor in infection rates, which were nearly halved during the study period for MSM ages 13-24, dropping from 10,400 in 2010 to 5,700 in 2019 ( $P<0.01$ ). They also fell by about a third for those ages 45-54, dropping from 2,900 to 2,000 ( $P<0.01$ ). But the number of HIV infections among MSM ages 25-34 jumped from 6,700 to 10,000 ( $P<0.01$ ).” In addition, the report “noted that the lowest percentages of diagnosed infections were seen among MSM ages 13-24 and ages 25-34, at 55% and 71%, respectively.”

## **One-third of U.S. mumps cases from 2007 to 2019 occurred in children and adolescents, CDC data show**

NBC News (12/1, Sullivan) reports, “Mumps cases continue to circulate in the U.S., largely among vaccinated people, including children,” according to research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published in *Pediatrics*. The report found that “one-third of mumps cases in the U.S. from 2007 to 2019 were reported in children and adolescents,” and “as many as 94% of those who contracted the illness had been vaccinated.”

HealthDay (12/1) reports, “Pediatric mumps cases have been reported in most U.S. states each year since 2016.”

## **One in 44 eight-year-old children in U.S. diagnosed with autism, CDC data show**

The AP (12/2, Tanner) reports, “In an analysis of 2018 data from nearly a dozen states, researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that among 8-year-olds, 1 in 44 had been diagnosed with autism,” compared to “1 in 54 identified with autism in 2016.” Meanwhile, a second

“CDC report released Thursday said that children were 50% more likely to be diagnosed with autism by age 4 in 2018 than in 2014.” The reports “are based on data from counties and other communities in 11 states.” The reports were published in the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summaries.

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