Expert sounds alarm on Covid-19 fifth wave

South Africa is seeing a rapid increase in the number of positive tests being recorded in the country

By ESTELLE ELLIS

It is not clear yet whether the currently circulating Omicron variant (B.1.1.529) is be

coming more transmissible or if it is simply a feature of the slightly later time of the start of the fifth wave compared to the fourth wave in South Africa. Looking at the case numbers, it appears they are increasing rapidly, with a rise in the number of positive tests in Gauteng.

"For the public to make correct inferences, these data also show an upsurge in testing," said NCA-LHI. As a result, new cases may be detected on a daily basis.

Last Thursday, the NDO reported that 17% of Covid-19-related posi

tions were in Gauteng. The previous week saw a significant increase of 10%.

Gauteng has the highest number of people testing positive and EpiLeaves has remained the highest positive test rate. The Gauteng Health Department’s spokesperson, Dr. Andile Mrwelenhu, said that they had made arrangements for increased testing in all provinces except North West, Limpopo, and Eastern Cape where it was excluded.

In the Western Cape, the highest number of positive tests were recorded. Testing in the Western Cape is currently being carried out at a slower rate than in other provinces. In the Eastern Cape, however, the number of positive tests has decreased significantly.

Health Department spokesperson Ntsile Moleko said the department had noted the increase in Covid-19 cases with concern.

PHOTO: AFP

"We are closely watching the trends and monitoring the situation closely," he said.

We must remain vigilant and continue to encourage the public to maintain all COVID-19 protective measures. This includes wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, and getting vaccinated. We must also ensure that we continue to monitor and respond to any new developments," he added.

Health Department spokesperson Dr. Andile Mrwelenhu said the department had noted the increase in positive tests, and they were monitoring the situation closely.

"We continue to urge the public to maintain all COVID-19 protective measures. This includes wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, and getting vaccinated. We must also ensure that we continue to monitor and respond to any new developments," he added.

Andile Mrwelenhu said that while the Omicron variant was detected in late November, it was still too early to determine its impact on the country's health system.

"We continue to monitor the situation closely and will provide updates as necessary," he said.

Health Minister Dr. Naledi Chikwevu said the Omicron variant had been detected in several countries and was considered a concern.

"We are monitoring the situation closely and will take appropriate action as necessary," she said.

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