‘Early days’, but scientists closely monitor a rapid rise in new coronavirus cases

Infections have more than doubled in the past week, with most in Gauteng

Tessa Kule

There are early signs of a resurgence of Covid-19, which has seen infections and hospital admissions rise in the past week, but up to 10% of the population is still unvaccinated.

In South Africa, the Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 variants accounted for more than 80% of recent infections, with the BA.5 strain in particular spreading rapidly.

There were 2,560 new cases of Covid-19 reported on Thursday, compared to 1,400 on Wednesday, according to statistics from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

A senior researcher at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, infectious disease specialist Richard Lesserr, said that while they were an early indication of a resurgence, the data was still preliminary.

"We have seen a rapid increase in infections in recent weeks, but it’s too early to determine whether this is the start of a larger trend," Lesserr said.

He urged people to remain cautious and continue following safety measures such as vaccination and wearing masks.

"It’s important to remember that we are still in the midst of the pandemic," he said. "We cannot afford to let our guard down, especially with the emergence of new variants like BA.4 and BA.5."