



Confirmation of Omicron Virus by Genome Sequencing

Why in News

- On December 5, 2021, in the report of genome sequencing of a family from South Africa in Rajasthan, 9 people have been found to be suffering from the new variant Omicron of Corona.

Key Points

- The [World Health Organization](#) has identified the recently discovered strain B.1.1.1.529 of Kovid-19 as '**Variants of Concern - VOC**'.
- The virus was first detected in South Africa and its name was changed to Omicron.
- Omicron has been placed in the most worrying category of COVID-19 variants along with the globally dominant Delta Plus and its weaker rivals Alpha, Beta and Gamma.
- However there is no reliable estimate of how much more infectious this Omicron variant is than the previous virus strain.
- In addition to South Africa, an Omicron variant has been identified in people arriving from Malawi, Botswana, Belgium and Hong Kong in Israel.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has decided to name the variant based on the letters of the Greek alphabet instead of the countries where they were first identified.
- WHO chose the name Omicron instead of the two letters Nu or Xi between Mu and Omicron.

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