

# Is the 'Delta Plus' COVID-19 variant a new concern?

June 28 2021

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India, already hit hard by the Delta variant of COVID-19, has labeled a

closely related new variant—dubbed "Delta Plus"—as a "variant of concern." But some epidemiologists in India and abroad say there is not enough data yet to warrant broader cautions about the variant, *CBS News* reported.

Delta Plus cases are rising in India, and the variant has also been spotted in COVID-19 patients in the United States, United Kingdom, China, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Russia, and Switzerland.

On Tuesday, India said more than 40 cases of Delta Plus (officially called B.1.617.2.1) were found across three states—Maharashtra, Kerala, and Madhya Pradesh. A group of labs in India have studied the new variant and report that it appears to have three troubling characteristics: increased transmissibility, better ability to infect cells in the lungs, and a potential for higher resistance to vaccines or immunity gained through prior infection.

Jeremy Kamil, Ph.D., a virologist at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, told *BBC News* that there is not "much reason to believe this [Delta Plus] is any more dangerous than the original Delta."

"I would keep calm," Kamil said. "I don't think India or anyone else in the world has released or accumulated enough data to distinguish the risk from the so-called Delta Plus as being more dangerous or concerning than the original Delta variant."

**More information:** [CBS News Article](#)  
[BBC News Article](#)

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Citation: Is the 'Delta Plus' COVID-19 variant a new concern? (2021, June 28) retrieved 26 April

2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-06-delta-covid-variant.html>

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