

Map reveals where new XEC Covid variant is spreading across Europe as doctor warns it could soon be dominant strain of the virus

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A new 'stronger' Covid variant, with cases reported around the world, is now spreading 'quite rapidly' across Europe as a doctor warns it could soon become the dominant strain of the virus.

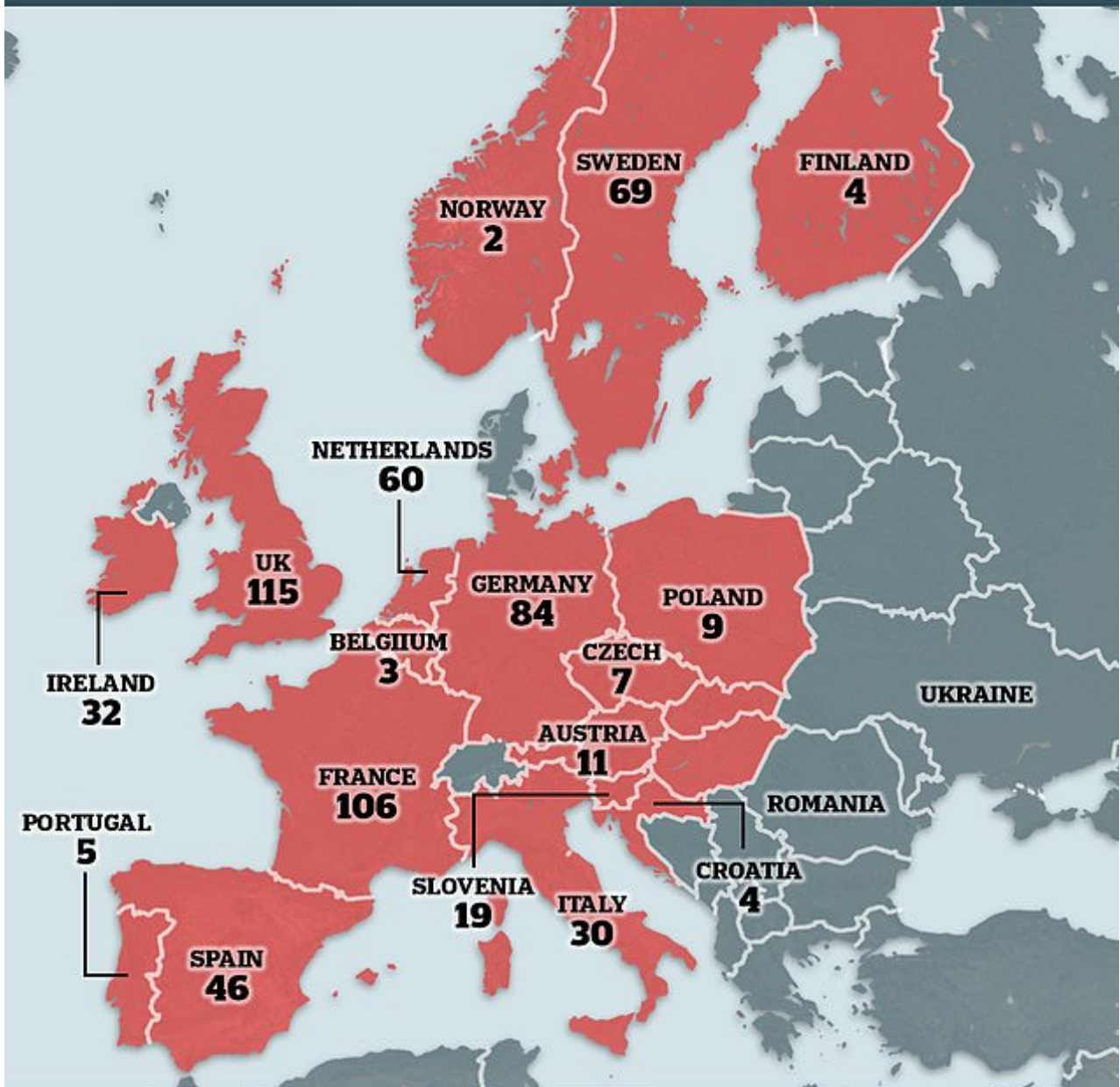
The XEC strain was first detected in [Germany](#) in June but cases have since been reported in the UK, Ireland, [France](#), [Spain](#), the US and other countries - with 1,115 cases worldwide.

MailOnline's map highlights all of the documented cases of the new XEC strain across Europe.

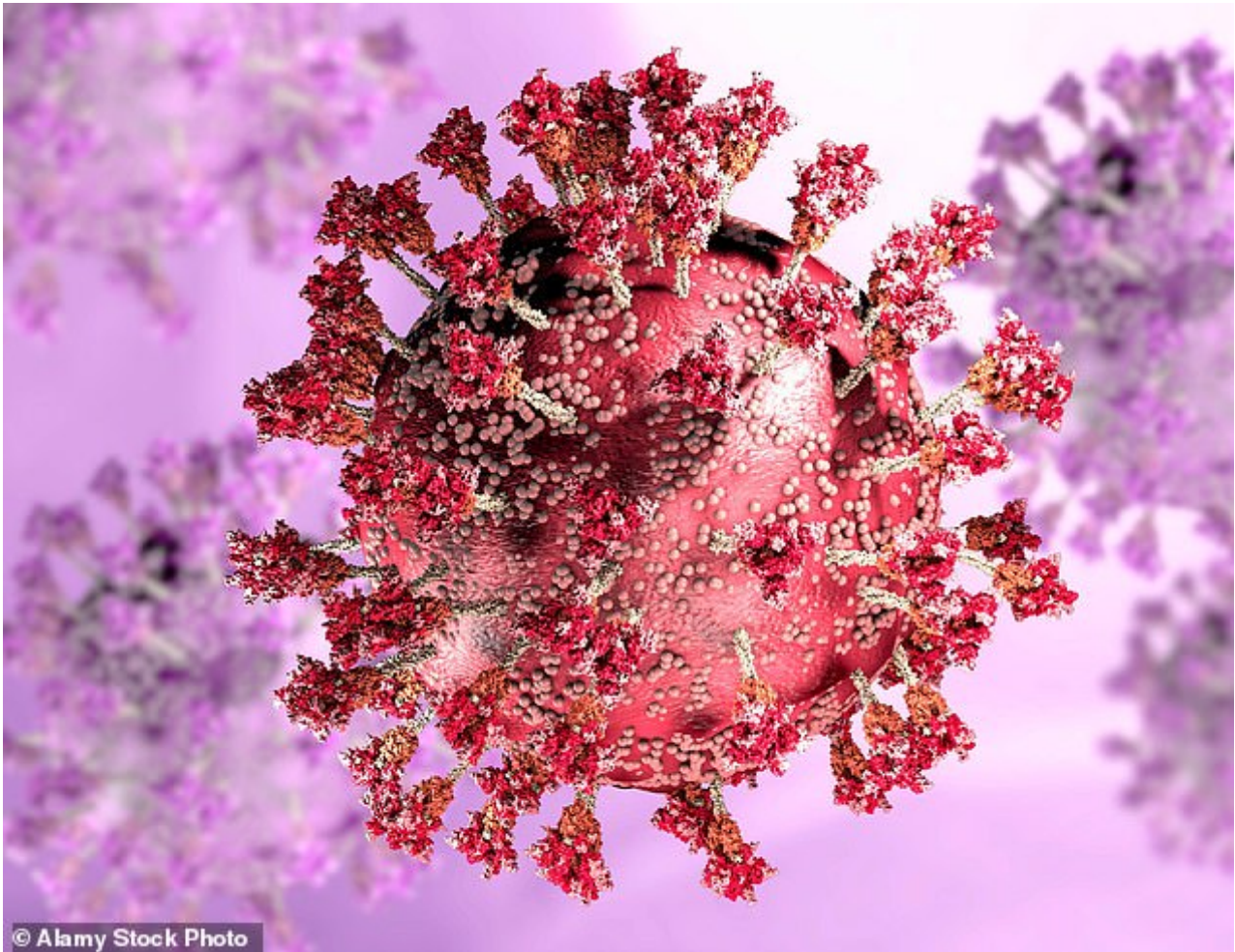
It is a combination of the KS.1.1 and KP.3.3 variants and causes symptoms that are similar to those you experience with common illnesses such as [flu](#) and colds.

Most people will get better within a few weeks, but for others it could take longer to recover and some may even require hospitalisation as it is said to 'wipe you out'.

HOW XEC COVID CASES ARE SPREADING ACROSS EUROPE



MailOnline's map highlights all of the documented cases of the new XEC strain across Europe



The XEC strain was first detected in Germany in June and has since been reported in 29 countries (stock image)



Experts warn the XEC variant could become the dominant strain over the winter months

Usual symptoms include a high temperature, continuous cough, loss of sense of taste or smell, shortness of breath, body aches and extreme fatigue.

Also, cold-like symptoms such as a headache, a sore throat, a blocked or runny nose are common as well as a loss of appetite, diarrhoea, feeling sick and vomiting.

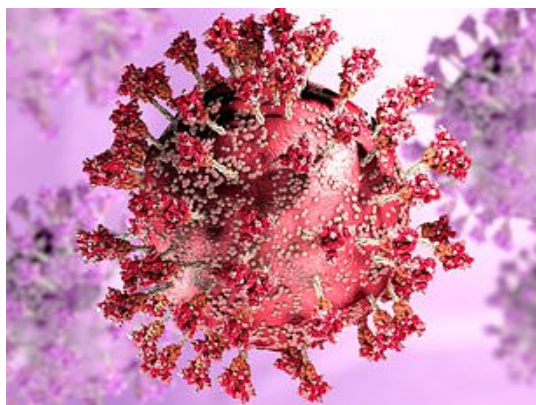
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But researchers have called for closer monitoring of the XEC variant to better understand its symptoms.

GP and clinical director of population health, Dr Helen Wall, pointed out an increase in respiratory infections coinciding with a rise in cases of the new XEC strain.

She told Manchester Evening News: 'There is another Covid variant on the scene which is expected to become the most dominant, and is becoming more prevalent like all the variants before it.'



'We don't completely know if it makes it more or less transmissible, I suspect more because they always are. But we don't know what the situation is.'

Director of the Genetics Institute at University College London, Professor Francois Balloux, told the BBC that the XEC variant is more contagious but the vaccines should still offer good protection as it comes from the Omicron family.

He also believes it is possible that it could become the dominant strain over the winter months.

1757

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Usual symptoms include a high temperature, continuous cough, loss of sense of taste or smell (stock image)

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Last month, Director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in California Eric Topol said XEC is 'just getting started now around the world and here'.

Speaking to the LA Times, he added: 'And that's going to take many weeks, a couple months, before it really takes hold and starts to cause a wave.'

'XEC is definitely taking charge. That does appear to be the next variant.'

'But it's months off from getting into high levels.'

The strain has now been detected in at least 29 countries and 24 US states and is now spreading 'quite rapidly' across Europe, North America and Asia, according to Covid data analyst Mike Honey.

The Czech Republic has the highest prevalence of the variant as XEC was detected in 16 per cent of Covid samples from the country.