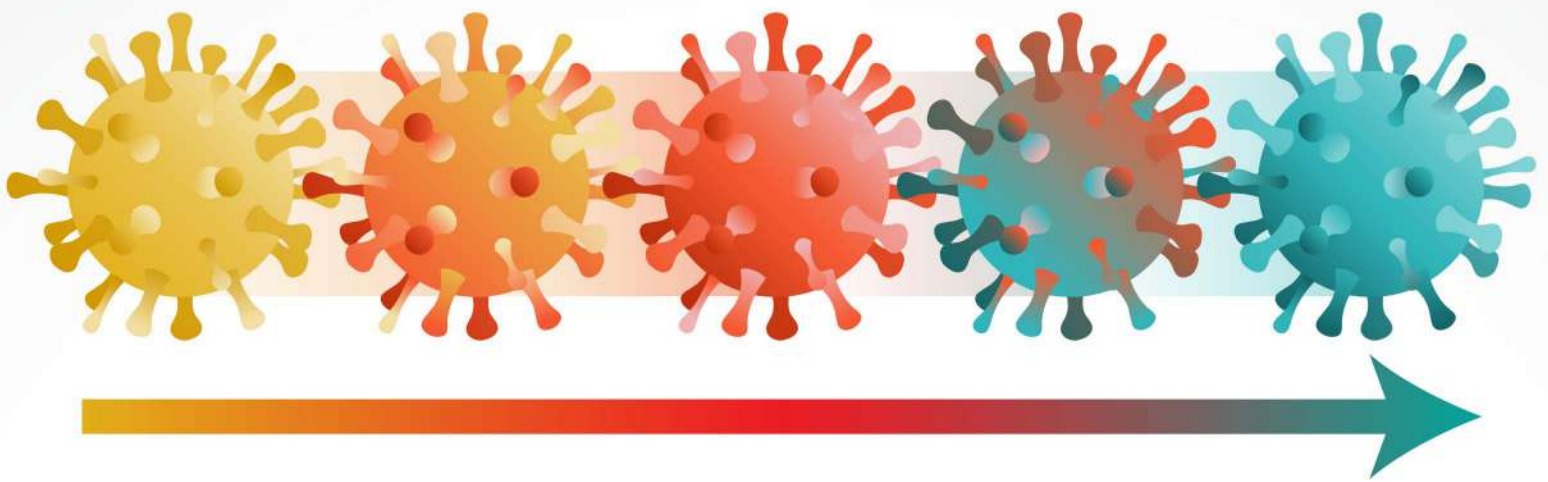


## COVID-19 VARIANTS

All viruses, including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, change over time. The changes may affect the virus's properties, such as how easily it spreads, the associated disease severity, or the performance of vaccines, therapeutic medicines, diagnostic tools, or other public health and social measures.



Variants of interest (VOI) is a SARS-CoV-2 variant:

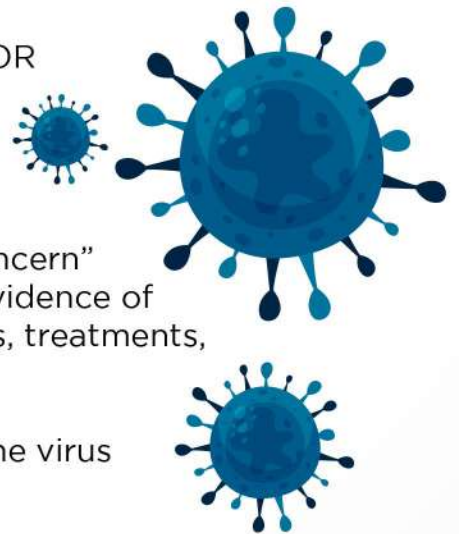
- With genetic changes that are predicted or known to affect virus characteristics such as transmissibility, disease severity, immune escape, diagnostic or therapeutic escape;

AND

- Is identified to cause significant community transmission or multiple COVID-19 clusters, in multiple countries with increasing relative prevalence alongside increasing number of cases over time, or other apparent epidemiological impacts to suggest an emerging risk to global public health.

Variants of concern (VOC) is a SARS-CoV-2 variant that meets the definition of a VOI and, through a comparative assessment, has been demonstrated to be associated with one or more of the following changes at a degree of global public health significance:

- Increase in transmissibility or detrimental change in COVID-19 epidemiology; OR
- Increase in virulence or change in clinical disease presentation; OR
- Decrease in effectiveness of public health and social measures or available diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics.



- **Omicron and all of its lineages** are considered “variants of concern” by the CDC and World Health Organization, which suggests evidence of increased transmissibility, severity, and impacts on diagnostics, treatments, or vaccines
- **Omicron variant** spreads more easily than earlier variants of the virus that can cause Covid-19, including the Delta variant.
- The new **BA.4** and **BA.5 Omicron** variants are considered more contagious than the BA.2 subtypes and are expected to become the dominant subvariants.
- In the Philippines, as of July 5, 2022, there were 190 cases testing positive for the Omicron Variant of Concern and all of its sublineages (90.5%), while 21 samples have no lineage assigned

Public health and social measures (PHSM), including infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, have been effective in reducing COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths.



Keep a safe distance



Open windows when possible



Wear a mask



Keep hands clean



Get vaccinated as soon as it is your turn

Some Covid-19 variants may spread more easily, but the SAME basic measures work against them

With the circulation of new variants, Covid-19 protective measures are important now more than ever. Do it all to protect you and your loved ones.