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Natural Immunity Against COVID Could Be Offered By Omicron, Opines EU Medical Agency Chief

Marco Cavaleri has said that the highly contagious Omicron was first detected in Europe at the end of 2021 and has now spread across the continent.

Written By [Apoorva Kaul](#)



Image: AP/Unsplash

As the world continues to witness rise in COVID-19 cases driven by the Omicron variant, the European Union Medical Agency has expressed concern over the increase in cases fuelled by highly transmissible Omicron strain. Addressing a press briefing, Marco Cavaleri, head of Biological Health Threats and Vaccine Strategy,

underscored that with the increase of immunity in the population through vaccines, there will be immunity in people through Omicron.

“With the increase of immunity in population and with Omicron, there will be a lot of natural immunity taking place on top of vaccination. We will be faster moving toward a scenario that will be closer to endemicity,”
Marco Cavaleri said at a press conference.

Cavaleri, in the press briefing, said that the highly contagious Omicron was first detected in Europe at the end of 2021 and has now spread across the continent. He highlighted that the new contagious strain of COVID-19, Omicron variant is becoming the dominant variant. He added that it appears that the Omicron is less severe than Delta variant. He underlined that the study conducted in South Africa, the UK and some European countries have indicated that the risk of getting admitted to hospitalised after being infected with Omicron is reduced to "approximately half compared to the Delta variant."

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“EMA’s regular press briefing on #COVID19 vaccines and treatments will be broadcast live today, 11 January, from 16:00 to 16:30 CET. #EMAPresser
<https://t.co/GRD7cFSUR7> [pic.twitter.com/RHzRiKfdwa](https://t.co/RHzRiKfdwa)
– EU Medicines Agency (@EMA_News) January 11, 2022

Speaking at the press briefing, Marco Cavaleri insisted that Omicron apparently infects the cells differently. He emphasised that the Omicron could result in reduced spread of disease into lungs. He added that Omicron is highly transmissible and leads to increase in high number

of people getting infected. Cavaleri pointed out that the preliminary results of studies show that existing vaccines effectiveness against the Omicron variant is “significantly reduced” compared to previous strains. He added, "the studies suggest that more vaccinated people will develop breakthrough infection and disease resulting from Omicron due to the immune evasion associated with this variant." He noted that the evidence suggest that COVID-19 vaccines provide high protection against severe disease & hospitalisations linked to Omicron strain.

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“Omicron apparently presents some differences in the way it infects cells after binding to the ACE2 receptor, which could lead to a reduced spread of the disease into the lungs. On the other hand, Omicron is highly contagious, resulting in high numbers of infected individuals, so it is very important to be aware of its potential burden and not to dismiss it as a mild disease,” Marco Cavaleri said in the press briefing.

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