# UKHSA Monitoring FLiRT Variant with Sub-Variants KP.2, KP.3, JN.1.7, JN.1.1, and KP.1.1



A new Covid-19 variant, referred to as FLiRT, is drawing attention from health authorities in both the United Kingdom and the United States. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is currently monitoring the variant, which includes sub-variants KP.2, KP.3, JN.1.7, JN.1.1, and KP.1.1. These sub-variants have arisen from the JN.1 variant, also known as Juno, which has been prevalent in the UK for several months.

FLiRT accounts for approximately 30% of new Covid cases in the UK, and about 25% in the US. Despite these numbers, there is no conclusive evidence that FLiRT is more infectious or deadly than previous strains. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and John Hopkins University, there are no new specific symptoms linked to FLiRT, and its infectious period remains consistent with previous Omicron variants.

Recent data from the UKHSA shows a 25% increase in Covid cases for the week ending May 7, with a total of 1,985 cases reported. Furthermore, positivity rates have risen from 6.8% to 8.6% from the previous week, indicating a slow increase in infections following a decline in the spring.

Health officials continue to advise individuals with respiratory symptoms to avoid contact with vulnerable groups to prevent severe illness. However, they emphasize that the immunity developed from past infections and vaccinations has significantly reduced the likelihood of returning to strict pandemic-era restrictions.

In conclusion, while the FLiRT variant is under close observation, current evidence suggests it does not pose a greater threat compared to earlier strains.