

Wellcome Genome Campus | Nextstrain_trimmed_lj_Jan_04

This animation from Nextstrain shows the truly global nature of the genomic surveillance programme during the current pandemic. It also demonstrates how different viral lineages emerge and spread and how this varies across different geographies. Viral lineages arise due to errors of replication followed by selective evolutionary pressure or genetic drift.

If these new lineages affect transmission or clinical severity, they may be deemed as a variant of concern. One of these variants of concern is delta, and we can see the light blue colours of delta overtaking the animation extremely quickly. Towards the end of the animation, we can also see Omicron beginning to emerge in red.