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Dept. of Health Investigating Death of 41-Year-Old Man Who D.O.H. Says Recovered From Covid-19 Five Weeks Ago

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ST. THOMAS — The V.I. Department of Health said Sunday it was investigating the sudden death of a 41-year-old man from St. Thomas who the department said recovered from Covid-19 five weeks ago.

"Health officials are waiting for evaluation from the medical examiner for more details to determine if there is any direct relation to COVID-19," said D.O.H.

"The deceased's next of kin has been notified. If confirmed, this death will mark the twenty-fifth death related to COVID-19 in the territory."

D.O.H. extended condolences to the family of the deceased and said it would continue to work with other agencies "in taking unprecedented actions to slow the spread of COVID-19."

D.O.H. also included known precautionary measures in its release: stay at home, practice social distancing, wear a mask when in company of others outside of those in your household, clean frequently used areas thoroughly, and wash your hands often with soap and warm water.

Possible higher mortality rate of U.K. Covid-19 variant

The United Kingdom variant of Covid-19, already believed to be up to 70 percent more contagious than the strain currently dominant in the U.S. and around the world, [could be up to 40 percent more deadly](#), according to preliminary conclusions from four separate studies. The variant, already the dominant strain in the U.K., [is expected to become the commanding strain](#) in the U.S. by March if efforts are not taken to mitigate spread, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The preliminary results from the four separate studies were released Friday via Britain's top scientific adviser, who said the variant could be 30 percent to 40 percent more lethal.

"We have been informed today that, in addition to spreading more quickly, it also now appears that there is some evidence that the new variant—the variant that was first identified in London and the southeast—may be associated with a higher degree of mortality," U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Friday (via Wall Street Journal).

This latest development comes as the U.S. and other countries struggle with vaccination rollout, and as other mutations of the virus are popping up, with at least two strains — the [South African](#) and recently a Brazilian strain — showing significant resistance against the vaccines.

USVI health officials said they were monitoring the U.K. variant. "The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Health is sending samples to the CDC for sequencing to determine if and when the variant is detected here as well," said Dr. Esther Ellis, D.O.H.'s territorial epidemiologist, during a recent Bryan administration Covid-19 press briefing. "These recent events are alarming and could have real impacts in the Virgin Islands, in which we have seen [cases increasing significantly](#)."