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V.I. Dept. of Health Announces 96th Death Related to Covid-19 in U.S. Virgin Islands

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The V.I. Dept. of Health on Friday announced two deaths related to Covid-19. The first was a 67-year-old man on St. Thomas, announced this morning, and the latest — announced Friday afternoon — a 76-year-old man from St. Croix.

"After further investigating cause of death and ensuring notification of next of kin, the Virgin Islands Department of Health is saddened to confirm the territory's 96th death related to Covid-19. The deceased is a 76-year-old male on St. Croix," the health department said in a release.

The territory's total active Covid-19 cases as of Thursday stood at 1,456, with St. Croix accounting for 778 of those infections, followed by St. Thomas with 582, and St. John with 96. The territory's positivity rate fell to 12.93 percent, according to [the latest data](#).

Immunity From Prior Infection Gave Better Protection Than Vaccination During Delta Wave, CDC Says

A previous infection from Covid-19 provided better protection than vaccination against the virus during the Delta wave, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday, citing data showing those who received immunity through prior infection or vaccination fared way better compared to those who were unvaccinated.

The data came from 1.1 million people and included testing, actual cases and immunization. It was collected in New York and California, the federal health authority said, spanning the months of May through November of 2021, the period in which the Delta variant became the dominant strain of Covid-19 in the U.S., before the Omicron variant started circulating in December last year.

“Before the Delta variant, Covid-19 vaccination resulted in better protection against a subsequent infection than surviving a previous infection,” CDC epidemiologist Benjamin Silk said. “When looking at the summer and fall of 2021, when Delta became predominant in this country, however, surviving a previous infection now provided greater protection.” According to the CDC, data from hospitalizations came from more than 50,000 people just in California.

The timeframe of the research coincided with when vaccinated people were experiencing waning immunity from vaccine-induced inoculation before the wider rollout of booster shots, Dr. Silk said.

Many have contended that the U.S., like many parts of Europe, should count immunity gained through prior Covid-19 infection as providing enough protection to work, enter restaurants and participate in other activities that some jurisdictions only allow for the vaccinated.

The CDC, however, is still advocating vaccination, stating that it continues to be the surest way to gain immunity. And Dr. Silk also pointed to recent data that found people who got vaccinated several months after being infected with Covid-19 had more protection against symptomatic disease than a prior infection alone.

It is not yet clear how symptomatic infection from the Omicron variant defer from those who received natural immunity compared to those who took vaccines. However, reports suggest that the infections are milder in people with natural immunity.

The federal health authority said it would publish data showing the results of Covid-19 vaccines and boosters during the current Omicron circulation later this week.