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Pfizer vaccine 'highly effective' in reducing coronavirus transmission, study suggests

New data from Israel suggests vaccine is 89.4 per cent effective at preventing infections, whether symptomatic or not

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(AFP via Getty Images)

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The **Covid-19** vaccine developed by **Pfizer** and **BioNTech** appears to be highly effective in limiting the spread of the virus, according to reported data from **Israel**, in a development that could alter the course of the pandemic.

A study conducted by Pfizer and the Israeli Health Ministry shows that the vaccine is 89.4 per cent effective at preventing infections, whether symptomatic or not.



disease, admittance to hospital and death from the virus.

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But a reduction in the spread of Sars-CoV-2 - the virus that causes Covid-19 - offers hope that the acute phase of the pandemic can be brought to an end by the summer.

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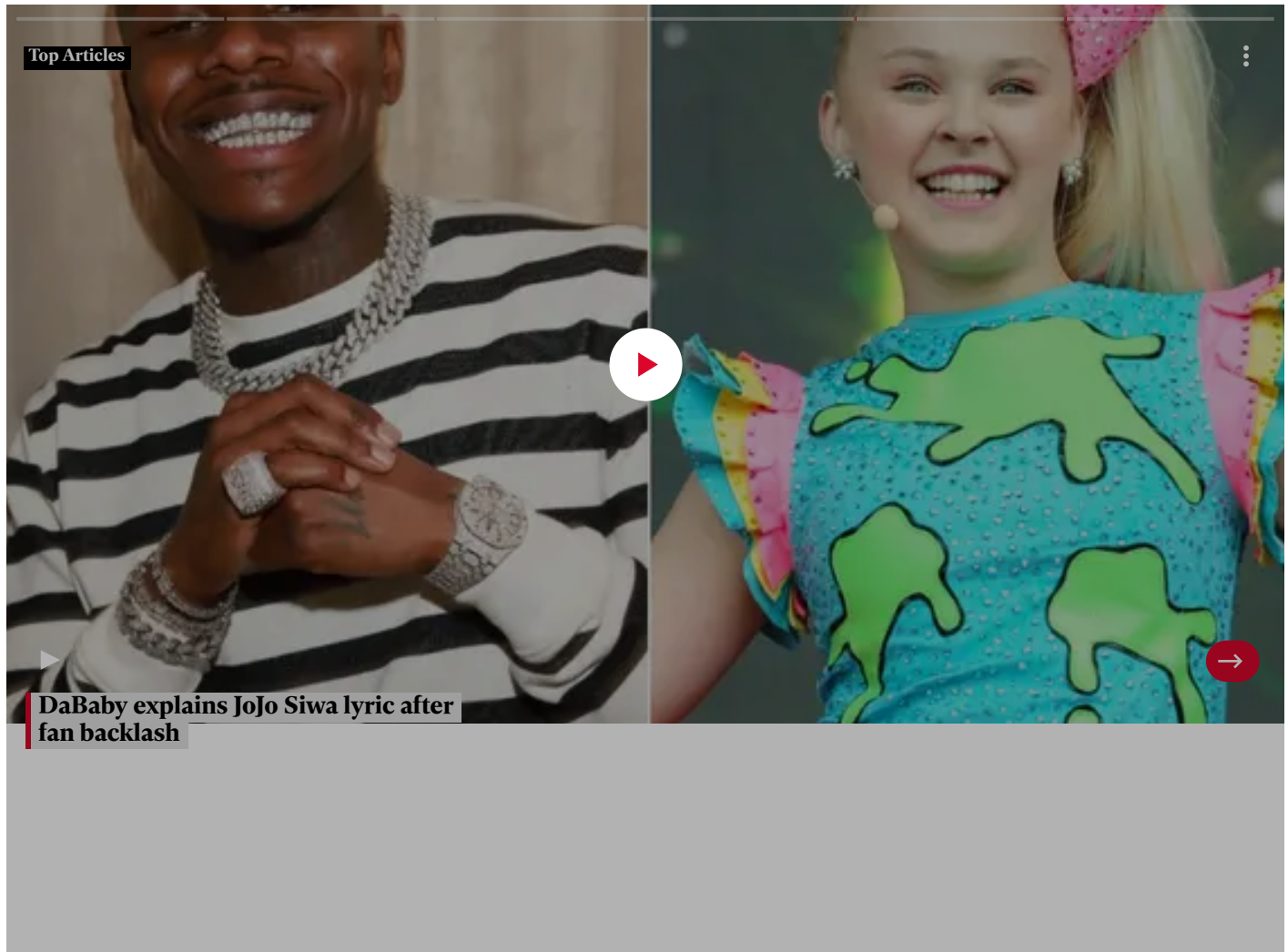
Israel is leading the way with its inoculation programme, having delivered at least one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech jab to nearly half of its population.

The latest study from the country - others have similarly highlighted the efficaciousness of the vaccine - was conducted in the three weeks up to 6 February.

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Over this period, 27.4 per cent of people aged 15 and over were fully immunised using two doses of the Pfizer jab, which had been the only available Covid-19 jab at the time.

Among those admitted to hospital in a severe or critical condition during the study, 4.4 per cent had received both shots and 5.7 per cent of those who died from the disease were fully vaccinated.



Overall, the vaccine was 93 per cent effective in preventing hospitalisation and death.

During the observation period of the study, the UK variant - known as B117 - was found in 81.5 per cent of Covid-19 test samples, pointing to its high prevalence in Israel.

This suggests the Pfizer vaccine is effective in providing high levels of protection against the highly transmissible B117, which drove a winter wave of infections across Israel and led to a third national lockdown on 8 January.

Previous laboratory-based studies have shown that its ability to neutralise the South African variant is diminished - though scientists have said there is no clinical evidence to suggest people vaccinated with the jab lacked protection.

Separately, Israel's health ministry said on Saturday that the risk of becoming ill with coronavirus falls by 95.8 per cent after a second dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

The vaccine is also 98 per cent effective in preventing breathing problems or a fever, the ministry added.

On the back of its vaccine rollout, Israel reopened sections of its economy on Sunday, including malls and leisure facilities.

Shops are open to all but access to gyms, hotels and theatres is limited to people with a "Green Pass": those who have had both doses of the vaccine more than a week prior, or recovered from the disease with presumed immunity.



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