

CDC Newsroom

Dr. Robert R. Redfield Statement on SARS-CoV-2 infections

Media Statement

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Misleading media reports have suggested there are 24 times more SARS-CoV-2 infections than reported cases. As CDC has been saying, our retrospective estimate is that there were 10 times more cases than reported from the period where we've been examining antibody data: March through May.

The JAMA article estimated that the range was as low as 6 times in certain areas. Moreover, the article also points out that in 10 jurisdictions sampled, somewhere between 1% and 6.9% of individuals in those jurisdictions are calculated to have had infection at some point based on antibody testing.

Of the 10 states in which data was collected for this study, one state was estimated to have 23.8 times more infections than reported cases, but this may be due to underreporting or less testing done at the time the data was collected. The article indicates that the underreporting was in part due to asymptomatic individuals that were not seeking testing at the time.

Lastly, this study covered a time period from March to the beginning of May. Today, we are testing more individuals and identifying more asymptomatic individuals than was able to be done previously.

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