

Covid Omicron, Ceinge: 'In Italy, new sub-variant BA.2.3, at 20%'

A new sub-variant of Omicron is circulating in Italy. It is called BA.2.3 and is currently present in about 20% of Covid-19 cases in our country. The geneticist Massimo Zollo, coordinator of the Covid-19 Task Force of Ceinge – Advanced Biotechnologies and professor of Genetics at the Federico II University of Naples, told Ansa. “Starting from March 1, Italy has deposited 10,000 sequences” in international databases that collect the genetic sequences of the Sars-CoV-2 virus, he added, and then underlined that “BA.2.3 originated from BA.2, but compared to this one it has some more mutations”. (COVID: THE LATEST NEWS LIVE – COVID VACCINE: DATA AND GRAPHICS ON ADMINISTRATIONS IN ITALY, REGION BY REGION)

Yesterday the news of a further variant of the coronavirus landed on Italian soil. For the first time, in Italy, a new variant of the Sars-CoV-2 virus was isolated and sequenced, called “Xf”, already defined by experts as a sort of fusion between the Delta and Omicron variant. The discovery, which was reported by the Bolognese edition of the newspaper “La Repubblica”, was made in the laboratory of Pievesestina, in Cesena, directed by the microbiologist Vittorio Sambri. The positive swab belonged to a patient who had reported important pathologies and who, once contracted Covid a couple of months ago, had subsequently died. “But not for the Xf variant, this must be said very clearly”, Sambri emphasized.

The Xf variant is already widespread in England with about 100 registered cases and was recently uploaded to the databases managed by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (Iss). “In Italy it had never been reported, it is the first time that it has been found in a patient, while there are about a hundred English cases”, confirmed the expert, professor at the University of Bologna. Experts, at the moment, are working to try to understand similarities and differences with the variants already known, assess their danger, contagiousness, resistance to vaccines and therapies. “Xf” could include Delta’s “aggressive” characteristics with Omicron’s high contagiousness. This “is the conclusion we arrive at, which is why we brand it tightly. We study it in the laboratory to understand how much it is blocked by vaccines and monoclonal antibodies. In short, we need to understand what this little beast can do, there is no doubt,” said Sambri.

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