

## Coronavirus Pandemic

# Evaluation of sample pooling for gene sequencing of SARS-CoV-2: a simulation study

Heng Chen<sup>1,2</sup> #, Yue Cheng<sup>1,2</sup> #, Xun He<sup>1,2</sup>, Yuzhen Zhou<sup>1,2</sup>, Wenjun Xie<sup>1,2</sup>, Danyun Shen<sup>1,2</sup>, Zhiqun He<sup>2</sup>, Ruidan Li<sup>2</sup>, Weixuan Liu<sup>2</sup>, Liang Wang<sup>1,2</sup>, Xuejun Zhang<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chengdu Workstation for Emerging Infectious Disease Control and Prevention, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Chengdu, 610047, China

<sup>2</sup> Chengdu Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Chengdu, 610047, China

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Blood Transfusion, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Chengdu, 610066, China

# Authors contributed equally to this work.

### Abstract

**Introduction:** Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) continues to pose a significant public health threat, requiring epidemiological and genomic surveillance. Next generation sequencing (NGS) is commonly utilized for monitoring viral evolution at a high cost. This study evaluated pooled sequencing as a cost-effective tool for monitoring virus variants.

**Methodology:** A simulation study was conducted to evaluate the efficacy of sample pooling for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) sequencing. In total, 72 original sets of raw data of gene sequencing with different genotypes were collected and combined to create 70 simulated samples based on five pooling strategies. A bioinformatics tool based on Freyja was utilized to analyze the variant composition of these 70 simulated pooled samples. The efficiency of recovering the correct genotypes of the original samples among different pooling strategies, result reports, and genotypes was evaluated with R software.

**Results:** The genetic composition of the pooled samples mostly recovered the genotype compositions of the original samples, with discrepancies between the top X results (where X is the number of original samples in the pool) and the complete results ( $p < 0.05$ ). Variability in identification efficiency of genotypes were observed in the reports for the top X results ( $p < 0.05$ ) across the five pooling strategies, but not in the reports of complete results ( $p > 0.05$ ). Some original samples of low quality were not accurately identified.

**Conclusions:** Sample pooling coupled with streamlined genotyping offers a promising approach for cost-effective gene sequencing of SARS-CoV-2, which will aid in COVID-19 genomic surveillance.

**Key words:** SARS-CoV-2; sample pooling; gene sequencing; simulation study.

*J Infect Dev Ctries* 2025; 19(1):1-8. doi:10.3855/jidc.20348

(Received 23 May 2024 – Accepted 16 October 2024)

Copyright © 2025 Chen *et al.* This is an open-access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

### Introduction

The impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on both human health and the social economy has been profound. The World Health Organization (WHO) conducted a study between 22 July to 18 August 2024 to estimate the impact of COVID-19 and reported that over 776 million confirmed cases and more than seven million deaths have been reported globally since the beginning of the pandemic [1]. The rapid mutation rate of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) has led to the emergence and global dissemination of new variants with distinct phenotypes in transmissibility, severity, and immune evasion [2]. Fourteen months after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an end to the public health emergency of international concern regarding COVID-19, there were over 238,000

new cases reported across 91 (39%) countries, and about 4,400 new fatalities reported across 35 (15%) countries during the 28-day period (from July 22, to August 18, 2024), primarily attributed to the prevalence of the lineages of JN.1 and the variant KP.3.1.1 [1]. Ongoing genomic surveillance remains crucial for addressing the persistent threat of new variants and outbreaks due to the continuous evolution and spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus [3]. In the post-pandemic era, the focus of genome sequencing has shifted from individual diagnosis and molecular epidemiology tracing; to the surveillance of population spread, and the genetic diversity and evolution of SARS-CoV-2 within communities. The viral genotypes and their compositions in populations can be used to track the emergence of new variants and genetic changes, which

is of significant importance for early warning and risk assessment of COVID-19.

Next generation sequencing (NGS) is widely used to monitor viral evolution. Notably, the sequences of SARS-CoV-2 shared on GISAID (<https://gisaid.org/>) vary significantly across continents, with Europe contributing the most and Africa the least (even lower than Oceania). Cost and sequencing throughput are likely limitations affecting the use of genomic surveillance in tracking the possible risk of COVID-19. These factors can influence our understanding of the prevalence of variants of concern or interest (VOCs/VOIs). A high-throughput, low-cost sequencing method will offer notable advantages and be valuable for public health.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the practice of pooling SARS-CoV-2 samples was utilized for population screening due to its recognized benefits [4–5]. Pooling samples increase the throughput of molecular testing and reduce costs [6], making them an economically advantageous option. However, the challenge lies in the results analysis of pooled sequencing, specifically in accurately estimating the composition of multiple SARS-CoV-2 lineages within samples containing mixed viral populations. A bioinformatics analysis method using Freyja has revolutionized the challenges of analyzing mixed sequencing data and has been applied in the sequencing of sewage (mixed) samples for SARS-CoV-2 [7], indicating the potential for population-based pooled sequencing. Pooled sequencing presents a cost-efficient approach for acquiring sufficient genomic data in areas with constrained sequencing capabilities and high demand, thereby enriching our understanding of viral evolutionary and transmission patterns.

This study aimed to assess the efficacy of lineage classification for SARS-CoV-2 in various simulated pooling samples. The objective was to evaluate the potential of pooled sequencing as a genomic surveillance tool for COVID-19.

## Methodology

### *Original samples*

The original raw data (in fastq.gz format) from gene sequencing procedures carried out using Illumina NGS platforms (Illumina, USA) were collected in our laboratory between 2020 and 2024. This dataset included samples from individuals and vaccine materials (CoronaVac, the Sinovac inactivated SARS-CoV-2 vaccine). A coverage exceeding 96% was the fundamental criterion for inclusion of effective sequences in our country; while a depth surpassing

1000× was determined by the average sequence depth acquired in our laboratory. It was observed that data with depths below this threshold were generally of low quality. Subsequently, samples meeting our criteria (minimum 96% coverage and depth exceeding 1000× for the entire genome of SARS-CoV-2) were identified as genotype-determined specimens. In addition, to test the impact of low-quality sequencing samples on the results, data from two low-quality sequencing samples were randomly included.

The study established various genotype groups at different hierarchical levels: 4 in the first-level classification including the groups of Original\*, BA\*, XBB\*, and recombinants; six in the second-level classification by dividing the genotypes of BA\* and XBB\* into four subgroups (BA.1 + BA.5, BA.2, XBB.1.9\*, and XBB\* without XBB.1.9\*), and 38 of subdivided subtypes in the third-level classification. A total of 72 samples representing all the available subtypes in our laboratory were included in the study (Supplementary Table 1). A total of 500,000 raw data reads were randomly extracted for each sample using the subsample tool of CLC Workbench 23.0 software (Qiagen, Dusseldorf, Germany) to create original samples.

### *Pooling strategy design*

Potential interactions among genotypes of SARS-CoV-2 in real-world scenarios by integrating genotype classification and historical prevalence of the virus were assessed, and 5 distinct pooling strategies were developed. Five groups of mixtures were created to simulate sample pooling for gene sequencing using the Create Sequence tool within the CLC Workbench 23.0 software (Qiagen, Dusseldorf, Germany). The details of the simulated samples and mixtures are listed below and presented in Table 1.

1) A mixture of 5 groups was formed based on the second-level classification, excluding “recombinants”. One random sample from each group was selected and mixed equally, labeled as “mix.”

2) The samples were classified into 3 specific groups based on the first-level classification, excluding “recombinants”. A mixture of transition between 2 groups, comprised of movement from the original\* stage to the BA\* stage, and from the BA\* stage to the XBB\* stage. Random samples were selected from each of the 2 groups at varying ratios of 1:4, 3:2, and 4:1, respectively; and combined as a mixture labeled as “change.”

3) The samples were classified into three specific groups based on the first-level classification, excluding

“recombinants”. Five random samples were selected from each group and combined, then labeled as “genotype-class I”.

4) The samples were grouped into 8 categories based on prevalent lineages, with Delta\XBB.1.5\XBB.1.9.1\XBB.1.9.2\XBB.1.16\BA.5.2\BA.5.2.48&49\JN being the most common. Each group was combined to create one simulated sample labeled as “genotype-class II”.

5) Three recombinants of XBF/XBL/XBC, along with 3 simulated recombinants of XBG/XBC/XDD; in total 6 recombinants based on the third-level classification; were identified and labeled as “recombinants”.

*Data analysis*

The combined data from simulated samples underwent genotype and abundance analysis using the bioinformatics software module within the Pathogenic Microbial Analysis System (V1.0.6, MicroFuture, Beijing, China). Specifically, the analysis was conducted utilizing the SARS-CoV-2 Analysis Module for Environmental Samples of the software. This system is underpinned by the Freyja algorithm and makes use of the genotyping tool Nextclade (<https://clades.nextstrain.org/>).

The study assessed the lineage abundances, ranked genotype composition by abundance, and examined the genetic consistency between simulated pooled samples and the original samples. The consistency assessment was mainly based on the “genotype of original samples”

(Table 1). This evaluation was conducted based on the top X results (X representing the number of original samples in the mixture) and the complete results.

The efficiency of recovering the correct genotypes of the original samples using different pooling strategies, result reports, and genotypes was evaluated with R software (<http://www.R-project.org>, version 4.2.1). The categorical variables were analyzed using either the Chi square test or Fisher’s exact probability method (when there were expected frequencies below 5 in the 2×C table) to compare the differences in gene identification efficiency among different hybridization strategies and result reports. Statistical significance was defined as a *p* value < 0.05.

**Results**

*General identification efficiency of pooled sequencing*

This study included 72 original samples and 70 simulated pooled samples (details in Supplementary Table 2). Among these, 39 simulated samples precisely matched the original genotypic compositions (good), while 24 samples had one missing genotype (mediocre), and 7 samples had two missing genotypes (bad); as determined by the top X results. In contrast, 61 simulated samples exactly replicated the genetic compositions of the original samples, with 9 samples containing one missing genotype as determined by the complete results. There were no “bad” results observed in the entire output. The complete results demonstrated superior identification compared to the top X results across all pooling strategies. Among the various

**Table 1.** Pooling strategy for mixture as simulated samples.

Group	Classification	Pooling strategy for mixture	Counts of simulated samples		
Mix	Second level	1 out of each 5 groups randomly (excluding recombinants group)	5		
Change	First level	Original (1):BA*(4)	5		
		Original (3):BA*(2)	5		
		Original (4):BA*(1)	5		
		BA*(1):XBB*(4)	5		
		BA*(3):XBB*(2)	5		
		BA*(4):XBB*(1)	5		
		Genotype-Class I	First level	5 out of the group of Original randomly	5
				5 out of the group of BA* randomly	5
5 out of the group of XBB* randomly	5				
Genotype-Class II	Third level	all the samples of Delta* group	1		
		all the samples of XBB.1.5* group	1		
		all the samples of XBB.1.9.1* group	1		
		all the samples of XBB.1.9.2* group	1		
		all the samples of XBB.1.16* group	1		
		all the samples of JN* group	1		
		all the samples of BA.5.2* group	1		
		all the samples of BA.5.2.48/49* group	1		
		Recombinants	Third level	XBF	1
				XBL.3	1
XBC.1.6.2, XBG#, Omicron (BA.2.76)*1 + Omicron (BA.5.2)*3	3				
XBC#, Omicron (BA.2) *1, + Delta (B.1.617.2*)*3	3				
XDD#, Omicron (EG.5.1.1) *1 + Omicron (JN*)*3	3				
Total				70	

\*: including the lineage and its subtypes.

**Table 2.** Consistency of simulated pooling samples and original samples among various pooling strategies.

Variable	N	Consistency				p value
		Identified (N)	Identified (%)	Unidentified (N)	Unidentified (%)	
Result-rank						
Top X	70	39	55.71	31	44.29	< 0.001# ( $\chi^2 = 16.94$ )
Complete	70	61	87.14	9	12.86	
Pooling strategy-top X						
Mix	5	0	0.00	5	100.00	0.003*
Change	30	15	50.00	15	50.00	
Genotype-class i	15	7	46.67	8	53.33	
Genotype-class ii	8	6	75.00	2	25.00	
Recombinant	12	11	91.67	1	8.33	
Pooling strategy-complete						
Mix	5	3	60.00	2	40.00	0.256*
Change	30	26	86.67	4	13.33	
Genotype-class i	15	13	86.67	2	13.33	
Genotype-class ii	8	7	87.50	1	12.50	
Recombinant	12	12	100.00	0	0.00	

#, Pearson’s Chi-squared test; \*, Fisher’s exact test.

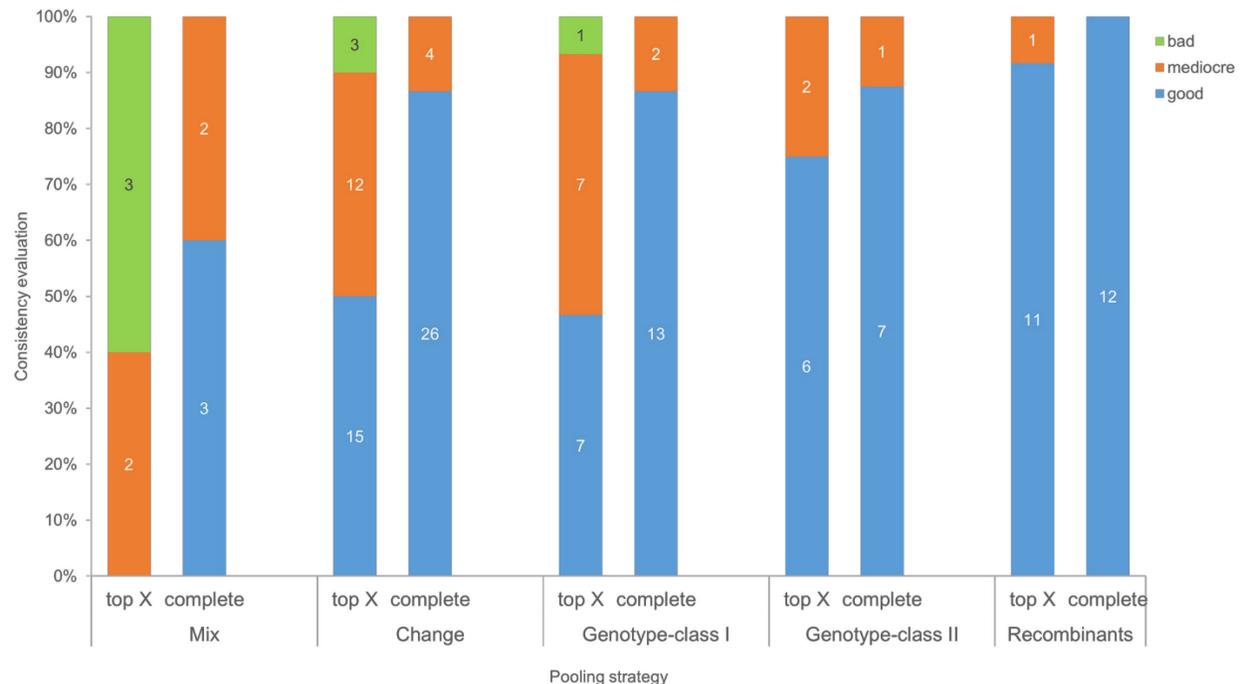
pooling strategies, the "mix" group consisting of five original samples with completely different genotypes exhibited the poorest identification, while the "recombinants" group with one or two original samples displayed the highest level of identification. The blending of closely related genotypes within groups such as "genotype-class I" and "genotype-class II" yielded approximately average identification results, with over 80% distinguishable outcomes as indicated by the complete results, along with the remaining group of "change". The genetic compositions of the simulated pooling samples largely reflected the correct variant proportions of the original samples, with variability

observed across different pooling strategies, as depicted in Figure 1.

*Identification efficiency among different pooling strategies and result reports*

By categorizing consistent results as identified and missing results as unidentified, the statistical analysis revealed significant differences in the top X and complete reports, with a Chi square value of 16.94 ( $p < 0.001$ ). The complete results revealed a higher percentage of identified samples (87.14%) compared to the top X results (55.71%). While there was variability in the top X result reports among the five groups ( $p =$

**Figure 1.** The identification of original genotypes by different pooling strategies.



The identification of original genotypes by different pooling strategies in the proportions of the original subtypes by the top X results and complete results, respectively. Gray color represents bad with two genotypes missing, orange represents mediocre with one genotype missing, and blue represents good with no genotype missing.



comprehensive list of all mutations present which was useful for genomic monitoring (not shown in this study). Moreover, as an innovative bioinformatics analysis approach, Freyja has been incorporated into diverse software tools for pooled sequencing of SARS-CoV-2, and it is also compatible for self-analysis using R software. Nonetheless, there are notable considerations regarding the implementation of pooled sequencing in genomic surveillance that warrant further attention.

Not all simulated samples were accurately recovered, primarily due to original samples lacking definitive mutations and exhibiting lower recognition quality. For instance, the simulated samples harboring B.1.1.48 (assessed as low-quality by Nextclade) and BA.2.76 (with less than 96% coverage) led to 36.8% unidentified cases among the top X results and 80% among complete results. Therefore, ensuring the sequencing quality of original samples before pooling is essential, because samples of poor quality can compromise identification accuracy. High-quality nucleic acid, characterized by both high concentration and purity, plays a key role in achieving superior sequencing outcomes, yet ensuring this may be challenging due to various factors that come into play during the sequencing process. However, the assessment of sequencing quality in the absence of sequence testing for the original samples raises questions regarding the feasibility of using cycle threshold (Ct), DNA integrity number (DIN), or RNA integrity number (RIN) values as indicators alone. Further investigation is required to establish quality control measures prior to pooling. We are trying to assess the quality of the library construction process to derive evaluation parameters that are more pertinent to sequencing quality, thereby enhancing the accuracy of sample selection in pooled sequencing.

Additionally, observations indicated that samples with lower viral loads could be overlooked in the final pooled RT-qPCR result [12], emphasizing the importance of pooling samples with high and similar nucleic acid concentrations. In simulated experiments, each sample is mixed with an equal number of reads, but the situation may vary in actual detection. Drawing from our experience in routine sequencing, adjustments in the proportion of labeled samples can be made based on the concentration of nucleic acids or libraries to ensure balanced data acquisition from each sample. Therefore, volume adjustments in pooled sequencing can also be tailored according to the nucleic acid concentration of original samples to achieve a more uniform mixing, optimizing abundance balance, and

reducing the likelihood of missed detection due to low data yield. When multiple original samples in a pooled sample share the same genotype, they become indistinguishable in pooled sequencing. Notably, adherence to the principle of approximately equal mixing may result in higher abundance, indicating a greater composite representation. Moving forward, the development of mathematical models could aid in mitigating such interference in pooled sequencing.

We also detected some unexpected variant sites. This may be either a misjudgment or the result of amplifying low-frequency variants in each sample due to an enrichment effect. This could serve as a meaningful early warning for exploring variants, warranting further investigation.

The software utilized for analyzing genomic composition ranked the abundance results, revealing differences between the top X results and the complete results. Upon simulating various pooling scenarios, statistical discrepancies were noted among the different pooling strategies, particularly when focusing on the top X results. Optimal consistency between the simulated samples and original samples was observed in the “recombinants” group, while the “mix” group showed the lowest level of consistency. These findings suggest that the complexity of the pooled samples significantly affects the accuracy of identification as well.

While the complete results demonstrated improved identification compared to the top X results, there were instances of inaccurate genotyping due to the presence of low-abundance mutation mixtures. The Freyja method incorporated a bootstrap technique to calculate standard errors for predicting variant compositions. However, determining the optimal cutoff value for genomic composition results that strike a balance between sensitivity and specificity remained a challenge. An additional constraint is that pooled sequencing can only determine the viral genotype compositions and abundance, necessitating individual identification when new variants emerge, similar to individual confirmation in pooling tests for RT-qPCR [13].

The study commenced by sporadically conducting gene sequencing on a pooled sample of routine tests, and successfully recovered most of the genotypes present in the individual samples (Supplementary Table S3). Due to the impracticality of pooling numerous samples into diverse groups, a simulated study was conducted to assess the feasibility of pooled sequencing. The pooling strategy designed based on historical data aligned well with the real world and

recent data also confirmed this. The monitoring of genomic diversity in the population in Chengdu in 2023 showed distinct phases throughout the year. Initially, the prevalent strains were BA.5.2.48, which gradually declined by week 19. Subsequently, a combination of major stains XBB.1.5, XBB.1.9.1, and XBB.1.9.2 were observed between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 27<sup>th</sup> week. From the 27<sup>th</sup> week onwards, XBB.1.9.2 emerged as the predominant strain. This was similar to the pooling strategy of “change”. Since 2024, the dominant genotypes have consistently been the JN lineage and XDV recombinants. The patterns of genotype mixing resembled the strategic pooling of “genotype-class II”, “recombinant”, and “change”. If the one-in-five mixed sampling was implemented in practice, it would result in a potential cost saving of around 80%, making it a highly cost-effective approach to monitoring.

Existing models for pooling tests in RT-qPCR [14,15] and wastewater-based epidemiological monitoring [16] offer valuable insights for implementing pooled sequencing for SARS-CoV-2. However, additional details are necessary for practical application, including the pooling procedure, pooling size, influencing factors, quality control of original samples, and optimization strategies of bioinformatics software. The rapid variation of the SARS-CoV-2 continually pose risks of new variants emerging and subsequent outbreaks. The presence of post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 (PASC) and incomplete understanding of the virus may cause more health hazards than common respiratory diseases such as influenza. Although the public attention towards COVID-19 has waned, it remains a virus requiring vigilance, as evidenced by the monthly updates from GISAID and reports from the WHO. Regular population surveillance remains an ongoing standard practice for the sake of public health. Timely awareness of virus variants and trends in their prevalence plays a constructive role in making prompt public health decisions, such as vaccine development, drug stockpiling, allocation of medical resources, and adjustments in prevention and control policies.

Pooled sequencing is recommended for population monitoring to approximate virus genotypes and their compositions, as the primary objectives. The approach aims to monitor virus variations, determine population prevalence, shift the focus from individuals to the overall population, and offers efficiency and cost advantages in this context. Nevertheless, for detailed genotypic analysis of SARS-CoV-2 or advanced research purposes, the traditional single sequencing methods remains indispensable.

## Conclusions

This study utilized simulated mixed samples to assess the feasibility of pooled sequencing with analysis using the Freyja tool. The findings demonstrated the successful recovery of the gene composition of the original samples. Therefore, pooled sequencing presents itself as a promising tool that can enhance genomic surveillance efforts in combating COVID-19 in a cost-effective manner.

## Acknowledgements

We are sincerely grateful to the colleagues involved in the epidemiological investigation, sampling, laboratory testing, and data analysis; as well as the patients who consented to donate their swab samples for detection. Special thanks to Professor Xiang Zhao (Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention) for helpful comments and assistance in designing the methodology for the study.

## Authors' contributions

Conceptualization: HC, LW; methodology and software analysis: XZ, validation: HC; formal analysis: XZ; experiments, resources, and data curation: XH, YZ, WX, DS, ZH, RL, WL; writing – original draft: HC, YC; writing – review and editing: XZ, LW; supervision: LW; funding acquisition: XZ, HC, YC. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Corresponding authors

Assoc. Professor Xuejun Zhang, MD.  
Institute of Blood Transfusion  
Academy of Medical Sciences & Peking Union Medical College,  
No.26 Huacai Road, Longtan Industry Park, Chenghua District,  
Chengdu City, Sichuan Province, PR China.  
Tel: 86-28-61648518  
Email: hotbird007@163.com

Professor Liang Wang, MD  
Chengdu Center for Disease Control and Prevention, No.4,  
Longxiang Road, Wuhou District, Chengdu City, Sichuan  
Province, PR China  
Tel: 86-28-87036290  
Email: 363686849@qq.com

**Conflict of interests:** No conflict of interests is declared.

## References

1. World Health Organization (2024) COVID-19 epidemiological update – 17 September 2024. Available: <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/covid-19-epidemiological-update-edition-171>. Accessed: 17 September 2024.
2. Flores-Vega VR, Monroy-Molina JV, Jiménez-Hernández LE, Torres AG, Santos-Preciado JI, Rosales-Reyes R (2022) SARS-CoV-2: evolution and emergence of new viral variants. *Viruses* 14: 653. doi: 10.3390/v14040653.
3. Markov PV, Ghafari M, Beer M, Lythgoe K, Simmonds P, Stilianakis NI, Katzourakis A (2023) The evolution of SARS-

- CoV-2. *Nat Rev Microbiol* 21: 361–379. doi: 10.1038/s41579-023-00878-2.
4. Chong BW, Tran T, Druce J, Ballard SA, Simpson JA, Catton M (2020) Sample pooling is a viable strategy for SARS-CoV-2 detection in low-prevalence settings. *Pathology* 52: 796–800. doi: 10.1016/j.pathol.2020.09.005.
  5. Augenblick N, Kolstad J, Obermeyer Z, Wang A (2022) Pooled testing efficiency increases with test frequency. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 119: e2105180119. doi: 10.1073/pnas.2105180119.
  6. Grobe N, Cherif A, Wang X, Dong Z, Kotanko P (2021) Sample pooling: burden or solution? *Clin Microbiol Infect* 27: 1212–1220. doi: 10.1016/j.cmi.2021.04.007.
  7. Karthikeyan S, Levy JI, De Hoff P, Humphrey G, Birmingham A, Jepsen K, Farmer S, Tubb HM, Valles T, Tribelhorn CE, Tsai R, Aigner S, Sathe S, Moshiri N, Henson B, Mark AM, Hakim A, Baer NA, Barber T, Belda-Ferre P, Chacón M, Cheung W, Cresini ES, Eisner ER, Lastrella AL, Lawrence ES, Marotz CA, Ngo TT, Ostrander T, Plascencia A, Salido R A, Seaver P, Smoot EW, McDonald D, Neuhaard RM, Scioscia AL, Satterlund AM, Simmons EH, Abelman DB, Brenner D, Bruner JC, Buckley A, Ellison M, Gattas J, Gonias SL, Hale M, Hawkins F, Ikeda L, Jhaveri H, Johnson T, Kellen V, Kremer B, Matthews G, Mclawhon RW, Ouillet P, Park D, Pradenas A, Reed S, Riggs L, Sanders A, Sollenberger B, Song A, White B, Winbush T, Aceves C M, Anderson C, Gangavarapu K, Hufbauer E, Kurzban E, Lee J, Matteson NL, Parker E, Perkins SA, Ramesh KS, Robles-Sikisaka R, Schwab MA, Spencer E, Wohl S, Nicholson L, Mchardy IH, Dimmock DP, Hobbs CA, Bakhtar O, Harding A, Mendoza A, Bolze A, Becker D, Cirulli ET, Isaksson M, Schiabor Barrett KM, Washington NL, Malone JD, Schafer AM, Gurfield N, Stous S, Fielding-Miller R, Garfein RS, Gaines T, Anderson C, Martin NK, Schooley R, Austin B, Maccannell DR, Kingsmore SF, Lee W, Shah S, McDonald E, Yu AT, Zeller M, Fisch KM, Longhurst C, Maysent P, Pride D, Khosla PK, Laurent LC, Yeo GW, Andersen KG, Knight R (2022). Wastewater sequencing reveals early cryptic SARS-CoV-2 variant transmission. *Nature* 609: 101–108. doi: 10.1038/s41586-022-05049-6.
  8. Turakhia Y, Thornlow B, Hinrichs AS, De Maio N, Gozashti L, Lanfear R, Haussler D, Corbett-Detig R (2021) Ultrafast Sample placement on Existing tRees (UShER) enables real-time phylogenetics for the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. *Nat Genet* 53: 809–816. doi: 10.1038/s41588-021-00862-7.
  9. Rambaut A, Holmes EC, OToole Á, Hill V, McCrone JT, Ruis C, Plessis L, Pybus OG (2020) A dynamic nomenclature proposal for SARS-CoV-2 lineages to assist genomic epidemiology. *Nat Microbiol* 5: 1403–1407. doi: 10.1038/s41564-020-0770-5.
  10. Khan M, Li L, Haak L, Payen SH, Carine M, Adhikari K, Uppal T, Hartley PD, Vasquez-Gross H, Petereit J, Verma SC, Pagilla K (2023) Significance of wastewater surveillance in detecting the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 variants and other respiratory viruses in the community - a multi-site evaluation. *One Health* 16: 100536. doi: 10.1016/j.onehlt.2023.100536.
  11. Reis AC, Pinto D, Monteiro S, Santos R, Martins JV, Sousa A, Páscoa R, Lourinho R, Cunha MV (2024) Systematic SARS-CoV-2 S-gene sequencing in wastewater samples enables early lineage detection and uncovers rare mutations in Portugal. *Sci Total Environ* 921: 170961. doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2024.170961.
  12. Mulu A, Alemayehu DH, Alemu F, Tefera DA, Wolde S, Aseffa G, Seyoum T, Habtamu M, Abdissa A, Bayih AG, Beyene GT (2021) Evaluation of sample pooling for screening of SARS CoV-2. *PLoS One* 16: e0247767. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0247767.
  13. Hogan CA, Sahoo MK, Pinsky BA (2020) Sample pooling as a strategy to detect community transmission of SARS-CoV-2. *JAMA* 323: 1967–1969. doi: 10.1001/jama.2020.5445.
  14. Hanel R, Thurner S (2020) Boosting test-efficiency by pooled testing for SARS-CoV-2-Formula for optimal pool size. *PLoS One* 15: e0240652. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0240652.
  15. Perchetti GA, Sullivan KW, Pepper G, Huang ML, Breit N, Mathias P, Jerome KR, Greninger AL (2020) Pooling of SARS-CoV-2 samples to increase molecular testing throughput. *J Clin Virol* 131: 104570. doi: 10.1016/j.jcv.2020.104570.
  16. Valieris R, Drummond RD, Defelicibus A, Dias-Neto E, Rosales RA, Tojal da Silva I (2022) A mixture model for determining SARS-CoV-2 variant composition in pooled samples. *Bioinformatics* 38: 1809–1815. doi: 10.1093/bioinformatics/btac047.

**Annex - Supplementary Items****Supplementary Table 1.** The definitions of genotype groups at various levels of the original samples.

First-level classification	Second-level classification	Third-level classification	Genotype of original samples		
Original	Original	B	B		
		B.1.1*	B.1.1.7 B.1.1.487		
		B.1.36 Delta	B.1.36 B.1.617.2 B.1.617.2.30 B.1.617.2.36 B.1.617.2.85		
BA*	BA.1+BA.5	BA.1	BA.1		
		BA.5.1	BA.5.1		
		BA.5.1.3	BA.5.1.3		
		BA.5.2.1*	BA.5.2.1 BA.5.2.1.7.14		
		BA.5.2.7	BA.5.2.7		
		BA.5.2.27	BA.5.2.27		
		BA.5.2.48*	BA.5.2.48 BA.5.2.48.1 BA.5.2.48.2 BA.5.2.48.3		
		BA.5.2.49*	BA.5.2.49 BA.5.2.49.2		
		BA.2	BA.5.3.1*	BA.5.3.1.1.1	
			BA.2.2*	BA.2.2.1	
	BA.2.3*		BA.2.3.7		
	BA.2.10		BA.2.10		
	BA.2.12*		BA.2.12.1.2		
	BA.2.38		BA.2.38		
	BA.2.75*		BA.2.75.1 BA.2.75.5.1.2		
	BA.2.76		BA.2.76		
	JN*		BA.2.86.1.1 BA.2.86.1.1.1 BA.2.86.1.1.1.1		
	XBB*		XBB*(excluding XBB.1.9*)	XBB.1	XBB.1
		XBB.1.5*		XBB.1.5 XBB.1.5.4 XBB.1.5.7 XBB.1.5.15 XBB.1.5.24.1 XBB.1.5.59	
		XBB.1.16*		XBB.1.16.1 XBB.1.16.1.1 XBB.1.16.2.1.1 XBB.1.16.3 XBB.1.16.7 XBB.1.17.1.1 XBB.1.18.1.1.1 XBB.1.19.1.5.3.1	
XBB.1.17*		XBB.1.17.1.1			
XBB.1.18*		XBB.1.18.1.1.1			
XBB.1.19*		XBB.1.19.1.5.3.1			
XBB.1.42*		XBB.1.42.1			
XBB.2.3*		XBB.2.3.2.1			
XBB.1.9*		XBB.1.9.1*		XBB.1.9.1.2 XBB.1.9.1.5 XBB.1.9.1.13 XBB.1.9.1.15.2 XBB.1.9.1.37	
		XBB.1.9.2*		XBB.1.9.2.2 XBB.1.9.2.4 XBB.1.9.2.5.1.3.3 XBB.1.9.2.5.1.1.3.3	
		XBB.1.9.5*		XBB.1.9.5	
		Recombinants		Recombinants	XBF
			XBL.3		XBL.3
			XBC.1		XBC.1.6.2
			XBG#		Omicron (BA.2.76) + Omicron (BA.5.2)
			XBC#		Omicron (BA.2) + Delta (B.1.617.2*)
			XDD#		Omicron (EG.5.1.1) +Omicron (JN*)

\*, including the lineage and its subtypes; #, simulated samples.

**Supplementary Table 2.** The original genotypes and the recovered genotypes of 70 simulated samples.

N <sub>o.</sub>	Name	Original genotypes					Name	Recovered genotypes															
1	M-1	B.1.1.7	BA.5.1	BA.2.10	XBB.1	JG.3 XBB.1.9.2.5. 1.3.3	M-1	3490.46															
		B.1.1.7	BA.5.1	BA.2.10	XBB.1			summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.747991806212 6736), (‘Alpha’, 0.1921229949875 294)]														
		√	BA.5.1.12	√	—	√		lineages	B.1.1.7	BA.2.10	BA.5	JG.3	BA.5.1. 12	XBB.1.5	XBB.1. 1	XU	XBB	EG.5	Q.7	EG.5.1. 8	BA.5.3		
		√	BA.5.1.12	√	XBB.1.1	√		abundances	0.16897169	0.12384649	0.107868 12	0.10358644	0.09602 485	0.07438334	0.06180 715	0.05509775	0.05337 512	0.03120 199	0.02315 13	0.02271 8	0.01808 24		
2	M-2	B	DY.3	BA.2.3.7	XBB.1.5	XBB.1.9.5	M-2	3693.13															
		B	BA.5.2.48. 3	BA.2.3.7	XBB.1.5	XBB.1.9.5		summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.717573625424 9501), (‘Other’, 0.0769656771765 3452)]														
		B.50	√	√	—	√		lineages	BA.2.3.7	DY.3	XBB.1.1 8	XBB.1.9.5	B.50	XBB.1.9 5.49	B.1.1.161	B.1.1.52 9	XBB.1. 44	0.01784 808	0.01358 338				
		B.50	√	√	XBB.1.5.49	√		abundances	0.25902808	0.17137134	0.098906 19	0.0802005	0.05224 083	0.04305058	0.02472485								
3	M-3	AY.30	BA.5.2.1	BA.2.76	HH.1	EG.2	M-3	2846.46															
		B.1.617.2 .30	BA.5.2.1	BA.2.76	XBB.2.3.2.1	XBB.1.9.2.2		summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.757146079966 1878), (‘Delta’, 0.1458299330566 627), (‘Other’, 0.025543412722 42678)]														
		√	BF=BA.5. 2.1.X BF25, BF7	—	—	√		lineages	AY.30	BF.25	XM	BF.7	HH.1	BA.5	XBB.2.3.11	BA.5.2	B.1.1	XBB.1. 5.28	FY.5	XBB.2. 3.2			
		√				√		abundances	0.28825317	0.14582993	0.103965 13	0.07143909	0.06482 34	0.05566293	0.05085 629	0.04202304	0.03417 595	0.02554 341	0.01816 22	0.01440 661	0.01337 829		
4	M-4	B.1.1.487	BA.5.2.27	JN.1	XBB.1.42.1	XBB.1.9.5	M-4	3293.72															
		B.1.1.487	BA.5.2.27	BA.2.86.1.1	XBB.1.42.1	XBB.1.9.5		summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.816741328914 1051), (‘Other’, 0.06068784100741 4066)]														
		—	√	—	√	√		lineages	XBB.1.42.1	EG.2	BA.5.2.6	BA.5.2.27	XBB.1. 9.5	JN.10	XBB	XBV	BA.5	JN.1	XAH	XBB.1. 9			
		—	√	√	√	√		abundances	0.17739342	0.13326568	0.098328 47	0.0889538	0.08456 66	0.06516836	0.06371 711	0.06087841	0.04144 122	0.03114 673	0.02108 052	0.01163 803			
5	M-5	B.1.1.487	BA.5.1.3	BA.2.2.1	GY.1.1	EG.4	M-5	3477.93															
		B.1.1.487	BA.5.1.3	BA.2.2.1	XBB.1.16.2.1. 1	XBB.1.9.2.4		summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.927803864539 2129), (‘Other’, 0.0109728999878 63232)]														
		—	√	√	—	√		lineages	BA.2.703	BA.5.1.3	BA.2.2.1	EG.4	BA.2.10	GY.1	GY.1.1	B.1.1.487							
		√	√	√	√	√		abundances	0.24956205	0.21641132	0.210573	0.14938617	0.05027 963	0.03904992	0.01254 177	0.0109729							
6	C1-1	AY.85	B.1.36	AY.30	B.1.1.7	BE.1.1	C1-1	100															
		√	√+27	√	√	√		summarized	[(‘Delta’, 0.381433443933 112), (‘Alpha’, 0.1906032224041 9916), (‘Omicron’, 0.187709530190 18025), (‘Other’, 0.139933479586 7076)]														
		√	√+27	√	√	√		lineages	AY.85	BE.1.1	B.1.1.7	B.1.36.27	AY.30	Q.7	AY.1	B.1.143							
		√	√+27	√	√	√		abundances	0.24615889	0.18770953	0.163974 82	0.12462686	0.11587 868	0.0266284	0.01939 587	0.01530662							
7	C1-2	B.1.1.487	B.1.36	B.1.36	B	BA.5.2.7	C1-2	100															
		√	√+27	√+27	√	√		summarized	[(‘Other’, 0.459861347102 91543), (‘Omicron’, 0.1738207872757 6097)]														
		√	√+27	√+27	√	√		lineages	B.1.36.27	BA.5.2.7	B	B.1.1.487	B.1.1.18 9	B.1.1.161	BA.5.2. 21								
		√	√+27	√+27	√	√		abundances	0.34494781	0.16114223	0.058810 61	0.023105	0.01798 034	0.01501758	0.01267 856								
8	C1-3	B.1.1.487	B	B	B.1.617.2	BA.2.2.1	C1-3	100															
		√+487	√	√	√+29	√		summarized	[(‘Other’, 0.385825975735 5056), (‘Omicron’, 0.3471621720112 029), (‘Delta’, 0.1383007222787 54357)]														
		√+487	√	√	√+29	√		lineages	B.1.1	BA.2.2.1	B	AY.9	XAP	B.1.1.529									
		√	√	√	√+29	√		abundances	0.24604664	0.207222	0.139779 34	0.13830072	0.09312 467	0.04681551									
9	C1-4	AY.85	B.1.36	AY.85	B.1.1.7	JN.1	C1-4	100															
		√	√+27	√	√	√		summarized	[(‘Delta’, 0.467501000000 17036), (‘Other’, 0.1799593483993 398), (‘Alpha’, 0.179954634489 7931), (‘Omicron’, 0.092083997057 47791)]														
		√	√+27	√	√	√		lineages	AY.85	B.1.36.2 7	JN.1	JN.10	B.1.143	Q.7	BA.2								
		√	√+27	√	√	√		abundances	0.467501	0.16135263	0.145995 9	0.04226986	0.03845 331	0.03396344	0.01860 2	0.01136083							
10	C1-5	B	B	AY.36	B.1.36	BA.2.75.1	C1-5	100															
		√	√	√	√+27	√		summarized	[(‘Other’, 0.356827115568 71616), (‘Omicron’, 0.2784310779282 0765), (‘Delta’, 0.195110422923 69396)]														
		√	√	√	√+27	√		lineages	BA.2.75.1	B	B.1.36.2 7	AY.36	AY.1	B.1.1.529									
		√	√	√	√+27	√		abundances	0.23516187	0.21393912	0.142888	0.141651	0.05345 942	0.04326921									
11	C2-1	B	B.1.36	B.1.1.7	BA.5.2.1	BA.5.1.3	C2-1	100															
		√	√+27	√	√	—		summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.378108585228 21666), (‘Other’, 0.2880143130983 9853), (‘Alpha’, 0.177734761996 55625)]														
		√	√	√	√	√		lineages	BA.5.2.1	B.1.36.27	BA.5.3	B.1.1.7	B	BA.5.1.3	Q.7								
		√	√	√	√	√		abundances	0.17699206	0.161333	0.132709 07	0.13127296	0.12668 131	0.06840745	0.04646 18								
12	C2-2	B	AY.36	B.1.36	BA.1	BE.1.1	C2-2	100															
		√	√	√+27	√	√		summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.312509805547 9885), (‘Other’, 0.2781763953398 677), (‘Delta’, 0.168532999994 40222)]														
		√	√	√+27	√	√		lineages	BE.1.1	AY.36	B	B.1.36.27	BA.1	B.1.1987 801									
		√	√	√+27	√	√		abundances	0.20263179	0.168533	0.140817 4	0.137359											
13	C2-3	AY.85	B	B.1.36	BA.1	BA.5.1	C2-3	100															
		√	√	√+27	√	—		summarized	[(‘Other’, 0.351994403523 70287), (‘Delta’, 0.3087980000074 719), (‘Omicron’, 0.170101131568 36038)]														
		√	√	√+27	√	√+6		lineages	AY.85	B	B.1.36.2 7	BA.1	B.1.143	BA.5.1.6	BA.5.3								
		√	√	√+27	√	√+6		abundances	0.308798	0.14344643	0.139746 91	0.11476483	0.06880 106	0.02939109	0.02594 52								
14	C2-4	B.1.1.7	B	B.1.36	BA.5.1.3	BG.2	C2-4	100															
		√	√	√+27	—	√		summarized	[(‘Other’, 0.357296757721 5377), (‘Omicron’, 0.3172479766684 1953), (‘Alpha’, 0.210252005021 54973)]														
		√	√	√+27	—	√		lineages	B.1.36.27	B.1.1.7	BA.5.3	B	BG.2	BA.5.1.3	B.1.1.16 1	Q.7	BA.3						
		√	√	√+27	√	√		abundances	0.17716	0.16871851	0.149502 46	0.12947869	0.07860 012	0.06789862	0.05065 807	0.0415335	0.02124 677						
15	C2-5	B.1.1.487	B.1.36	AY.36	BA.5.2.7	BE.1.1	C2-5	100															
		—	√+27	√	√	√		summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.410865226894 85083), (‘Other’, 0.2058792701726 0454), (‘Delta’, 0.183322999877 24723)]														
							lineages	BE.1.1	B.1.36.27	AY.36	BA.5.2.7	BA.5.2. 8	B.1.533										

		—	√+27	√	√	√			abundances	0.21538579	0.189087	0.183323	0.17683529	0.01864415	0.01679227						
									resid coverage	11.87066011100											
16	C3-1	B.1.1.487	BA.2.2.1	BA.2.10	BA.5.2.27	BA.2.75.1			summarized	0.9231443202478207]											
		—	√	√	√	√-1			lineages	BA.5.2.27	BA.2.2.1	BA.2.75	BA.2.10	BA.2.2	BA.2.75.1	XAH	XBD	BA.5			
		—	√	√	√	√			abundances	0.18585591	0.182348	0.14942499	0.10654654	0.09207599	0.06528333	0.05846714	0.05090689	0.03223553			
									resid coverage	6.48963537999.84276204											
17	C3-2	B.1.36	BA.2.3.7	BA.5.2.7	JN.1.3	BA.2.75.1			summarized	0.7201466233422218), ('Other', 0.16783339233390127)]											
		√+27	√	√	√-3	√			lineages	BA.2.3.7	BA.2.75.1	B.1.36.27	BA.5.2.7	JN.1	BA.2.65	BA.5.2.8	BA.3				
		√+27	√	√	√-3	√			abundances	0.23563908	0.1967888	0.16783339	0.12131143	0.07704404	0.03735676	0.03333964	0.01866687				
									resid coverage	12.62601975100											
18	C3-3	AY.36	BA.5.1	BA.2.3.7	BG.2	BA.2.10			summarized	0.782625736552486), ('Delta', 0.1883780000061634)]											
		√	√	√	√	√			lineages	BA.2.3.7	AY.36	BA.5.1	BA.2.10	BG.2	XJ	XAH	XE	BA.2.12	BA.5	BA.5.3	
		√	√	√	√	√			abundances	0.266403	0.188378	0.1275029	0.11268825	0.0891302	0.07867812	0.02958619	0.02914365	0.01836622	0.01613895	0.01498825	
									resid coverage	12.119846899.90967181											
19	C3-4	B.1.36	BA.2.38	BA.5.2.1	BA.5.2.27	BN.1.2			summarized	0.7024269082989902), ('Other', 0.19184514064594316)]											
		√+27	√	√+28	√	√			lineages	BN.1.2	B.1.36.27	BA.5.2.27	BF.28	BA.2.38	XBD	BA.3					
		√+27	√	√+28	√	√			abundances	0.19555445	0.19184514	0.18460378	0.13599178	0.1258915	0.03502579	0.02535961					
									resid coverage	11.37562092100											
20	C3-5	B	BA.5.2.49	BA.2.2.1	BA.1	BA.2.76			summarized	0.7948905552687626), ('Other', 0.13823057761200525)]											
		√	√	√	—	—			lineages	BA.2.2.1	XM	BA.5.2.49	B	B.1.1.529	DZ.1	BA.5.2.6	B.1.1.161	BA.1	BA.1.6		
		√	√	√	—	—			abundances	0.2196609	0.2173996	0.12915866	0.10349989	0.07429543	0.06986034	0.05001753	0.03473069	0.01747343	0.01702467		
									resid coverage	11.707491799.71563347											
21	C4-1	BA.5.2.7	BA.2.38	BA.5.1.3	DY.3	XBB.1.5.4			summarized	0.9661868416398551)]											
		√	√	√	√	√			lineages	DY.3	BA.5.2.7	BA.2.38	XBB.1.5.4	BA.5.1.3	XBB.1.4	XAH	BA.5	BA.5.2	BA.5.2		
		√	√	√	√	√			abundances	0.22425645	0.187755	0.162162	0.16156747	0.14892508	0.02016377	0.01971354	0.01554885	0.01333695	0.01275773		
									resid coverage	7.13637803399.24057409											
22	C4-2	BA.5.2.27	DZ.2	BG.2	BE.1.1	HHL.1			summarized	0.9627264752882939)]											
		√	√	√	√	—			lineages	DZ.2	BE.1.1	BA.5.2.27	BG.2	BA.2.65	HHL.1	BA.5					
		√	√	√	√	√			abundances	0.25492772	0.24961696	0.227053	0.08692386	0.0690553	0.0455975	0.02956214					
									resid coverage	6.26963077399.24057409											
23	C4-3	BA.5.1	BE.1.1	BA.5.1.3	BA.1	FL.2			summarized	0.9591101199224349)]											
		√+3	√	√	√	√			lineages	FL.2	BE.1.1	BA.5.1.3	XM	BA.1	BA.5.3	BA.5.3.1	BA.1.6				
		√+3	√	√	√	√			abundances	0.23268755	0.23205519	0.20197686	0.14863133	0.07235535	0.02762413	0.02295022	0.01782949				
									resid coverage	8.25877141699.71563347											
24	C4-4	BA.5.1	BA.5.2.49	BA.2.75.1	BA.5.1.3	GY.1.1			summarized	0.9446032735609112)]											
		—	√	√	√	—			lineages	BA.2.75.1	BA.5.1.3	DZ.1	BA.2.10	XAS	BA.5.2.8	BA.5.2.49	GY.1	BA.2.64	BA.2.75	BA.2.12	GY.2
		√	√	√	√	√-1			abundances	0.25421276	0.23498074	0.10373912	0.0846719	0.06039242	0.05048337	0.033608581	0.03105092	0.0285116	0.02590645	0.0179897	0.01657892
									resid coverage	9.93843128599.24057409											
25	C4-5	BA.5.1.3	BA.2.10	BG.2	BE.1.1	GW.5.3.1			summarized	0.9794359729441638)]											
		√	√	—	√	√			lineages	BE.1.1	BA.5.1.3	BA.2.10	GW.5.3.1	BA.2.65	GW.5	BG.2	BA.2.12	BA.5.1.12	XAS	XBB.1.1	BA.2.12
		√	√	√	√	√			abundances	0.21707397	0.15457818	0.1199978	0.115117	0.08631458	0.07521658	0.07184944	0.04969711	0.03385127	0.0279494	0.0155026	0.01228804
									resid coverage	8.70022743499.83941655											
26	C5-1	BA.5.2.1	BA.5.1.3	BA.5.2.27	XBB.1.16.1	XBB.1.9.5			summarized	0.9430508794342044)]											
		√+3	√	√	—	√			lineages	BA.5.1.3	BA.5.2.27	XBB.1.6.1	BF.3	XBB.1.9.5	BA.5.2.4	XBB.1.9	BF.28	XBB.1.16.1	FY.5		
		√+3	√	√	√	√			abundances	0.1785886	0.1640464	0.15026172	0.08580602	0.0786901	0.07586072	0.0606853	0.05811424	0.04324078			
									resid coverage	6.10462609999.24057409											
27	C5-2	BA.2.3.7	BA.2.10	JN.1	XBB.1.16.1	EG.2			summarized	0.9626367609872303)]											
		√	√	—	√	√			lineages	BA.2.3.7	XBB.1.16.1	EG.2	BA.2.10	BA.2.1	JN.1	XBB.1.9.2					
		√	√	√	√	√			abundances	0.242808	0.17938343	0.17244788	0.15609039	0.1005769	0.08667896	0.0246512					
									resid coverage	10.6904353299.89628985											
28	C5-3	BA.5.2.27	BG.2	BA.5.2.49	XBB.1.5.15	XBB.1.42.1			summarized	0.915426147489491), ('Other', 0.036131552183941644)]											
		√	√	√	√+2	√			lineages	XBB.1.42.1	BA.5.2.27	FD.2	BA.5.2.49	BG.2	DZ.1	XBV	BA.5	XBB.1.5.15	XBB	BA.5.2.6	
		√	√	√	√+2	√			abundances	0.22239233	0.22052465	0.18191122	0.08605289	0.07484343	0.06509688	0.03613155	0.02308482	0.01815525	0.0123655	0.01099917	
									resid coverage	6.66466893199.24057409											
29	C5-4	BG.2	BA.2.2.1	BA.2.10	FE.1.1	XBB.1.9.5			summarized	0.9572967711480168)]											
		√	√	√	√	—			lineages	BA.2.2.1	FE.1.1	BA.2.10	FL.2.4	BG.2	BA.2.65	XBB.1.18	BA.2.2	XBB.1.9.5			
		√	√	√	√	√			abundances	0.211712	0.16979661	0.12730348	0.09958206	0.0795291	0.07809989	0.06598522	0.063838	0.0614504			
									resid coverage	7.56957417299.83941655											
30	C5-5	BA.2.38	BA.2.3.7	BE.1.1	FL.13	GW.5.3.1			summarized	0.916602324320431), ('Other', 0.05474191275908443)]											
		√	√	√	√+1	—			lineages	BE.1.1	BA.2.3.7	FL.13.1	BA.2.38	BA.2.10	GW.5.3.1	XDE	BA.2.1	FL.13	FL.25	BA.5.3.1	

	√	√	√	√+1	√		abundances	0.18470767	0.17993168	0.13152	0.12300457	0.1143002	0.07708367	0.05474191	0.04724363	0.02503157	0.02010626	0.01367307			
							resid coverage	8.285413483	99.24057409												
31	C6-1	BA.5.2.7	GA.1	GW.5.3.1	FL.2	XBB.1.42.1	C6-1	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.9124032735406497),	(‘Other’, 0.04843396600319554)]		GW.5.3.1	XDE	XBB.1.19	BA.5.2.6	XBB.1.17.1	XBB.1.19.1	BA.5.2.23			
		√	√	√	√	√	lineages	FL.2	XBB.1.42.1	GA.1	BA.5.2.7										
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.19936228	0.1899798	0.161707	0.13118977	0.0950954	0.04843397	0.03651153	0.0343417	0.02577648	0.02240949	0.01602982			
							resid coverage	6.484723953	99.24057409												
32	C6-2	DZ.2	XBB.1.9.5	XBB.1	GW.5.3.1	XBB.1.42.1	C6-2	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.9028085635548736),	(‘Other’, 0.04638414798297391)]		XBB.1.14	XBB.1.5.40	XBB.1.19	XBB.1.9.5	BA.5.2.658	XDE	XBB.1.19.1	XBB.1.23	EG.2.392	
		√	√	√+5.28	√	√	lineages	DZ.2	XBB.1.42.1	XBB.1.5.28	GW.5.3.1	XBB.1.14	XBB.1.5.40	XBB.1.19	XBB.1.9.5	BA.5.2.658	XDE	XBB.1.19.1	XBB.1.23	EG.2.392	
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.18897432	0.17542771	0.1019822	0.0701092	0.06336807	0.05670855	0.05182661	0.0507937	0.0499568	0.04638415	0.04075924	0.02616111	0.01510392	
							resid coverage	9.473359853	99.66210565												
33	C6-3	BA.2.76	GA.1	XBB.1.9.5	XBB.1.42.1	XBB.1.5	C6-3	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.9423161854696444)]		XBB.1.5.28	XBB.1.9.5	BA.2.76	XBB.1.5.77	XBB.1.17	XBB.1.9	XBB.1.17.1	XBB.1.22			
		√	√	√	√	√+28	lineages	XBB.1.42.1	GA.1	XBB.1.5.28	XBB.1.9.5	BA.2.76	XBB.1.5.77	XBB.1.17	XBB.1.9	XBB.1.17.1	XBB.1.22				
		√	√	√	√	√+28	abundances	0.21228635	0.148991	0.0857266	0.0845666	0.08303346	0.07936591	0.0784098	0.07645132	0.06609282	0.02739232				
							resid coverage	5.224898071	99.24057409												
34	C6-4	BA.5.1	XBB.1	FE.1.1	GA.1	FL.13	C6-4	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.9673819027142181)]		FE.1.1	BA.5.1	FL.13.1	FL.2.4	BA.5	XBB.1.39	XBB				
		√	√+5	√	√	√+1	lineages	XBB.1.5	GA.1	FE.1.1	BA.5.1	FL.13.1	FL.2.4	BA.5	XBB.1.39	XBB					
		√	√+5	√	√	√+1	abundances	0.23349935	0.16269731	0.13966963	0.10578073	0.101047	0.0768053	0.0535326	0.04885701	0.04549298					
							resid coverage	6.802805585	99.66210565												
35	C6-5	BG.2	XBB.1.42.1	HK.3.3	XBB.1	FL.2	C6-5	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.9630353114446671)]		XBB.1.42.1	XBB.1.5.28	BG.2	XBB.1.39	XBB.1	HK.3					
		√	√	√	√+5.28	√	lineages	HK.3.3	FL.2	XBB.1.42.1	XBB.1.5.28	BG.2	XBB.1.39	XBB.1	HK.3						
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.212742	0.19975814	0.19256073	0.12826264	0.07323582	0.06399994	0.06180641	0.03066963						
							resid coverage	4.36486206968294	99.24057409												
36	T-O-1	B	B.1.1.487	AY.30	B.1.617.2	B.1.36	T-O-1	summarized	[(‘Other’, 0.436486206968294),	(‘Delta’, 0.289008239099724)]		AY.30	AY.24	B.1.1	B.1.551	B.1					
		√	√	√	√+24	√+27	lineages	B.1.36.27	AY.30	AY.24	B.1.1	B.1.551	B.1								
		√	√	√	√+24	√+27	abundances	0.15151737	0.14952757	0.13947326	0.08448467	0.08008201	0.06213698	0.05826559							
							resid coverage	8.876707977	100												
37	T-O-2	AY.85	AY.36	B	B.1.617.2	B.1.1.7	T-O-2	summarized	[(‘Delta’, 0.670016704094318),	(‘Alpha’, 0.17355740700204708),	(‘Other’, 0.10102115430485181)]		AY.9	Q.7	AY.106						
		√	√	√	√	√	lineages	AY.85	B.1.1.7	B.1.617.2	AY.36	B	AY.9	Q.7	AY.106						
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.29673	0.14200401	0.13995761	0.13856292	0.10102115	0.07866277	0.0315534	0.01610339						
							resid coverage	10.63130576	99.90298083												
38	T-O-3	B.1.617.2	B	AY.36	AY.30	B.1.36	T-O-3	summarized	[(‘Delta’, 0.4561742775269694),	(‘Other’, 0.3578289703622396)]		AY.9	B.1								
		√	√	√	√	√+27	lineages	B	AY.30	AY.36	B.1.36.27	AY.9	B.1								
		√	√	√	√	√+27	abundances	0.18455915	0.17613983	0.172596	0.155794	0.08743844	0.01747582								
							resid coverage	9.606708161	100												
39	T-O-4	B.1.1.487	B.1.1.7	B.1.617.2	B.1.36	AY.30	T-O-4	summarized	[(‘Other’, 0.3014692536398053),	(‘Delta’, 0.2900685811981087),	(‘Alpha’, 0.2365065020085385)]		Q.7								
		√	√	√	√	√	lineages	B.1.1.7	AY.30	B.1.36.27	AY.9	B.1.551	B.1	Q.7							
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.1733384	0.15800221	0.15265614	0.13206637	0.08268694	0.06612618	0.0631681							
							resid coverage	10.99185487	100												
40	T-O-5	B.1.617.2	B.1.1.7	B.1.1.487	AY.30	AY.36	T-O-5	summarized	[(‘Delta’, 0.7011156978150622),	(‘Alpha’, 0.21809509783712383),	(‘Other’, 0.033681799998364558)]		Q.7	B.1.1.487							
		√	√	√	√	√	lineages	AY.36	AY.30	B.1.1.7	B.1.617.2	AY.9	Q.7	B.1.1.487							
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.247664	0.18991547	0.1637018	0.14812005	0.11541617	0.0543933	0.0336818							
							resid coverage	8.264774461	99.85614399												
41	T-BA-1	BA.5.2.4	JN.1	BA.5.2.1	BA.2.10	JN.1.1	T-BA-1	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.8944726509745479)]		BA.5.2.4	JN.1.1	BA.2.1	BA.2.56	BA.2.16	JN.3	JN.1	CT.1	BA.5.2.9	JN.8	BA.5.2.8
		√	√	√	√	√	lineages	BA.2.10	BF.25	BA.5.2.4	JN.1.1	BA.2.1	BA.2.56	BA.2.16	JN.3	JN.1	CT.1	BA.5.2.9	JN.8	BA.5.2.8	
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.1373305	0.12714003	0.10690852	0.10521356	0.077996	0.05937536	0.05654601	0.04756187	0.0461708	0.03799002	0.03170054	0.0306653	0.02987413	
							resid coverage	14.16768055	99.89628985												
42	T-BA-2	BG.2	DY.3	JN.1.1	BA.5.2.27	JN.1.3	T-BA-2	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.9787435501809867)]		JN.1.1	BA.5.2.27	BG.2	JN.3	BA.2.65	JN.10	BA.2.86				
		√	√	√	√	√	lineages	DY.3	XAS	JN.1.1	BA.5.2.27	BG.2	JN.3	BA.2.65	JN.10	BA.2.86					
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.25444789	0.18961847	0.17281396	0.16552575	0.09381627	0.05058857	0.02546783	0.014729	0.01173582					
							resid coverage	14.18306557	99.72566993												
43	T-BA-3	BA.5.1.3	BG.2	BE.1.1	DY.1	DZ.2	T-BA-3	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.9762001270966906)]		BE.1.1	DY.1	BA.5.1.3	BG.2	BA.5.2	XAS	BA.2.65	BA.5.3	BA.5	BA.2.12	BA.5.2.59
		√	√	√	√	√	lineages	DZ.2	BE.1.1	DY.1	BA.5.1.3	BG.2	BA.5.2	XAS	BA.2.65	BA.5.3	BA.5	BA.2.12	BA.5.2.59		
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.22466177	0.19784601	0.18977295	0.12130919	0.06937039	0.05857305	0.0408857	0.01778967	0.01663876	0.01654271	0.01196494	0.01084501		
							resid coverage	5.223142034	99.24057409												
44	T-BA-4	DY.3	JN.1	BA.5.2.1	BF.7.14	BA.2.3.7	T-BA-4	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.9294546493597126)]		BA.2.3	BF.7.14.6	JN.1	BF.7.14	BF.28	BA.2.1	BA.2.86				
		√	√	√	√+6	√	lineages	BA.2.3.7	DY.3	BA.2.3	BF.7.14.6	JN.1	BF.7.14	BF.28	BA.2.1	BA.2.86					
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.248793	0.236102	0.13553186	0.1195046	0.07349447	0.04528763	0.03328135	0.0250589	0.01240084					
							resid coverage	11.01379641	99.72901542												
45	T-BA-5	BE.1.1	BA.2.2.1	JN.1.3	BG.2	BN.1.2	T-BA-5	summarized	[(‘Omicron’, 0.9658651110713212)]		BA.2.2.1	BE.1.1	BA.2.65	JN.1	BG.2	JN.3					
		√	√	√	√	√	lineages	BN.1.2	BA.2.2.1	BE.1.1	BA.2.65	JN.1	BG.2	JN.3							
		√	√	√	√	√	abundances	0.24984843	0.226729	0.21687522	0.09981632	0.08018381	0.07455413	0.0178582							



				resid coverage	4.64860405 99.39112107				
61	2023-19- CX2945	XBC.1.6. 2 √ √		2023-19- CX2945	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Other’, XBC.1.6.1 0.99910304 4.847309135 96.07239637	0.999103040998 8897]		
62	XBG-1	BA.2.76 √ √	BA.5.2.7 √ √	XBG-1	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Omicron’, BA.5.2.7 0.67153261 5.261731841 99.24057409	0.982806469533 7260] BA.2.76 0.053099 68 BF.7 0.03456206		
63	XBG-2	BA.2.76 √ √	DY.3 √ √	XBG-2	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Omicron’, DY.3 0.696521 7.214499616 99.2372286	0.981610414677 1814] BA.5.2.8 0.057470 69 BA.5.2.6 0.02074663 BA.2.21 0.01880 544		
64	XBG-3	BA.2.76 √ √	DZ.2 √ √	XBG-3	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Omicron’, DZ.2 0.710714 6.811211485 98.94951658	0.975547147394 2124] BA.2.76 0.17746544 97 BF.7.8 0.048016 97 BA.5.2.49 0.028768 BA.5.2 0.01058 274		
65	XBC-1	BA.2.3.7 √ √	B.1.617.2 √ √	XBC-1	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Omicron’, BA.2.3.7 0.48059 17.89729333 99.78923422	0.674413431160 793], AY.71 0.28621494 0.085504 0.06291834 0.2862149379552 3584] XAC B.1.1.529 XAH 0.04540 109		
66	XBC-2	BA.2.3.7 √ √	AY.36 √ √	XBC-2	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Omicron’, BA.2.3.7 0.412766 16.91366773 99.8829079	0.604678167568 7839), AY.36 0.38288933 0.126326 65 0.03975602 0.3828893309450 955] XAH XAT XE 0.02582 949		
67	XBC-3	BA.2.3.7 √ √	AY.30 √ √	XBC-3	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Omicron’, BA.2.3.7 0.56310596 20.62633746 99.65541467	0.653757107887 1127), AY.30 0.27988335 0.090651 15 0.2798833450220 262]		
68	XDD-1	EG.5.1.1 √ √	JN.1 √ √	XDD-1	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Omicron’, EG.5.1.1 0.63530975 17.62939286 99.72566993	0.995041762635 4994] JN.1 BA.2.86. 1 0.117627 01 0.242105 0.117627 01		
69	XDD-2	EG.5.1.1 √ √	JN.1.1 √ √	XDD-2	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Omicron’, EG.5.1.1 0.59656207 17.53110218 99.72566993	0.992504072806 8011] BA.2.86.1 JN.1.1 0.219731 0.176211		
70	XDD-3	EG.5.1.1 √ √	JN.1.3 √ √	XDD-3	summarized lineages abundances resid coverage	[(‘Omicron’, EG.5.1.1 0.67941148 16.78885854 99.70225151	0.992421745996 3304] JN.1 BA.2.86. 1 0.075057 0.049576 JN.10 JN.3 0.03831 585		

**Supplementary Table 3.** The original genotypes and the recovered genotypes of 3 real samples in routine tests.

Named sample	Detection date	Original sample	Genotypes (single sequencing)			Genotypes (pooled sequencing)				
mix-S12	2023/5/24-25	RY1126	EG.5.1.1	XBB.1.9.2.5.1.1	lineages	EG.5.1.1	FL.2.4	EG.5		
		RY1177	EG.5.1.1	XBB.1.9.2.5.1.1	abundances	63.97%	33.70%	1.41%		
		RY1218	FL.2.4	XBB.1.9.1.2.4	resid coverage	2.13444				
test-mix1	2023/9/5	2702	FL.15	XBB.1.9.1.15	lineages	FY.3.3	EG.5.1.1	FL.15.2	XBB.1.16.12	XBB.1.16
		2706	XBB.1.16	XBB.1.16	abundances	34.56%	19.60%	16.60%	9.46%	7.07%
		2713	EG.5.1.1	XBB.1.9.2.5.1.1	resid	4.44507				
		2742	FY.3	XBB.1.22.1.3	coverage	99.24%				
test-mix2	2023/9/5	2874	FL.4.5	XBB.1.9.1.4.5	lineages	EG.5.1.1	FL.4.5	JJ.1	EG.5.1.4	
		2896	EG.5.1.4	XBB.1.9.2.5.1.4	abundances	45.84%	28.28%	18.11%	5.49%	
		2928	EG.5.1.1	XBB.1.9.2.5.1.1	resid	4.03265				
		2947	HK.3	XBB.1.9.2.5.1.1.3	coverage	99.24%				