



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

www.healthwatchusa.org Feb. 1, 2021

Member of the National Quality Forum and a designated "Community Leader" for Value-Driven Healthcare by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

In the Month of Dec. Health Watch USAsm has:

- Written 5 articles/opeds regarding COVID-19,
- Participated in 2 COVID-19 video podcasts,
- 14 radio shows concerning the COVID-19 virus.

Our 2020 COVID-19 Conference Presentations and additional resources can be accessed

from: <http://www.healthwatchusa.org/COVID19.htm> & www.healthconference.org [*The need for the public to embrace public health strategies*](#)



With the coronavirus mutating and vaccinations behind schedule, here's what we must do now.

The news media is filled with articles regarding the new UK coronavirus mutation, which modeling has shown to be 56% more infectious. This mutation appears to be widespread in the United States, possibly emerging

as early as October and now is spreading in multiple states. Similar to the original virus, this one has spread undetected because of inadequate testing. The United States is not leading but is 43rd in the world for genetic sequencing to detect new strains of the virus....Remember the Louisville Zoo's snow leopards. They are particularly good at enforcing social distancing, not so much at wearing masks. They caught COVID-19. You need to do both. USA Today. Jan. 9, 2021. [References](#)

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/01/09/coronavirus-vaccination-covid-19-britain-schedule-column/6594484002>



Dangerous COVID-19 variants lurk, but there are signs of hope.

We are fighting not only a deadly virus, but an inability of our nation to unite to confront this deadly adversary, being kept apart by "fake news" and an alternate reality being inflamed by a misplaced trust in false idols. Even more formidable strains of the virus already exist. The P1 in Brazil and the 501Y.V2 in South Africa are even more concerning. They may evade monoclonal antibodies, make the vaccines less effective and cause reinfections. We all need to receive vaccinations when vaccines become available. We now have many months of safety data which should capture the vast majority of adverse events. So far, both vaccines have been found to be effective and very safe, certainly safer than developing COVID-19. Some recall the Tuskegee experiments and are concerned, but this is much different. With this virus, our only choice is to get the vaccine or be an experimental "control." I for one will choose the vaccine. Courier Journal. Jan. 29, 2021. [References](#) <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2021/01/28/dangerous-covid-19-variants-lurk-but-there-signs-hope/4262830001/>



As Vaccine Rollout Stalls, Move Monoclonal Antibodies Into COVID Fight

As of January 16, 2021, only 39.4% of the 31.2 million allocated vaccine doses have been placed in arms. The original goal was to vaccinate 20 million citizens by the end of 2020. Until vaccines become widely available, it is imperative that those at high risk for severe COVID-19 be offered monoclonal antibody therapy. So far, the use of monoclonal antibodies has not

been a priority in the United States' COVID-19 response, and the medication has largely gone unused, with 80% of the 600,000 doses still "sitting on shelves." Monoclonal antibodies need to be given within 3 days of diagnosis and to those who are at high risk for severe COVID-19. To locate a facility, the Dept. of Health and Human Services has posted a medication locator at: <https://combatcovid.hhs.gov/> Then click on the "Find Infusion Locations" screen button. Infection Control Today. Jan. 17, 2021. [References](#)
<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/as-vaccine-rollout-stalls-move-monoclonal-antibodies-into-covid-fight>

Problem: COVID-19 Hospital-Acquired Infections

HSJ analyzed England's National Health Service Data regarding hospital-acquired SARS-CoV-2 infections. SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19 and unfortunately HSJ found that hospital-acquired infections (HAIs) are not uncommon, estimated to cause almost 1 in 4 hospital COVID-19 cases. We need to have mandatory reporting of worker and patient acquisition of SARS-CoV-2 and the development of COVID-19 with metrics to provide us the most accurate estimate of cases so we can effectively plan and allocate resources. Infection Control Today. Jan. 20, 2021. [References](#)
<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/problem-covid-19-hospital-acquired-infections>

COVID-19 Variants Make Infection Prevention Harder

Infection preventionists need to spread the message and articulate the uncertainties of this new variant of COVID-19. They need to emphasize that it is just not the old who are at risk and employ stricter containment measures.... Many health departments are understaffed. In one Kentucky Public Health District, staffing has been cut almost in half over the last decade. Our stressed healthcare system has an inadequate infrastructure to administer the initial vaccine dose, let alone doubling the effort to administer the second dose. Infection Control Today. Jan. 4, 2021. [References](#)
<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/covid-19-variants-make-infection-prevention-harder>

Q&A: COVID Variants Pose a Deadly Threat

Willpower. That's what's missing, says Kevin Kavanagh, MD, a member of Infection Control Today®'s Editorial Advisory Board. "We have the technology to do it," Kavanagh tells ICT®. "We just don't have the willpower. I mean, we know how it spreads, we know how to kill it, we should be able to stop it cold in its tracks." And because of that lack of willpower among the public, there's a real danger that the variants of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) that have cropped up will stop being variants and become commonplace, But what's very distressing about the South African and the Brazilian variants is that they've mutated enough that it appears that they can evade our monoclonal antibody therapeutics. And they may be moderately resistant to the vaccines. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/q-a-covid-variants-pose-a-deadly-threat>

B.1.1.7 Coronavirus Strain Now Said to Be More Deadly and Contagious

Kevin Kavanagh, MD, a member of Infection Control Today®'s Editorial Advisory Board said that "initial reports that the UK Variant is not more lethal than our current strain and that its increase in transmissibility was possibly due to an increase in viral production by the patient did not make sense. Since, increased viral load should produce a more severe disease in the patient. I was thus hoping for another mechanism, but it now looks like this strain may be more lethal after all and to make matters worse, it may have an increased propensity to infect children and young adults." Kavanagh argues that now is the time for the CDC to be proactive in its outreach to other countries. "The new emerging coronavirus strains underscore the necessity of not only having increased vigilance on our shores and the need to expand our genomic surveillance in the United States, but also to reactivate and expand the CDC's foreign support services and personnel. Similar to Ebola we need to stop these new biological threats in the countries they emerge in, rather than let them spread around the globe and into the United States." Jan. 22, 2021.
<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/p-1-1-7-now-said-to-be-more-deadly-and-contagious>

Health Watch USA - Meeting Presentations



Regina LaRocque, MD MPH is an infectious disease specialist at Massachusetts General Hospital and Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School discusses the impact of COVID-19 on Massachusetts and the problems and drivers of vaccine hesitancy. Jan.. 20, 2021. <https://youtu.be/5glqLCzcZto>

Radio / Podcasts

COVID-19: UK, South African, Brazilian Strains

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the increased transmission and lethality of the United Kingdom (B117), South African (P1) and Brazilian (501Y.V2) Strains. In addition, there are concerns that the United Kingdom Strain may also have an increased ability to infect children compared to the previous strains. The vaccines are expected to be effective against the UK strain but may have reduced effectiveness against the South African and Brazilian Strains. The Brazilian Strain has been observed to cause a large surge of reinfections in a town which was felt to have reached herd immunity. In addition, the Defense Production Act needs to be activated to produce N95 masks and the CDC's foreign branches need to be bolstered to increase expertise and boots on the ground to stop viral spread in the country of origin. Jack Pattie Show. WVLC AM 590. Jan. 25, 2021. <https://youtu.be/QRWbL5QjnHY>

COVID-19: The South African Strain

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the new variant of the South African Strain which is not only more infectious but also may cause more disease in the young and may even have some resistance to vaccines. Luckily the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are flexible and can be readily modified. The Kentucky vaccine rollout is also discussed. Jack Pattie Show. WVLC AM. Jan. 6, 2021. (3:48) <https://youtu.be/kbtrc6pdKgE>

COVID-19: Will The Vaccines Prevent Spread?

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses a variety of topics including the new more infectious South African Strain underscoring the need to follow public health advice. We do not know what makes the new strain more infectious so we need to be extra vigilant. A side benefit of these precautions is that the flu season has been decimated. The current vaccines stimulate IgG antibodies and may not prevent spread of the virus as opposed to stopping symptoms. More research is needed. The demonstrations in DC may well be a superspreader event. An increase in infectivity (ability to spread - R0) causes more damage to society than an increase in lethality (case fatality rate). We cannot become lax when improvements occur because the virus will re-surge. We all need to come together and stop the virus by following public health advice and taking the vaccine. Jack Pattie Show. WVLC AM 590. Jan. 8, 2021. (17:04) <https://youtu.be/haAXU6-XBu4>

COVID-19: The Importance of Monoclonal Antibodies

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the importance of receiving monoclonal antibodies if you are at high risk for severe COVID-19 and within three days of diagnosis. For this to happen you need ample testing with results available within 48 hrs. Rapid testing should ideally be used if the patient has newly

become symptomatic. Obtaining vaccinations are also problematic. Contact your physician, local hospital and health department for information on how you can register for a waiting list. Jack Pattie Show. WVLC AM 590. Jan. 15, 2021. <https://youtu.be/mig4S7b53HU>

COVID-19 Articles of Interest

Covid infections caught in hospital rise by a third in one week in NHS hospitals in England.

In the past week, almost one in four hospital covid-19 cases were likely to have been caught in hospital. There were a total of 10,150 covid cases in hospital, of which 2,414 were probably caught by patients in hospital while they were being treated for other illnesses.

<https://www.hsj.co.uk/patient-safety/covid-infections-caught-in-hospital-rise-by-a-third-in-one-week/7029211.article>

Why America is 'flying blind' to the coronavirus mutations racing across the globe.

For months, scientists have been sounding alarms and trying to ramp up genetic sequencing of test samples, but the effort has been plagued by a lack of funding, political will and federal coordination, health experts and state officials said... The lack of widespread genetic sequencing means the window is closing to find and slow the spread of variants such as the one first spotted in Britain, which appears to be much more transmissible, and those initially detected in Brazil and South Africa. the United States so far has only sequenced about 0.32 percent of its total cases, according to a Washington Post analysis. As of late January, the country ranks 38th out of 130 countries reporting whole-genome sequencing data.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/01/29/genetic-sequencing-mutations-coronavirus/>

The Amazonian city that hatched the Brazil variant has been crushed by it.

Galvão, the lead physician in the coronavirus ward at a public hospital in the Brazilian city of Manaus, had been haunted by the wave that crashed last spring. In less than 10 days, (the first wave) ruptured the city's bewildered medical system. Sick patients were turned away. The dead were piled into mass graves.....The number of confirmed coronavirus deaths at home (then) rose (again) from a total of 35 from May through December to 178 so far this month, according to city health officials.... That stunned Brazilian researchers who last month published a paper in Science proclaiming that 76 percent of Manaus's population had already been infected with the virus.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/01/27/coronavirus-brazil-variant-manaus/>

Study finds past coronavirus (COVID-19) infection provides some immunity for at least 5 months, but people may still carry and transmit the virus.

PHE scientists working on the study have concluded naturally acquired immunity as a result of past infections provide 83% protection against reinfection, compared to people who have not had the disease before. This appears to last at least for 5 months from first becoming sick.

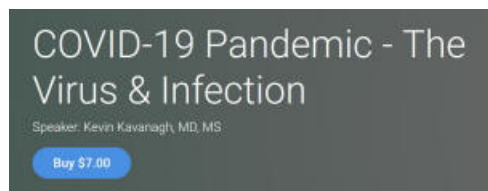
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/past-covid-19-infection-provides-some-immunity-but-people-may-still-carry-and-transmit-virus>

Post-COVID lungs worse than the worst smokers' lungs, surgeon says

Dr. Brittany Bankhead-Kendall says patients who've had COVID-19 symptoms show a severe chest X-ray every time, and those who were asymptomatic show a severe chest X-ray 70% to 80% of the time.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-lungs-scarring-smokers-lungs/>

COVID-19 Education Courses



COVID-19 Pandemic - The Virus & Infection:

Available for this course are 1 Hour CE/CME for Category 1 AMA Credits & Kentucky Board of Nursing (KBN), also Physical Therapy Credits. **Southern Kentucky AHEC.** To take the course go to: <https://sokyahec.thinkific.com/courses/covid-virus>



COVID-19 The Need for the Public To Embrace Public Health Strategies - Past Course

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses reasons why the public has not embraced public health guidance. They include, overstatement of treatment efficacy, mixed messaging regarding the use of masks, testing for asymptomatic carriers and aerosolization of COVID-19. In addition, false narratives (that herd immunity can be achieved with few deaths, COVID-19 is no deadlier than the flu and children do not become sick) are discussed.

Finally, ways of retorting misinformation with examples given regarding the effectiveness of the Zelenko Protocol and use of facial masks. Nov. 12, 2020. Kentucky Rural Health Association. <https://youtu.be/G7OUYGWaatA>



COVID 19: History of Ineffective Infectious Disease Policy - Past Course

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm updates his previous lecture which traces the history of the United States' response to the COVID-19 epidemic. A historical perspective is given, covering President George Bush's 2005 proposal of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act to the disastrous second peak of the first wave with continued shortages of medical supplies and the changing federal advisements on asymptomatic spread, viral aerosolization and use of masks. Treatments are reviewed along with overstatements of efficacy. Finally, vaccines are discussed along with the review process and distribution barriers. Sept. 29, 2020.

[Download Presentation Slides](#) YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/xA7pR2bDAes>

The COVID-19 Pandemic, The Virus & Infection: Health Watch USAsm - Past Course

- 1) COVID-19: Survivability And The Prevention of Spread. The course discusses the survivability of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19 Virus) in the environment (surfaces, sunlight, humidity, heat) and with different types of hand sanitizers. The course also describes research behind the use of masks, eye protection and social distancing along with data indicating the virus may be airborne or aerosolized more commonly than thought. Finally, risks and mitigating strategies are described in various retail and community venues.
- 2) COVID-19 Characteristics of the Virus, Symptoms & Long-Term Disability: The course discusses the characteristics of the SARS-CoV-2 virus along with the body's immune response and dwindling prospects for herd immunity. Characteristics of COVID-19 along with protracted recovery and disability is also discussed.
- 3) COVID-19: Presentation In Children and When To Open Schools: The course discusses the various presentations of COVID-19 in children, and the risk of childhood transmission to and infections of adults.

Current guidance on opening of schools along with international experience on school openings is also discussed. Video Link: <https://youtu.be/Y4p6C0mORiM>



Through the Eyes of the Frontline: COVID 19

Health Watch USAsm & Massachusetts Nurses Association
COVID-19 Worker Safety Conference

Online Videos of KeyNote Presentations:

- Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, Board Chairman of Health Watch USAsm. United States. View Video: <https://youtu.be/L7qShgRSLIU>
- Dr. Christina Vandenbroucke-Grauls, Editor Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Control and Professor of Medical Microbiology, VU University Medical Center: Netherlands. View Video: <https://youtu.be/UYLMgDgil8g>
- Dr. Matthias Maiwald, Adj. Assoc. Prof., is a Senior Consultant and the Head of Service, Microbiology, at KK Women's and Children's Hospital, and an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Department of Microbiology Service & Senior Consultant (Microbiology) at Duke-National University of Singapore: Singapore. View Video: <https://youtu.be/EEWis0cOLLA>
- Dr. Rodriguez-Baño is the Immediate Past President of the ESCMID (European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases) and Associated Editor of Clinical Microbiology and Infection: Spain. View Video: <https://youtu.be/mxfGYAtskVY>
- Dr. Elaine Bernard served as Executive Director of the Labor and Worklife Program from 1989-2017 at Harvard University: Harvard University, United States. View Video: <https://youtu.be/UIMg156bMOA>
- Jodi Sugerman-Brozan is MassCOSH's Executive Director. Before joining MassCOSH in April 2017, she was the Executive Director of Bikes Not Bombs which uses the bicycle as a vehicle for social change. Leadership development and community and youth organizing have been central to her work for decades. View Video: https://youtu.be/OA1CmmK0_60

More information at: www.healthconference.org

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