



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> May 1, 2022

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 April. Health Watch USAsm had:

- 3 articles/op-eds regarding COVID-19.
- 3 Radio Shows concerning the COVID-19 virus.
- 1 Presentation.

Our 2021 COVID-19 Conference Presentations and additional resources can be accessed from:

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/COVID19.htm> & <https://www.healthconference.org>

Health Watch USA's June 15, 2021 Annual Conference: COVID-19: A Global Perspective <https://www.healthconference.org>

Health Watch USA's 2021 Activities Report:
<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20211231-HWUSA-Report-2021.pdf>

Health Watch USA's 2020 Activities Report:
<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20201231-HWUSA-Report-2020.pdf>

Health Watch USA - News Articles & OpEds



We may not have to wear masks, but COVID is still lurking out there.

Masks have again entered the public spotlight with a Florida federal judge ruling prohibiting the CDC from issuing mask mandates regarding public transportation. Mid-flight passengers cheered, oblivious to the fact that the virus could care less. Currently, we are witnessing the emergence of a new and even more infectious variant in central New York, BA.2.12.1. Now is not the time to be promoting spread around the country with maskless airline travelers. Dosage counts. If a single virus penetrates a mask, it is unlikely to cause an infection, but if someone is exposed to 1000s of viruses, that is another story. [References](https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article260898327.html) Lexington Herald Leader. Apr. 29, 2022. <https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article260898327.html>



What the US must learn from its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic: Opinion

As stated by researchers in Nature: "This Swedish laissez-faire strategy has had a large human cost for the Swedish society". emails revealed: "they (State Epidemiologists) at least speculated on the use of children to acquire herd immunity," but at the same time were publicly stating children "played a negligible role" in spreading the disease and did not become ill. And the elderly fared even worse, where many were given morphine instead of needed and

available oxygen, "effectively ending their lives." Reuters described a European Union document that found that "Russian media... deployed a "significant disinformation campaign" against the West to worsen the impact of the coronavirus, generate panic and sow distrust..." As a nation, we need a Federal Government which does not sugarcoat the facts of the pandemic and a public that gathers its information from a multitude of historically reliable national and international sources. [References](https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2022/04/07/what-us-must-learn-from-its-handling-of-pandemic/9474089002/) Courier Journal. Apr. 7, 2022. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2022/04/07/what-us-must-learn-from-its-handling-of-pandemic/9474089002/>

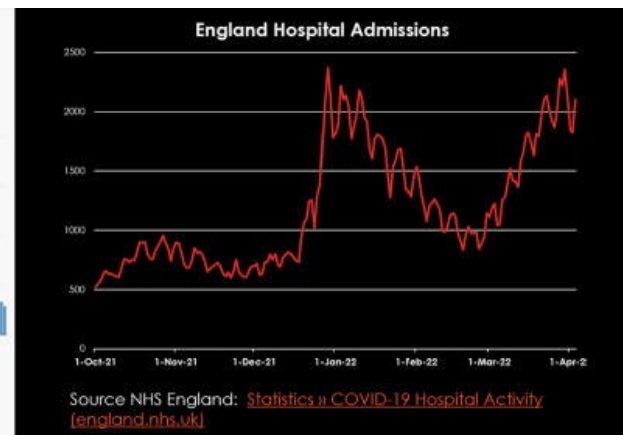
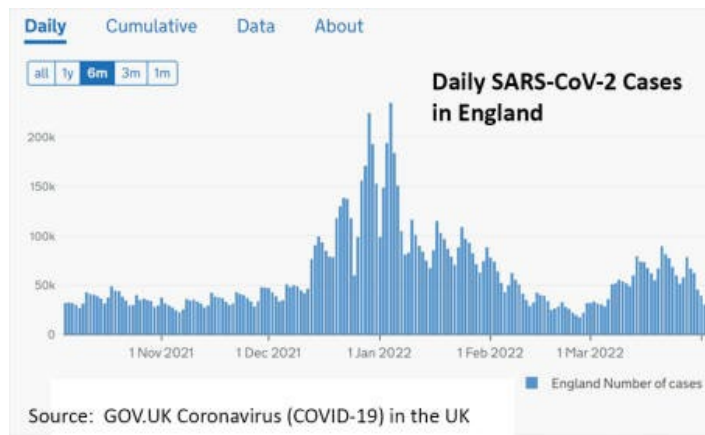


Viewpoint: New UK Data Show BA.2 Variant Produces More Frequent Hospitalizations Than Omicron

New UK Data Show BA.2 Variant Produces More Frequent Hospitalizations Than Omicron

"New data is beginning to emerge for the BA.2 variant, and the results do not look good. Data from the United Kingdom show the BA.2 surge to be about half that of the Omicron surge. However, the number of hospitalizations are the same and those caused by BA.2 may eventually surpass Omicron. This evidence indicates that BA.2 is not only more infectious but also more virulent than the Omicron variant. [References](https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/viewpoint-new-uk-data-show-ba-2-variant-produces-more-frequent-hospitalizations-than-omicron) Infection Control Today. Apr. 6, 2022.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/viewpoint-new-uk-data-show-ba-2-variant-produces-more-frequent-hospitalizations-than-omicron>



Health Watch USA - Presentations

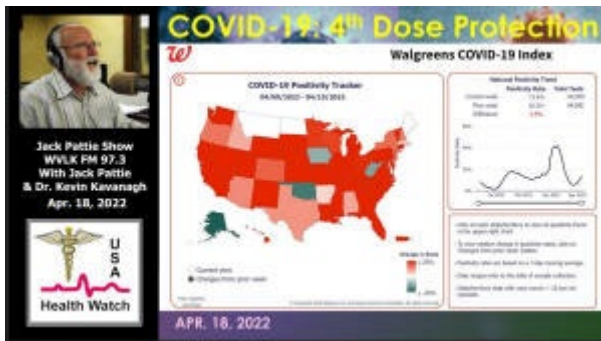


COVID-19: Animal Hosts of Human Viral Infections

Andrew Bowman, DVM describes the importance of animal hosts and how swine-human interfaces have fueled Seasonal Flu mutations and pandemics over the last century. In addition, he stresses the importance of county and state fairs as a human animal interface that has the potential of spreading zoonotic disease over large areas of our nation, similar to the Wuhan Animal Market in China. Health Watch USAsm Meeting. Apr. 20, 2022.

https://youtu.be/r2RdF2aH2_Y

Radio / Podcasts



Apr. 18, 2022. COVID-19: Walgreens' Test Positivity Data & Efficacy of the 4th Vaccine Dose.

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the new data which Walgreens' is posting on test positivity rates. This is a large comprehensive data set which should give a good cross section of the nation. One can access it by Googling "Walgreens COVID-19 Index". In Kentucky, our test positivity rate has

increased 100% over last week and our test positivity rate is over 10%. However, our very poor performance during the Omicron, BA.1, surge may give us some protection for the BA.2 variant, mitigating the number of cases. The second mRNA booster (Pfizer) appears to be efficacious in older individuals to restore one's immunity back to the original state. After six weeks efficacy against severe infections (hospitalizations) is augmented four times, back to the original state, and did not wane. However, efficacy against infections approaches baseline after 6 to 8 weeks. This probably indicates a decrease in circulating antibodies but a persistence of memory B cells. New data regarding myocarditis shows that overall, the COVID-19 vaccine produces an incidence similar to other vaccines. There is one age group, young males which has an incidence of 450 out of a million vaccine doses. This is still only one case out of several thousand vaccine doses and the vast majority of cases are mild. In addition, even in this age group, the chances of contracting myocarditis from a vaccine is much less than contracting it from an infection. Jack Pattie Show. <https://youtu.be/gOP5hESU60I>



Apr. 25, 2022. COVID-19: BA.2.12.1 May Surge and the Need to Continue Masking.

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the new Sub-Sub-Variant BA2.12.1 which has arisen out of central New York. It is more infectious than the Omicron Variant and the BA2 Variant. Hospitalizations are also rising in several States. The severity of disease will be related to the immune status of an individual.

Those with previous infections and who are vaccinated

may still become infected but have less of a chance of hospitalizations. Infections give a variable degree of immunity while with vaccinations the immunity is more predictable. Having an infection plus becoming vaccinated often produces super immunity. New vaccines to a number of different variants are on the horizon and look promising. Until then we should follow public health advice of becoming vaccinated and wearing a high quality N95 mask. However, many are giving up masking and the new ruling regarding the lifting of mask mandates on public transportation places many at risk.

Immunocompromised individuals often have to use public transportation and two-way masking is much better than just having one person wearing a mask. We all need to wear higher quality masks, either a N95 or KN95 mask. Jack Pattie Show. April 25, 2022. <https://youtu.be/7Vxr14Skv4c>



Mar. 31, 2022. COVID-19: Misinformation, Masks, Vaccines and Long COVID with BA.2 Looming

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the need to aggressively combat misinformation regarding masks and vaccinations. With the looming BA.2 variant the use of N-95 masks are imperative. In addition, we more than ever must transform our healthcare system to provide access to all individuals.

COVID-19 is here to stay and even those who survive may deal with symptoms of Long COVID for years to come. Jeff Santos Show. Mar. 31, 2022. <https://youtu.be/cz55keJX2QE>

COVID-19 Articles of Interest

Omicron Sublineages Likely Evade Vaccines, Natural Immunity

"New omicron sublineages, discovered by South African scientists this month, are likely able to evade vaccines and natural immunity from prior infections, the head of gene sequencing units that produced a study on the strains said." Bloomberg. Apr. 29, 2022. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/other/omicron-sublineages-likely-evade-vaccines-natural-immunity/ar-AAWI0fz>

Government documents reveal CDC delayed disclosing likely COVID-19 animal spillover event

"The documents, and the agency's statements in response to them, make clear the CDC was aware that mink on a fur farm may have infected humans at least three months before it quietly updated its website in March 2021." National Geographic. Apr. 5, 2022. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/government-emails-reveal-cdc-secrecy-around-likely-animal-spillover-of-covid>

Did Sweden beat the pandemic by refusing to lock down? No, its record is disastrous

"...the Nature authors observed. the authorities' "internal emails indicate their aim to use children to spread the infection..." If Sweden had Norway's death rate, it would have only 4,429 deaths from COVID-19, instead of more than 18,500. Los Angeles Times. Mar. 31, 2022. [Hiltzik: The horrifying toll of Sweden's lax pandemic policy - Los Angeles Times \(latimes.com\)](https://www.latimes.com/health/la-he-sweden-pandemic-2022-04-01)

People Gave Up on Flu Pandemic Measures a Century Ago When They Tired of Them – and Paid a Price

"The deadly third wave of the 1918 flu shows what can happen when society prematurely returns to pre-pandemic life, a medical historian cautions." Michigan Health. Apr. 1, 2022. <https://healthblog.uofmhealth.org/wellness-prevention/people-gave-up-on-flu-pandemic-measures-a-century-ago-when-they-tired-of-them>

COVID-19 Global Update



COVID-19: A Perspective from Healthcare Professionals from Around The World.

On Dec 15, 2021, a meeting of prominent infectious disease experts from around the world was conducted by Health Watch USAsm. Authorities from the United States, Singapore, Australia, Germany, and Peru were in attendance along with a short narrative update from the United Kingdom. Overall, all nations are reporting a significant rise in cases due to the Delta Variant. Omicron is starting to take hold and the United

Kingdom is bracing for an onslaught of patients which may overrun their healthcare system. Preventative strategies and barriers of the various countries are presented. Strategies discussed are masking, testing, travel bans, vaccine passports, natural immunity, vaccinations and financial disincentives. The United States, similar to other countries around the world, have little or no reserve to muster to confront an onslaught of hospitalizations due to the highly infectious Omicron Variant. Unless the United States starts to embrace public health advice, COVID-19 may become a catastrophe both in lives ruined, lost and in economically breaking dollar costs. Health Watch USAsm Meeting. Dec. 15, 2021. <https://youtu.be/QOgZcBPqBEk>



COVID-19 Lessons Learned: A Global Perspective

Health Watch USAsm & Massachusetts Nurses Association



White Paper: COVID-19 lessons learned: a global perspective

On June 15, 2021, infectious disease authorities from around the world participated in a joint webinar to share experiences and lessons learned in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the overriding goals of the conference “COVID-19 Lessons Learned: A Global Perspective” was to provide documentation of worldwide COVID-19 response strategies, in order to combat the plethora of misinformation and conspiracy theories that are being actively disseminated. This misinformation is having a profound negative impact on controlling the pandemic in many countries. Misinformation which was addressed in the conference included challenging the seriousness of COVID-19 infections, a refusal to

recognize aerosolization as the major mechanism of spread, a belief that schools can be opened safely without implementation of extensive control strategies, and that masks and vaccines are not effective. A second goal was the identification of common strategies between nations. Common strategies included the implementation of a range of closures, mask mandates, travel bans and the need for expanded testing. But of utmost importance there was recognition of the need to implement a coordinated national strategy, which is depoliticized and led by scientists. ARIC. Aug. 26, 2021.

<https://aricjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13756-021-00992-x>

Conference Videos are Now Available. Continuing Educational Credits through Southern Kentucky AHEC. For more information on continuing education go to <https://www.healthconference.org>



COVID-19: Veteran Administration's Fourth Mission

Acting Deputy Secretary Carolyn Clancy and Under Secretary Dr. Beth Taylor discusses the Veteran Administration's fourth mission to aid and support state and local health care systems in times of pandemics and other health emergencies. The presentation details the Veterans Administration activities to support health care systems during the COVID-19 pandemic along with lessons learned during the reassignment of resources and staff to support the United States' pandemic response. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/oBtNJeoNW2k>

COVID-19: Introduction To Suppression Strategies

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses strategies used by many countries including exclusion, elimination, suppression, and mitigation; along with the disruptive influences of misinformation and false hopes for herd immunity. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/Ej98j5WiGUw>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Australia

Professor Imogen Mitchell, Clinical Director of the Australian Capital Territory COVID-19 Response, discusses lessons learned in Australia. To date there are 910 deaths from COVID-19. If the United States did as well, adjusted for population, we would have lost less than 13,000 individuals. Australia is a federated nation, early on the State and Territories formed a national governing committee, guided by scientists, to formulate and direct the nation's COVID-19 response. Strategies included a zero tolerance for cases with cities imposing lockdowns, masking, physical distancing, along with strong testing and contact tracing for as few as 1 or 2 cases. Travel restrictions and 14-day quarantine were imposed on those entering the country and travel between State and territories was restricted during outbreaks. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/UpFrw3Wdbmw>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Singapore

Dr. Matthias Maiwald, Adjunct Associate Professor at the Department of Microbiology & Senior Consultant in Microbiology, National University of Singapore, discusses the COVID-19 response in Singapore. Strategies used were social distancing, mask wearing, and the closing of schools and non-essential businesses during a full lock-down. In addition, contact tracing was facilitated by phone app reporting of contacts in Singapore's population. Outbreaks occurred in migrant workers' dorms, and other outbreaks were associated with the airport, a hospital and a shopping mall. At hospitals, all patients were tested for SARS-CoV-2 upon admission and staff were tested every two weeks, if

vaccinated; and once a week, if not vaccinated. An important observation was that during the full lockdown, infectious diseases caused by many other respiratory viruses all but disappeared. Rhinoviruses and enteroviruses reappeared 13 weeks after the end of lockdown, later adenoviruses reappeared. However, influenza stayed at a very low level well into 2021. This is a testament as to how effective the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is in comparison to other respiratory viruses, and how difficult it will be to eradicate it around the world. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/-WPQv9ghTy0>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Kenya

Dr. Paul Yonga discusses lessons learned in Kenya. Kenya adopted a suppression strategy guided by a newly formed National Emergency Response Committee. The country utilized regional and localized lockdowns, mandatory masking, curfews and social distancing. Barriers included stigmatization of the disease, large political rallies and a lack of vaccines, the latter of which inhibited the long-term effectiveness of a suppression strategy. There were also poor working conditions for frontline workers and healthcare staff, including a lack of PPE and pay shortages. Currently, Kenya is expecting another wave, possibly driven by the Delta Variant which comprises 90% of sequenced cases in some regions. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/oTOFJiLYa2Q>

COVID-19: India In Crisis -- Vineeta Gupta, MD, JD

Dr. Vineeta Gupta describes the conditions in India and the socioeconomic challenges which inhibit the pandemic's control. The impact of the Delta (B1617.2) Variant on India and the United States is also discussed. <https://youtu.be/vsOj76yBH9g>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Spain

Dr. Jesús Rodríguez-Baño, MD, PhD from University Hospital Virgen Macarena, University of Sevilla discusses Spain's COVID-19 response. Spain is a federated nation. The country underwent three waves. During the first wave a national emergency was declared, and a hard lockdown was enacted. In the second and third waves regional governments guided the response. During these waves there were limits on gatherings and universal masking was mandated. Spain did not have a well-developed anti-vaccination movement as was seen in other European countries. However, the COVID-19 response became politicized during the second and third waves, a phenomenon seen in several other countries, including the United States. There was also intense discussion over the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine. Politics and economics took the lead in some of the decisions instead of healthcare, but everyone agreed there needs to be a balance in every decision taken. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/pWuu10Gg7ro>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Germany

Dr. Sebastian Hoehl presents on COVID-19 lessons learned in Germany. Dr. Hoehl was one of the first to recognize that asymptomatic spread is a major contributor to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. In his presentation he discusses strategies used by Germany to quell COVID-19 surges and the importance of frequent testing in the opening of schools. He also discusses the social disparities of COVID-19 and how it targets and disproportionately affects the socially disadvantaged. YouTube Video: https://youtu.be/_9is03QomGI

COVID-19: Lessons Learned In The United Kingdom

Dr. Stephanie Dancer provides an extensive description of how SARS-CoV-2 spreads and the importance of aerosolization. COVID-19 clusters at NHS Lanarkshire, Scotland, was caused by spread from the community, and was transmitted in hospitals by both patients and staff. Corrective measures included the use of masks, opening of windows and minimizing the risks in bathrooms and of toilet plumes. Air

exchanges in most hospitals were deficient. They were improved to six complete air exchanges per hour for general wards and ten for bathrooms. Proper building ventilation is of utmost importance in controlling respiratory pathogens. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/sMW3wUWUboA>

COVID-19: Lessons Learned in the United States

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses how the United States has viewed and dealt with COVID-19. Barriers to true acceptance are exemplified by Kubler-Ross stages of grief: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Final Acceptance. The role of foreign adversaries and misinformation is discussed and how this is preventing true acceptance of COVID-19 and an effective pandemic response. YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/eV8lBv7ADU4>

COVID-19: Comments Regarding Variants

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh Discusses COVID-19 Variants

1. The Delta Variant detected in The United States & the need for more genomic sequencing to detect community spread.
 2. Mutations and Variants can be tracked on the websites.
<https://nextstrain.org/> and <https://outbreak.info/>
 3. How Variants are named and How The Spanish Flu Got its Name.
 4. Almost all nations in almost all pandemics mitigate the severity and extent of disease and deaths.
- YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/U9Xs6JizJSE>

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