



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> June 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 May. Health Watch USAsm had:

- 2 articles/op-eds regarding COVID-19.
- 4 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



Does COVID make you dumber? Here's how you lose IQ points when you're infected

Last night I awoke during a nightmare. We were in a COVID-19 cognitive feedback loop, where repeated infections were causing a progressive loss of intelligence which was making us more likely to undertake risky behavior. Sort of like the planet of the apes, but instead of the apes getting smarter, we were getting dumber. This apocalyptic thinking was spurred by a New York Times report detailing healthy individuals enduring multiple infections because of waning natural and vaccine immunity. And cognitive loss with COVID-19 is a real concern.

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2022/05/31/covid-making-you-dumb-heres-how-you-lose-iq-points-when-infected/9998980002/>



A Pandemic Paradigm Shift in Our Understanding of Transmission

"The bugs are winning, but only because we are letting them. Modern day epidemiology has divided the spread of respiratory diseases into

categories of airborne and droplet transmission. We were not facing a dichotomy in methods of spread; we were facing a continuum. There is no doubt that infection preventionists have a herculean task before them. The first step must be to educate hospital administration regarding the resources required to reverse the increasing rates of antibiotic resistance and

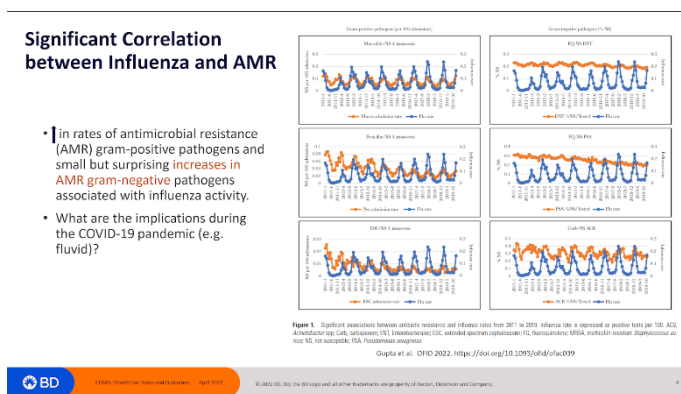
to improve infection prevention by implementing the knowledge learned during the pandemic. Only then will an optimal safe workplace be created and the safest possible care be provided to patients." [References](#) Infection Control Today. May 25, 2022.

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Publications/ReferencePages/20220525-COVID-19-ICT-COVID-19-ParadigmShift.htm>

2022-21-HW (Link to Article): AB.4 and BA.5 Variants, Pandemic Fatigue, and Waning Immunity: A Toxic Mix

"With new variants emerging, cases rising and a more complete understanding of the dangers of long COVID-19, one can make a strong case for resuming public health measures intended to control spread and infections from this disease. Unfortunately, even in the face of waning immunity, few individuals in the United States are currently wearing masks, and many are continuing to engage in risky behavior. This may well be a toxic mix, and healthcare facilities, and infection preventionists need to prepare for another possible surge in cases." [References](#) Infection Control Today. May 9, 2022. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/ab-4-ba-5-variants-pandemic-fatigue-waning-immunity-toxic-mix>

Health Watch USA - Presentations



May 18, 2022. Insights Into Patterns of Bacterial Resistance During Seasonal Flu and COVID-19 Surges

Dr. Vikas Gupta, Director, MMS Medical Affairs at Becton, Dickinson and Company; and Dr. Calvin Yu, Vice President, Medical & Scientific Affairs, US Region. Prior to being at BD, Dr Yu was Chief of Infectious Diseases at Southern California Kaiser

Permanente. They discuss "Insights from near real-time data on infection rates and related outcomes in the post COVID-19 vaccine period." They also give insights into patterns of rising bacterial resistance that they have observed during this time period. Health Watch USAsm Meeting. <https://youtu.be/RG57cihlbv4>

Radio / Podcasts

May 23, 2022. COVID-19: Boosters for Ages 5 to 11 and UK's Workforce Blunted by Long COVID

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the importance of boosters in children aged 5 to 11. The two shot vaccination has only a 29% efficacy at preventing infection at two months. However, vaccinations prevent severe disease, with vaccinated children being one half as likely to be hospitalized as unvaccinated children. In the United States children have lost over 200,000 caregivers to COVID-19. And children can become infected, even more so than adults. The CDC found that 74% of children had antibodies to

SARS-CoV-2 from infection compared to 50% of adults aged 18-49 years. We still do not know the long term effects on children and the development of symptoms down the line. More information has been coming out on Long COVID. Approximately 30% of individuals treated for COVID-19 develop Long COVID. In the United Kingdom, 2.1% of the entire population has reported having Long-COVID. The workforce has decreased in the UK by 400,000 (the USA has 5.2 times the population as the UK). Monkeypox has also been reported to have arisen simultaneously in 15 countries. It is not as infectious as SARS-CoV-2 and requires close contact to spread. The virus does not produce asymptomatic carriers and aerosolization is not a major mode of spread. Jack Pattie Show. <https://youtu.be/GgcpVpZjiWM>

References:

- 1) Hospitalizations of Children Aged 5–11 Years with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 — COVID-NET, 14 States, March 2020–February 2022
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7116e1.htm>
- 2) More than 200,000 children nationwide lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19. This St. Louis nonprofit is helping kids process their grief <https://www.stlmag.com/children-lose-parent-to-covid-annies-hope/>
- 3) Studies evaluate vaccine effectiveness against SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant among children and adolescents
<https://dgalerts.docguide.com/ncov-home/article/studies-evaluate-vaccine-effectiveness-against-sars-cov-2-omicron-variant-among-children-and-adolescents>
- 4) Seroprevalence of Infection-Induced SARS-CoV-2 Antibodies — United States, September 2021–February 2022 <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7117e3.htm>

May 23, 2022. Monkeypox, Curious Outbreaks Around the World.

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses Monkeypox and how it has all at once produced simultaneous outbreaks in 14 countries. Monkeypox is a member of the Smallpox family. It is a well-known DNA virus which has a low mutation rate and does not spread nearly as fast as SARS-CoV-2. Its primary mode of spread is on surfaces and with close contact. It does not have significant asymptomatic spread or spread by aerosols. We do have a vaccine for monkeypox, and the smallpox vaccine should provide some protection. There is also an antiviral medication TPOXX. Long COVID has also been in the news. Most of the information has been depressing. In the United Kingdom (about 1/5 the size of the United States), they estimate 2.1% of their entire population has Long COVID and their workforce shrank 440,000, the main driver is felt to be Long COVID. Jack Pattie Show. <https://youtu.be/bUPmTJTzPHM>

May 16, 2022. COVID-19: Hospitalizations are Up, Vaccines Preventing Long-COVID
Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the rising cases of SARS-CoV-2 in the United States. Over the last week, cases are up 25% with hospitalizations up 16%. In Kentucky, since the recent nadir, cases are up 34% and hospitalizations are up 40%. Deaths

nationally have increased 10%. The Kentucky Derby is felt to be a super spreader event, and may be responsible for the spike in cases in Louisville, Kentucky. It needs to be remembered that although outdoors dissipates aerosols, spreading by large droplets can still occur if you are within 6 feet of someone infected. Shouting and screaming increases spread by large droplets and aerosols.

There is added concern regarding Long COVID which affects 10% to 25% of all patients with COVID-19. A new report has found that if one is hospitalized there is a 4.5% chance of having kidney injury at 6 months, if in the ICU, this increases to over 7%. Cognitive impairment (brain fog, memory difficulties) is seen in 70% of long COVID-19 patients. Overall, just having COVID doubles your risk of heart disease. The good news is that recent research from Case Western Reserve has confirmed that vaccination is highly effective in the prevention of Long-COVID. At 3 months, those vaccinated are only 1/3 as likely to have heart disease, 1/4 as likely to have diabetes and 1/5 as likely to have hypertension. They are also 1/5 as likely to die as compared to the unvaccinated.

Another study which found Ivermectin to be beneficial with COVID-19 has been retracted. This brings the total to 10 retracted papers. Other recent studies have found no effect. The use of ivermectin has been promoted by disinformation, and unfortunately spread by some of our leaders. The use of this drug, as opposed to effective medications such as paxlovid, has cost lives. One needs to obtain information from reliable sources and remember there are paper mills which generate fake research and papers which are used in organized disinformation campaigns.

In the near future we will probably have a surge of the Omicron, BA.2 and BA.2.12.1 variants. Hopefully, vaccines will blunt this surge. Other variants which appear to be immune escape have emerged in South Africa, the BA.4 and BA.5 variants. Similar to the Mu and the Lambda variants, they may not take hold in the United States, we will just have to see. Jack Pattie Show. <https://youtu.be/wRjrp0agxi0>

May 9, 2022. COVID-19: Omicron as Deadly as Delta ? The BA.4 & BA.5 Immune Escape Variants.

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the increasing cases and hospitalizations in the United States. Cases are up 25% and hospitalizations are up 9%, nationally. This is driven by the BA.2 and BA.2.12.1 variants. New data from Harvard and Mass. General Hospital confirms previous studies and what we have been advising since December of last year, that Omicron is just as deadly as previous variants if immunity and patient demographics are controlled for. Thus, get vaccinated and if eligible get boosted. A second booster is indicated for those over the age of 50 and who are immunocompromised or at a very high risk for COVID-19. There are even more concerning variants in South Africa, the BA.4 and BA.5 variants which appear to be immune escape variants. South Africa was felt to be 90% immune to Omicron but now are undergoing another large surge. Long COVID is also a concern with new studies showing that a severe case of COVID-19 can drop one's IQ points by 10 and up to 70% of cases of Long COVID have brain fog and cognitive difficulties. Long COVID occurs in 10% to 25% of cases of COVID-19. Vaccinations have been shown to mitigate or lessen the chances of developing Long-COVID. For now, let's keep our immunity as

high as possible, wear masks on public transportation and respect the health of others, wearing a mask for them and not just ourselves. Jack Pattie Show.

<https://youtu.be/rZBe01qN0KY>

COVID-19 Articles of Interest

'Mild' Omicron variant was highly lethal, study finds

"From June 28 through December 5, 2021, when the Delta variant of the coronavirus was dominant, Massachusetts experienced 1,975 excess deaths. From December 27, 2021, through February 20, 2022, when the Omicron variant was dominant, there were 2,294 excess deaths. In other words, in a mere eight weeks of Omicron, Massachusetts experienced more excess deaths than in 23 weeks of Delta." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/mild-omicron-variant-was-highly-lethal-study-finds/ar-AAXOS9a>

CDC Issues Advisory on COVID-19 Rebound Following Paxlovid Treatment

"A brief return of symptoms may be part of the natural history of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) infection in some persons, independent of treatment with Paxlovid and regardless of vaccination status. Limited information currently available from case reports suggests that persons treated with Paxlovid who experience COVID-19 rebound have had mild illness; there are no reports of severe disease. There is currently no evidence that additional treatment is needed with Paxlovid or other anti-SARS-CoV-2 therapies in cases where COVID-19 rebound is suspected." <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2022/han00467.asp>

Coronavirus tally: CDC study finds one in five Americans below 65 suffered at least one long COVID symptom after infection

"A new study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that one in five adults below the age of the 65 have suffered at least one health condition that could be deemed to be long COVID, the New York Times reported.

The U.S. is averaging 110,614 cases a day, up 31% from two weeks ago, according to a New York Times tracker. The country is averaging 25,429 hospitalizations a day, up 28% from two weeks ago. The daily death toll has fallen to 7131 on average, down 13% from two weeks ago." <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/coronavirus-tally-cdc-study-finds-one-in-five-americans-below-65-suffered-at-least-one-long-covid-symptom-after-infection/ar-AAXK7zC>

Infectious viral load in unvaccinated and vaccinated individuals infected with ancestral, Delta or Omicron SARS-CoV-2

Full vaccination (defined as >2 weeks after receipt of the second dose during the primary vaccination series) significantly reduced infectious VL for Delta breakthrough cases compared to unvaccinated individuals. For Omicron BA.1 breakthrough cases, reduced infectious VL was observed only in boosted but not in fully vaccinated individuals compared to unvaccinated individuals." <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-022-01816-0>

Transmission and Infectious SARS-CoV-2 Shedding Kinetics in Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Individuals

"Delta Variant: 45 patients (median age, 37 years [IQR, 25-49 years]; 14 female [31%]) infected with the Delta variant were included, of whom 6 (13%) were fully vaccinated and 39 (87%) were partially or unvaccinated.

.....a viable virus in cell culture was detected for a notably longer duration in partially vaccinated (8 days after symptom onset) or unvaccinated (10 days after symptom onset) individuals compared with fully vaccinated individuals (4 days after symptom onset).

Fully versus Unvaccinated -- Secondary transmission of COVID-19

8 partially vaccinated, 10 days unvaccinated, 4 days vaccinated."

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2792598>

Data contradict fears of COVID-19 vaccine effects on pregnancy and fertility

To investigate those claims, Lu-Culligan and colleagues first conducted experiments in pregnant mice. They found that administering a COVID-19 vaccine early in pregnancy did not affect the size of the fetus, nor was it associated with any birth defects. In addition, they found that fetuses had high levels of antibodies against COVID-19 infection, suggesting that the protective effects of vaccination passed from pregnant mice to their fetuses. These findings are consistent with a growing body of data on pregnant humans reported by the US Centers for Disease Control and other research groups.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-05-contradict-covid-vaccine-effects-pregnancy.html>

<https://journals.plos.org/plosbiology/article?id=10.1371/journal.pbio.3001506>

COVID-19 in 2022—The Beginning of the End or the End of the Beginning?

If COVID-19 moves toward endemicity, then it should not disrupt everyday life. "However, with ongoing transmission and with an estimated 10% to 30% of individuals experiencing long COVID symptoms after infection, this issue will require careful attention to further define the syndrome and possible intervention (such as the RECOVER cohort study at the National Institutes of Health). Data suggest that vaccination can decrease the risk of long COVID and thus continuing to focus on improving vaccination rates must remain the cornerstone of COVID-19 prevention and mitigation not only locally, but globally."

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2793011>

Hospital Errors Worsened During The Pandemic, Say Federal Officials. Now They Want To Suppress The Data.

"Writing in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), senior officials at the CDC and CMS (the agency that runs Medicare) reported that since 2020, incidence of the most common hospital infections rose dramatically, as did other deadly mishaps like falls, surgical complications, wounds, and medication and medical errors."

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/leahbinder/2022/05/11/hospital-errors-worsened-during-the-pandemic-say-federal-officials-now-they-want-to-suppress-the-data/>

Omicron as severe as other COVID variants -large U.S. study

"The Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV2 virus is intrinsically as severe as previous variants, according to a preprint version of a large U.S. study that counters assumptions in other

studies that it was more transmissible but less severe. "We found that the risks of hospitalization and mortality were nearly identical" between the Omicron era and times in the past two years when different variants were dominant, the researchers said in their report." <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/omicron-severe-previous-covid-variants-large-study-finds-2022-05-05/>

One in Four Medicare Patients Harmed in Hospitals, Nearly Half Preventable

— CMS needs to do more to penalize facilities with avoidable adverse events, report says "Among the roughly 1 million Medicare patients who were discharged from hospitals in October 2018, a total of 258,323 experienced an adverse or temporary harm event during their stay. And 12% experienced events that led to longer stays, lifesaving interventions, permanent harm, or death."

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/special-reports/exclusives/98701>

Risk for Asymptomatic Household Transmission of *Clostridioides difficile* Infection Associated with Recently Hospitalized Family Members

"CDI incidence among insurance enrollees exposed to a recently hospitalized family member was 73% greater than enrollees not exposed, and incidence increased with length of hospitalization among family members. Compared with persons whose family members were hospitalized <1 day, the incidence rate ratio increased from 1.30 (95% CI 1.19–1.41) for 1–3 days of hospitalization to 2.45 (95% CI 1.66–3.60) for >30 days of hospitalization.

Asymptomatic *C. difficile* carriers discharged from hospitals could be a major source of community-associated CDI cases." https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/28/5/21-2023_article

Rapid MRSA and *S aureus* Decolonization Beneficial for Emergency Hip Surgery

"Screening for *Staphylococcus aureus*, decolonization, and use of teicoplanin for surgical antimicrobial prophylaxis among patients with methicillin-resistant *S aureus* (MRSA) lowered the number of prosthetic joint infections in elderly patients undergoing surgery for fracture of the femur." <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/972877>

2022 Health Watch USA Webinar Is Scheduled for Sept. 14th. Nationally and World-Renowned Speakers Will Discuss Frontline and Healthcare Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-19.

Speakers Will Include:

1. Dr. Joycelyn Elders, past US Surgeon General, United States.
2. Dr. Dale Fisher, WHO Committee Chair for Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network, Singapore.
3. Dr. Lidia Morawska, Director of the International Laboratory for Air Quality and Health, WHO Consultant and one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people of the world in 2021, Australia
4. Dr. Deborah Birx, Key Past Member of US Coronavirus Taskforce, United States.

SAVE The Date. The event will be all day from 8:45 am to 4:30 pm.

CEUs, CME for a variety of specialties, including Physicians, Nurses, Occupational

Therapists, Radiologists, Physical Therapists and Social Workers are planned.
Agenda and Updates will be posted on <https://healthconference.org>.

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>

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