



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

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

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

In the Month of Nov. Health Watch USAsm had:

- 6 Articles/op-eds regarding COVID-19.
- 2 Radio Shows concerning the COVID-19 virus.
- 1 Presentation.

Information & Registration for Health Watch USAsm Sept. 14th, 2022 COVID-19 Conference - Frontline Worker Safety: <https://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



There is no such thing as 'herd immunity.' Why the ongoing dangers of COVID-19 are real

We all need to recognize the dangers of COVID-19 and the risks it imposes to our long-term health and our country's workforce. Long COVID occurs in approximately 30% to 35% of cases. It commonly occurs with even mild disease and with reinfections. Thus, testing, masking, avoiding indoor crowded settings along with keeping vaccinations and boosters up to date are the best strategies we have to stay safe during times of high viral spread. Above all, we need to have clear and comprehensive public health messaging. We must be willing to make a few compromises in the way we live, for the safety of others and ourselves. [References](https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2022/11/29/covid-is-an-ongoing-threat-why-theres-no-such-thing-as-herd-immunity/69682517007/) Courier Journal. Nov. 11, 2022. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2022/11/29/covid-is-an-ongoing-threat-why-theres-no-such-thing-as-herd-immunity/69682517007/>



These holidays, we still need to think about COVID

With the upcoming holidays and family gatherings along with the public largely ignoring masking, testing and vaccinations, we may well be in for a holiday surge of COVID-19; adding to the increasing cases in RSV and seasonal flu. Masking, testing and vaccinations to flu and COVID are in themselves good steps, but taken together will give the best possible protection. Everyone should be tested immediately before the event, which some research has shown

can decrease spread by 40%. Second, ask those attending a family gathering to not enter high risk settings and to wear an N95 mask in public a week before the event. References Lexington Herald leader. Nov. 21, 2021. [References](#) [Download OpEd PDF](#)



Opinion: With only 28% of Kentuckians boosted against COVID-19, variants could pose a big health risk

Cases of COVID-19 are surging in Europe, there is not just one variant of concern but what appears to be a “soup” of highly infectious variants. In the United States these include the BA.5, BA.4.6, BA.2.75, BF.7, BQ.1 and BQ. 1.1 and in Southeast Asia, the XBB variant. Variant “soup” is highly problematic, since it just takes one variant that is able to evade your immunological history to cause an acute infection. “the original sin of the COVID-19 response is the failure to recognize airborne transmission as the dominant mode of transmission. ...” Industry needs to upgrade indoor ventilation and ideally install germicidal UV-C lighting. [References](#) Kentucky Gazette. Nov. 16, 2022.

<https://kentuckygazette.com/opinion-with-only-28-of-kentuckians-boosted-against-covid-19-variants-could-pose-a-big-health-risk/> [Download OpEd PDF](#)



Nov. 23, 2022. As Holidays Approach, COVID-19 Remains a Major Concern

As the festive holidays begin, even with vaccinations and boosters, COVID-19 still remains a concern for Long COVID and other severe long-term effects. Al Roker’s,

cohost of the Today Show, recent hospitalization for blood clots in his leg, which embolized to his lungs, is a sobering illustration of the long-term risks imposed by even a mild case of COVID-19, along with the reason why those who survive the acute infection should not be considered recovered. Remember, many relatives are elderly and at a very high risk for severe COVID-19 and Long COVID. All who are able should receive the bivalent BA.5 booster. Right before family gatherings, perform a rapid antigen test on all attendees. Ask visiting relatives to follow safe practices (wearing masks and avoiding crowded indoor settings) several days before the holiday events. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Nov. 23, 2022

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/as-holidays-approach-covid-19-remains-major-concern>

Nov. 8, 2022. Respiratory Spread and the Flawed Concept of Immunological Debt: A New Understanding

The recent CDC discussion of potential redefinition of spread, uniform application of guidelines across different types of facilities and the recommended use of N95 masks to stop the spread of SARS-CoV-2, if adopted, could provide revolutionary and needed changes in our approach to infectious disease, along potentially transforming our approach to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

Social media is filled with the discussion of “immunity debt” and a cause of the increase in RSV infections. I feel there is not a well-established scientific basis for this concept. One hypothesis to explain the increase in RSV hospitalizations is the possibility that SARS-CoV-2 causes a persistent immunological dysfunction in infected individuals. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Nov. 8, 2022.

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/respiratory-spread-flawed-concept-immunological-debt-new-understanding>

Nov. 1, 2022. Is the Current Bivalent Booster the Correct One? Studies Suggest it Isn't

"The United States may be on the precipice of a rude awakening regarding the persistence and devastation of COVID-19. A perfect storm is brewing with the convergence of 3 untoward outcomes: The bivalent booster may primarily elicit imprinted immunity, a deadly brew of a plethora of immune escape variants is forming, and our public has thrown safety to the wind with few—if any—masking or bothering to optimize their immunity. All of this is in the background of new and disturbing data regarding the dangers of long COVID-19. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Nov. 1, 2022.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/is-the-current-bivalent-booster-correct-one-studies-suggest-it-isn-t>



Experts urge polio vaccination to ward off any major resurgence

"Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., president and founder of the patient advocacy organization Health Watch USA, agrees with Vasani, especially about the need for the healthcare system and society in general to champion

polio vaccination. Vasani stresses the importance of a good public health system in the face of a polio outbreak. Kavanagh agrees with that as well, but with a caveat.

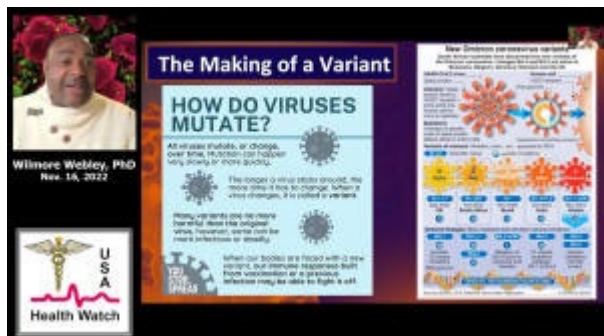
"The thing that is very hard about public health is when they're successful, you don't have disease," Kavanagh told Fierce Healthcare. "And so many people believe, 'Well, it wasn't needed. We don't need to get the vaccine.' Unless people believe that public health is vital and it's something that they need to incorporate into how they live their life plans (we will not be successful in mitigating outbreaks)." Kavanagh said, "unfortunately there are too many loopholes or opt-outs for either religious beliefs or other reasons that allow too many people to go unvaccinated. When that occurs in a large community, then you'd have a number of individuals that are at high risk of getting polio because you no longer have herd immunity."

Kavanagh points out that over 85% of the population needs to be vaccinated against polio before such herd immunity can take place. "Unfortunately, 70% of infections can be asymptomatic and those not vaccinated tend to have similar cultural views and encounter each other socially. Another 25% of polio infections are mild. Only one in 200 infections result in paralysis and of those 5% to 10% will die."

Most patients who contract the polio virus do well, and most do not know they are infected. However, those who develop paralytic polio face a devastating life-altering disease.

"The polio vaccine is safe and highly effective, which is why everyone should become vaccinated," said Kavanagh." Fiercehealthcare Nov. 9, 2022. <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/experts-urge-polio-vaccination-ward-any-major-resurgence>

Video Presentations & Written Comments



COVID-19: New Variants and the BA.5 Bivalent Booster

Dr. Wilmore C. Webley, Assoc. Professor & Assoc. Dean, Office of Inclusion & Engagement in the Graduate School at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Dr. Webley has received a M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Microbiology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, with expertise in immunology, infectious disease, host-pathogen interactions, and a concentration in vaccine development. Dr. Webley discusses the new bivalent

BA.5 booster and the challenges the new variants impose. In addition, an overview is presented on the life cycle of viruses, their propensity for mutation and the ever-increasing myriad of SARS-CoV-2 variants which have evolved. An overview of the WHO classification of viruses is also given. Health Watch USAsm Meeting. Nov. 16, 2022. <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-Meeting/20221121-WilmoreWebley.htm>

Radio / Podcasts

COVID-19: The Triple Threat & How to Prevent Long COVID

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses the triple threat of RSV, Long COVID, and COVID-19. He stresses the use of masking (N95 or KN95) especially for high-risk individuals, and the use of screening with home tests before family gatherings during the holidays. Three steps can be taken to prevent Long COVID, first do not get covid (100% effective), the second is to be up to date on vaccinations and boosters (30% to 40% effective) and finally, if you become infected to use Paxlovid (26% effective). Jack Pattie Show. Nov. 14, 2022. <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-JackPattie/20221114-JackPattie.htm>

COVID-19: Preparation for the BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 Surge in the Face of Immunological Imprinting.

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm discusses steps which should be taken with the upcoming holidays to prevent spread of COVID and the use of portable CO2 monitors to screen for poor air circulation. The Pandemic emergency has been extended through Jan 11, 2023, so one can order free COVID-19 tests on insurance and screen everyone prior to an event with a rapid test. There have been studies which show this will decrease spread by about 40%. In addition, one should ask guests to use precautions a week before the event of wearing masks and not going to high-risk venues. The new bivalent booster is at least as good as the original booster. However, some studies indicate it is not giving a large amount of added protection. Immune imprinting may be taking place. Another study on long COVID has found the incidence of occurrence at about 33%, even in mild to moderate cases. Long COVID commonly affects the heart and brain. We have given warnings about effects on the heart back in July of 2020, well before the vaccine, and at that time were called alarmist. The recent cardiac death of Julie Powell, just after having COVID, has focused the public on this occurrence. It is imperative that the public adopts testing, masking and become boosted to avert a surge with COVID-19. Jack Pattie Show. Nov. 7, 2022. <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-JackPattie/20221107-JackPattie.htm>

COVID-19 Articles of Interest

How to think like an aerosol scientist this holiday season to stay healthy

"The typical advice still applies — well-fitted N95 masks, vaccines, avoiding large crowds, and social distancing protects you and others around you. But for many, some of those options are not possible, with return-to-office mandates, and for others, no longer negotiable as COVID fatigue sets in almost three years after the virus was first detected. The monitor usually measures around 400 parts per million (ppm) when outdoors. Well-ventilated spaces are typically under 800. When the monitor goes above 1,000 ppm, that's typically when Jimenez recommends opening a window or moving outside to avoid stale air." Nov.16, 2022. <https://www.cpr.org/2022/11/16/colorado-covid-flu-rsv-indoor-air-quality/>

Enhanced replication of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron BA.2 in human forebrain and midbrain organoids

"Our results demonstrated that BA.2 replicated more efficiently while triggered lower levels of type I interferon response than that of SARS-CoV-2 WT, Delta, and BA.1 in both human forebrain and midbrain organoids. In addition, BA.2 triggered substantially higher levels of apoptosis in the infected human forebrain and midbrain organoids. Together, these findings suggest that BA.2 may be different from SARS-CoV-2 WT and previous variants in its capacity in targeting and causing diseases in the human brain." Nov. 20, 2022. Nature <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41392-022-01241-2>

Israeli long COVID study: 1 in 3 people fail to regain regular health months later

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-long-covid-study-1-in-3-people-fail-to-regain-regular-health-months-later/>

COVID-19 Surges Linked to Spike in Heart Attacks

"New data analysis from the Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars-Sinai found that deaths from heart attacks rose significantly during pandemic surges, including the COVID-19 Omicron surges, overall reversing a heart-healthier pre-pandemic trend." <https://www.cedars-sinai.org/newsroom/covid-19-surges-linked-to-spike-in-heart-attacks/>

COVID-19 and Excess All-Cause Mortality in the US and 20 Comparison Countries, June 2021-March 2022

"From June 27, 2021, to March 26, 2022, the US would have averted 122 304 deaths if COVID-19 mortality matched that of the 10 most-vaccinated states and 266 700 deaths if US excess all-cause mortality rate matched that of the 10 most-vaccinated states. If the US matched the rates of other peer countries, averted deaths would have been substantially higher in most cases (range, 154 622-357 899 for COVID-19 mortality; 209 924-465 747 for all-cause mortality)." <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2798990>

What If COVID Reinfections Wear Down Our Immunity?

"By dysregulation Leonardi means three effects of COVID:

- The hyperactivation of many T cells, which can prematurely age them
- The exuberant function of those hyperactivated T cells, which can then cause organ damage
- The exhaustion of those hyperactivated T cells, which implies they aren't winning the battle against viral proteins they are supposed to defeat.

In other words, argues Leonardi, T cells are becoming hyperactivated by SARS-CoV-2 and are prematurely aging, harming organs, and becoming exhausted trying to rid the body of an immune-evasive virus."

<https://thetyee.ca/Analysis/2022/11/07/COVID-Reinfections-And-Immunity/>

Immune imprinting and SARS-CoV-2 vaccine design

"This suggests that immune imprinting of the response may have occurred. Immune imprinting is a phenomenon whereby initial exposure to one virus strain effectively primes B cell memory and limits the development of memory B cells and neutralizing antibodies against new minor variant strains of the virus [6]. We hypothesize that repeatedly updating SARS-CoV-2 vaccines might not be fully effective because of limitations imposed by prior immune imprinting to ancestral SARS-CoV-2 strains."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8440232/>

It's not just Covid. Flu and RSV mean masks need to come back.

"Mask mandates not only stem the spread of diseases but also have helpful psychological benefits. Entering the holiday season last year, surging Covid-19 cases overwhelmed hospitals. This year, hospitals have been overwhelmed by a combination of Covid, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and the flu. " <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/holiday-travel-covid-rsv-flu-means-time-bring-mask-mandates-back-rcna58186>

Setting the record straight on the term 'immunity debt'

"Some scientists have suggested that the surge in RSV hospitalisations might be the result of SARS-CoV-2 infection causing immune deficiencies that leave people more susceptible to other infections. After all, Covid, like many viruses, harms the immune system as part of its strategy to gain entry. Infectious disease experts say (the) term and its surrounding narrative are dangerous and can promote Covid-19 misinformation."

<https://www.irishtimes.com/health/your-wellness/2022/11/28/has-covid-19-caused-permanent-damage-toour-immune-systems/>

Next Covid-19 Strain May be More Dangerous, Lab Study Shows

"-- Study done by team that first tested omicron against vaccines

-- Samples taken over six months from (an) immunosuppressed person

A South African laboratory study using Covid-19 samples from an immunosuppressed individual over six months showed that the virus evolved to become more pathogenic, indicating that a new variant could cause worse illness than the current predominant omicron strain. "

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-26/study-says-as-covid-evolves-in-long-term-infections-it-may-become-more-harmful?leadSource=uverify%20wall>

Sept. 14th, 2022 Health Watch USA Webinar



Frontline Worker Safety in the Age of COVID-19 Health Watch USAsm



Speakers Included:

Past Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, MD
– Introduction [View Video](#)



Professor Lidia Morawska, PhD, MSc. "Airborne infection transmission & Impact on Frontline Workers" Time Mag. Top 100 Most influential persons in the World for 2021. (Australia) [View Video](#)



Ambassador Deborah Birx, MD "COVID-19 USA - Lessons and new tools to improve workplace safety". Past White House Coordinator Coronavirus Response (USA) [View Video](#)



Professor Nele Brusselaers, MD, PhD "Evaluation of science advice during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sweden" (Sweden) [View Video](#)



Ziyad Al-Aly, MD "An Overview of Long COVID" (USA) [View Video](#)

Continuing Education Currently Available Online

Enduring materials are online and have been approved for 6 credit hours of Category I AMA Continuing Education and ANCC nursing credits for 6 hours. In addition, 6 hours of continuing education is provided for Physical Therapy, Respiratory Therapy, Dentistry and Social Work. 7.2 hours of continuing education is provided through the Kentucky Board of Nursing. Radiology has been approved for 5.5 hrs. Credits are pending for Occupational Therapy.

More information at <https://healthconference.org> There is no charge for continuing education credit hours.

For more information go to: <https://healthconference.org> .

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