



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Feb. 1, 2023

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

Activity for the Month of Jan. Health Watch USAsm:

- 7 Articles/op-eds regarding COVID-19.
- 1 Presentation (PACCARB).
- 2 Federal Written Comments.

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

Health Watch USA's 2022 Activities Report:

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Officers/20221231-HWUSA-Report-2022-2.pdf>

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 USAsm - News Articles & OpEds



A Holiday Card from Health Watch USA. Please share and distribute.

<http://bmacards.com/CV7dR2>

courier journal
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Why 'herd immunity' is as outdated as 'the earth is flat' when it comes to COVID: Opinion

This concept was formulated before science knew what viruses and mutations were. In actuality, many biological systems are highly dynamic and constantly adapting. With the exception of smallpox, no pathogen has ever been eradicated from the earth and with smallpox, eradication was achieved with a highly effective long-lasting vaccine. Our goal must be to decrease pathogen spread. We need to embrace vaccinations, the use of N95 masks in crowded venues, along with home delivery, curbside pickup and outside dining. Indoor air quality must be improved to the point where it is safer indoors than it is outdoors. [References](https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2023/01/04/why-herd-immunity-is-as-an-outdated-concept-when-it-comes-to-covid/69750170007/) Courier Journal. Jan. 4, 2023. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2023/01/04/why-herd-immunity-is-as-an-outdated-concept-when-it-comes-to-covid/69750170007/>



Who gets better COVID protection? CEOs or the frontline workers they employ? Opinion

What does the capitalistic business magazine, Forbes, and the World Socialist Web Site have in common? Answer: Both are pointing out the glaring double standard in COVID-19 precautions given to business CEOs and world business leaders at the DAVOS World Economic Forum, compared to those given to frontline workers which many of them employ. With the dangers of delayed heart disease, memory and disorders cognition, along with post-COVID immune dysfunction, we are dealing with a dangerous pathogen and I have repeatedly given the advice for business owners to upgrade their airflow, patrons to use portable CO2 monitors to estimate air quality and to test before gatherings. If it is good enough for billionaires and Fortune 500 CEOs it is good enough for me.

References Courier Journal. Jan. 30, 2023. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2023/01/30/ceos-or-the-frontline-workers-they-employ-who-gets-better-covid-protection/69844461007/>



Despite misinformation, we can do more to protect against Covid, RSV and flu

Much of the current COVID-19 misinformation has its genesis from the newly concocted explanation of "Immune Debt." Mounting evidence indicates this is not the case. A more concerning process of "Immune Theft" may be taking place. In Africa and Southeast Asia, masks and social mitigation measures have been used for decades to blunt the epidemics of SARS, MERS, and Ebola without any observed ill effects. The other more ominous possibility is "immune theft" resulting from an immunodysfunction caused by previous COVID-19 infections. A non-peer reviewed preprint recently reported that children who contracted RSV were twice as likely to have had a previous COVID-19 infection than those who did not develop an RSV infection. Common sense measures need to be taken during this winter surge. And The United States also had a large RSV spike last year. Thus, the "Immune Debt" explanation does not fit. For patrons, high-quality N95 masks should be worn when one enters indoor venues. For business, to the extent possible, make available curbside pickup and online purchasing options. References Lexington Herald Leader. Jan. 6, 2023. <https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article270831132.html>



Re: Long covid outcomes at one year after mild SARS-CoV-2 infection: nationwide cohort study

Another way of stating the results is that in very young unvaccinated adults (median age 25 years) who have mild disease, if one has cognitive impairment during the acute illness, this symptom will probably persist (81% of the time), if one has dyspnea or weakness, well over a third will have persistent symptoms, if one has heart palpitations about a third will have persistence of this symptom. BMJ. Jan. 1, 2023. <https://www.bmj.com/content/380/bmj-2022-072529/rr-2>

Immunodysfunction: A Cause of Stealth COVID-19 Illness and Death

"The concept of immune dysfunction caused by COVID-19 is rapidly changing from a theoretical construct to a significant adverse outcome of COVID-19. One which may have the potential to collapse our health care system and impact patients long after they become COVID-19-negative. Along with heart disease, immune dysfunction and severe infections are becoming another cause of stealth COVID-19 deaths. The public needs a paradigm shift from believing that COVID-19 is a respiratory disease to understanding that COVID-19 impacts every organ of the body, causing delayed manifestations such as strokes, heart attacks, and infections which can present long after one becomes COVID-19-negative." References Infection

Control Today. Jan. 17, 2023. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/immunodysfunction-a-cause-of-stealth-covid-19-illness-death>

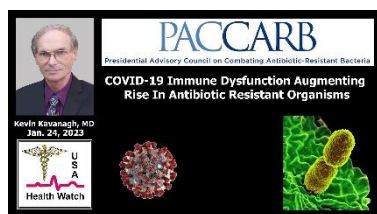
Bird Flu Warning: Its Spreading, Mutating, and Infecting Mammals

I'm starting to experience déjà Vu. Gain-of-Function experiments performed on a hazardous virus, viral spread from birds to mammals, spread between mammals, and mutations beginning to arise, which may be the first step in conferring the ability to transmit in humans. I do not want to go through this again, especially since our current pandemic is not under control. We need to aggressively contain the spread of bird flu and increase our genomic surveillance for this disease. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Jan. 23, 2023. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/bird-flu-warning-its-spreading-mutating-infecting-mammals>

FDA VRBPAC Meeting: Bivalent Vaccines, Natural Immunity, Imprinting and COVID-19 Hospitalization Rates

The FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee laid out a simpler direction for SARS-CoV-2 development and deployment. In individuals without a previous infection, the better the original vaccination matches the current viral strain, the better the immunological response will match future viral sublineages and the less of an impact any potential imprinting will have. In addition, during a discussion regarding natural immunity, it was stated: "Major issue is, the concept was that if you had COVID-19 or had been vaccinated previously, you would just need one dose versus others who might have multiple doses." Thus, the new vaccine strategy may bring natural immunity on par with initial vaccination, and require frequent updating of vaccines and boosters to minimize the impact, if any, of immune imprinting and maximize the immunological response to SARS-CoV-2. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Jan. 29, 2023. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/fda-vrbpac-meeting-bivalent-vaccines-natural-immunity-imprinting-covid-19-hospitalization-rates>

Health Watch USAsm – Committee Public Comment



Impact of COVID-19 Immune Dysfunction on Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria- PACCARB Presentation

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh gives a short discussion regarding the impact of immune dysfunction caused by COVID-19 and its impact on antibiotic resistant organisms. It is stressed that exposure needs to be prevented and similar to the protocols used by the Veterans Health Administration system, surveillance and contact precautions are of utmost importance. PACCARB Oral Comment Jan. 24, 2023. <https://youtu.be/8QYfp7KSd20> <https://www.healthwatchusa.net/Videos-Presentations/20230124-PACCARB-PublicComment.htm> [Download Written Comment](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Imprinting and the Need to Reformulate the COVID-19

Vaccine. FDA Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee. Jan. 26, 2023. [Download Comment](#)

Health Watch USAsm – News Reports



268K people who died from COVID-19 in first 2 years of pandemic not included in official tally: study

Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., president and founder of patient advocacy organization Health Watch USA, told Fierce Healthcare that “the importance of having accurate data and the impact of COVID-19 for our country’s workforce and our healthcare system cannot be overstated.”

Kavanagh adds that “our healthcare system may not be able to withstand the continued stresses of the pandemic, transforming it into a dysfunctional system not able to take care of heart attack or cancer patients during high rates of COVID-19. We thus should not choose to understate the actual numbers and mitigate the impact of the pandemic; this results in a lack of resources and inhibits our ability to effectively confront the pandemic.”

Kavanagh said the “authors’ data and conclusions further build on a mountain of evidence of the dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic. Death certificate death numbers will greatly underestimate actual COVID-19 deaths. Many COVID-19 deaths are going uncounted and unnoticed since the public and policymakers seem fixated on just those resulting from acute respiratory disease.”

“(Delayed deaths from Long COVID) would almost double the total number of COVID-19 deaths,” said Kavanagh. “The vast majority of these additional deaths are in COVID-19 negative patients and are stealth deaths not reported to COVID fatality registries.” Fierce Healthcare. Jan. 24, 2023.

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/268176-people-who-died-covid-19-first-2-years-pandemic-not-included-official-tally-study>

Providers jostle to lead way if FDA makes COVID vaccination a yearly jab

So why are children still getting the original monovalent version of the COVID-19 vaccine? That's a question Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., president and founder of patient advocacy organization Health Watch USA, told Fierce Healthcare he wants to see answered.

Kavanagh said he worries about imprinting, where exposure to the virus, whether it’s from a vaccine or infection, will determine the type of immune response to all future exposures. This creates a concern that those exposed only to the original variant, for instance through the monovalent vaccine, will not produce as strong a response and immune memory to new variants. “And this may also limit then the immune system’s learning about how to respond to the new infections when they’ve been imprinted with the original variant,” said Kavanagh. “The advantage of imprinting to the body is that it provides for a very rapid immunological response, but a response that may not perfectly match the virus that individuals are exposed to.” He expressed those concerns in a letter to VRBPAC ahead of the Thursday meeting. Fierce Healthcare. Jan. 26, 2023. <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/and-then-there-were-1-fda-weights-battling-covid-similar-battling-flu-1-yearly-jab>

How COVID-19 may have enhanced the status of preprint studies

Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., is the founder and president of the patient advocacy organization Health Watch USA. He’s also been keeping a close watch on COVID-19 throughout the pandemic, often using information from preprint studies. He was one of the first experts to sound the alarm about Delta’s

lethality, and early on noted that COVID-19 doesn't just affect the respiratory system, but other organs in the body as well.

Kavanagh argued that "by the time journal articles are formally reviewed and printed often the information will be outdated or lives lost in the delay." However, Kavanagh echoes Krumholz in saying that preprint studies need to be handled with care, and the reader should be able to spot shoddy research.

"Both the history of the authors and institution is very important and of course you have to read the whole article, plus any comments which are posted on the preprint's webpage," Kavanagh told Fierce Healthcare. "Some journals have an open review process where anyone can make and post comments during the formal review process of the article. These steps should also be performed for articles that have been formally published, since peer review is largely a volunteer process and not an ironclad guarantee of quality." Fierce Healthcare. Jan. 27, 2023.

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/how-covid-19-may-have-enhanced-status-preprint-studies>

Health Watch USAsm – Articles of Interest

How your first brush with COVID warps your immunity (Immune Imprinting)

(Excellent article on Imprinting. Should we be giving a bivalent vaccine so we are not imprinting newly vaccinated individuals to the original variant.)

Nature: "The immune system responds more strongly to the strain of a virus that it first met, weakening response to other strains. Can this 'imprinting' be overcome?" "Imprinting is often presented as a problem, but it's a fundamental part of immune memory that delivers a lightning-fast response to a viral invader, without having to start from scratch." <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-00086-1>

Bivalent COVID Vaccines Likely Thwarted by Immune Imprinting, Expert Says

— Paul Offit, MD, also argues that boosting should be reserved for older or vulnerable individuals "Omicron-targeting bivalent boosters likely conferred no extra protection against COVID-19 over the original mRNA products due to immune imprinting, according to vaccine expert Paul Offit, MD, of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia."

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/covid19vaccine/102604>

"Why did the strategy for significantly increasing BA.4 and BA.5 neutralizing antibodies using a bivalent vaccine fail? The most likely explanation is imprinting. The immune systems of people immunized with the bivalent vaccine, all of whom had previously been vaccinated, were primed to respond to the ancestral strain of SARS-CoV-2. They therefore probably responded to epitopes shared by BA.4 and BA.5 and the ancestral strain, rather than to new epitopes on BA.4 and BA.5."

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2215780>

Persistent COVID-19 Symptoms at 6 Months After Onset and the Role of Vaccination Before or After SARS-CoV-2 Infection

(Benefits of Vaccination after a COVID-19 Infection)

"In this cohort study of 1832 US adults, the risk of reporting symptoms for 28 or more days after COVID-19 onset was significantly higher in participants who were unvaccinated at the time of infection and

those who reported moderate or severe acute illness symptoms. At 6 months after onset, participants had significantly higher risk of pulmonary, diabetes, neurological, and mental health encounters vs preinfection baseline." **"Among unvaccinated participants, postinfection vaccination was associated with a 41% lower risk of reporting symptoms at 6 months..."** "Participants had higher risk of pulmonary (RR, 2.00; 95% CI, 1.40-2.84), diabetes (RR, 1.46; 95% CI, 1.00-2.13), neurological (RR, 1.29; 95% CI, 1.02-1.64), and mental health-related medical encounters (RR, 1.28; 95% CI, 1.01-1.62) at 6 months after symptom onset than at baseline (before SARS-CoV-2 infection)." <https://lnkd.in/gTd4mb3u>

Opinion Covid hospitalizations don't account for long covid

"The most meaningful metric is excess deaths above a pre-pandemic average. Many peer-reviewed, quantitative analyses of excess mortality have demonstrated that the United States has experienced significantly higher covid-specific and all-cause mortality than peer countries of similar wealth; the U.S. excess mortality rate during the pandemic is more than threefold that of Canada..... Medical science now knows that many people living with long-term conditions such as heart, lung and liver diseases are tipped into decompensation and death by the coronavirus. Many more suffer lethal strokes and heart attacks months after covid." Washington Post. Jan. 19, 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/01/19/covid-hospitalizations-dont-account-long-covid/>

Lauterbach (German Federal Health Minister) warns of incurable immunodeficiency caused by corona

Those who become infected with corona more often apparently run the risk of developing an incurable immune deficiency. According to Health Minister Lauterbach, this is indicated by various studies that are currently being further researched. As a result, the risk of chronic diseases such as dementia would increase. Several corona infections in one person can have serious consequences for the immune system, according to the words of Federal Health Minister Karl Lauterbach. "It's worrying what we're seeing in people who have had multiple corona infections. Studies now show very clearly that those affected often have to deal with an incurable immune deficiency," said Lauterbach of the Düsseldorf "Rheinische Post".

<https://www.n-tv.de/politik/Lauterbach-warnt-vor-unheilbarer-Immunschwaeche-durch-Corona-article23860527.html>

Long Covid may be 'the next public health disaster' — with a \$3.7 trillion economic impact rivaling the Great Recession

"Long Covid has affected as many as 23 million Americans to date — and it's poised to have a financial impact rivaling or exceeding that of the Great Recession. By one estimate, the chronic illness will cost the U.S. economy \$3.7 trillion, with extra medical costs accounting for \$528 billion. David Cutler, an economist at Harvard University who projected the \$3.7 trillion economic cost of long Covid, estimates the individual medical costs of the disease to be about \$9,000 a year, on average. However, typical costs can range from roughly \$3,700 up to almost \$14,000, Cutler said. "

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/30/why-long-covid-could-be-the-next-public-health-disaster.html>

Excess deaths in 2022 among worst in 50 years

BBC News: "A number of studies have found people are more likely to have heart problems and strokes in the weeks and months after catching Covid, and some of these may not end up being linked to the virus when the death is registered." And cases of vaccine related cardiac injury are too rare - and mostly not fatal - to account for the excess in deaths. Finally, figures up to June 2022 looking at deaths

from all causes show unvaccinated people were more likely to die than vaccinated people. While this data on its own can't tell us it's the vaccine protecting people from dying - there are too many complicating factors - if vaccines were driving excess deaths we would expect this to be the other way around." <https://lnkd.in/gW6ebs7i>

COVID-19 patients retain elevated risk of death for at least 18 months after infection, finds large-scale study

"COVID-19 is associated with higher risks of cardiovascular disease and death in the short- and long-term, according to a study in nearly 160,000 participants published today in Cardiovascular Research, a journal of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC). Compared to uninfected individuals, the likelihood of COVID-19 patients dying was up to 81 times higher in the first three weeks of infection and remained five times higher up to 18 months later." <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-01-covid-patients-retain-elevated-death.html>

Myocarditis: COVID-19 is a much bigger risk to the heart than vaccination

The heart has played a central role in COVID-19 since the beginning. Cardiovascular conditions are among the highest risk factors for hospitalization. A significant number of patients hospitalized with SARS-CoV-2 infections have signs of heart damage, and many recover from infection with lasting cardiovascular injury. <https://theconversation.com/myocarditis-covid-19-is-a-much-bigger-risk-to-the-heart-than-vaccination-174580>

Excess risk for acute myocardial infarction mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic

"The excess death, defined as the difference between the observed and the predicted mortality rates, was most pronounced for the youngest (25–44 years) aged decedents, ranging from 23% to 34% for the youngest compared to 13%–18% for the oldest age groups. The trend of mortality suggests that age and sex disparities have persisted even through the recent Omicron surge, with excess AMI-associated mortality being most pronounced in younger-aged adults."

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jmv.28187>

Repeated vaccination of inactivated SARS-CoV-2 vaccine dampens neutralizing antibodies against Omicron variants in breakthrough infection

"Our data suggest that repeated vaccination with inactivated virus vaccine may recall strong immune response to target the original strain, which in turn dampen immune responses to newly infected strains, as manifested by reduced nAb activities against BA.2, BA.4 and BA.5 in the group that received three doses of vaccines." <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41422-023-00781-8>

Absence from work at record high as Americans feel strain from Covid

More than a million people have called out sick for the past three years, and CDC says long Covid probably a contributor too The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/29/covid-absence-workforce-health-long-covid>

Sept. 14th, 2022 Health Watch USAsm Webinar

Frontline Workers: A Global Perspective



**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, and Dentistry. 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.

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