



Health Watch USAsm Newsletter

<https://www.healthwatchusa.org> Mar. 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 Feb. Health Watch USAsm:

- 4 Articles/op-eds regarding COVID-19.
- 1 Presentation (PACCARB).

Information Regarding 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

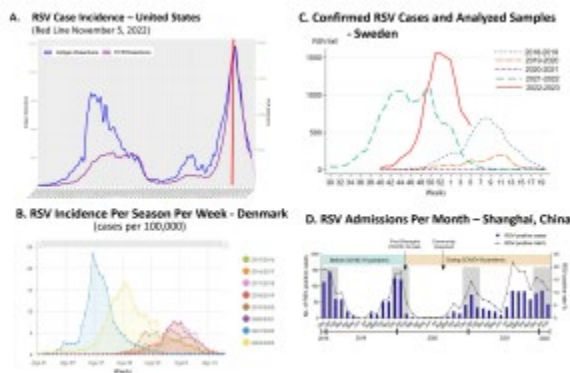


COVID-19 Immunity: Catching a Disease to Prevent a Disease?

I had to stop and read the Seattle Times news article "UW study: Catching COVID gives protection from its worst effects." The article's

first sentence states: "A past COVID-19 infection offers 'durable,' temporary protection against getting severely sick with the coronavirus." Can you please tell me what 'durable - temporary protection' is? Unfortunately, neither vaccination nor infection provides durable protection. Hybrid immunity is best, but becoming infected to achieve immunity is a perilous strategy. At 40 weeks, the study in question, reported that pooled data found only a 36.1% effectiveness against reinfection. This protection would be expected to be even less effective with the highly immune-invasive XBB.1.5 and BQ.1 variants. Herd immunity is not achievable and has not been achieved in Sweden, a country whose results have been discouraging. There is minimal downside to boosting your immunity to help avoid long COVID. Our goal as a nation must not be to become reinfected yearly; this is not a viable option. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Feb. 20, 2023.

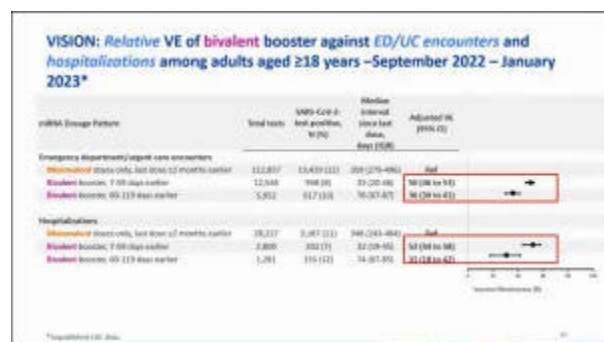
<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/covid-19-immunity-catching-disease-prevent-disease->



Is the Rise in RSV Infections Associated With Immune Debt or SARS-CoV-2 Immune Dysfunction?

Post-COVID-19 immune dysfunction is supported by epidemiological, clinical, and laboratory evidence. Attributing, with little to no evidence, that masking and lack of exposure is the primary driver of increases in bacterial and viral infections discourages critical interventions needed to stop the spread of disease. [References](#) Infection Control Today. Feb. 24, 2023.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/is-rise-rsv-infections-associated-immune-debt-sars-cov-2-immune-dysfunction->



How Soon Is Another Booster Needed? Durability of Vaccine-Induced Immunity

Specifically for older individuals and immunocompromised individuals, a year could be too long. "Is the (bivalent) booster worth taking? Yes, definitely. However, this differs from the booster or vaccine we need to navigate this pandemic. At the conclusion of the CDC Committee meeting, my primary impression was

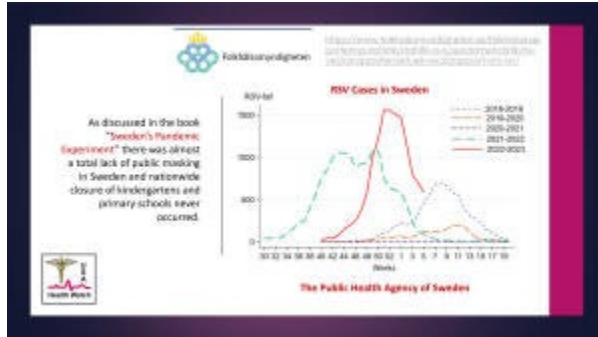
that we senior citizens might be viewed as expendable. Policymakers need to make the hard decisions that must be made to assure our safety during this pandemic. After looking at the data, I will consult my physician about receiving a booster on an accelerated schedule, possibly at 6 months." [References](#) Infection Control Today. Feb. 24, 2023.

<https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/how-soon-is-another-booster-needed-durability-vaccine-induced-immunity>

Mpox Emergence: A Review of the 2022-2023 Outbreak

"The clinical and epidemiological presentation of mpox has changed," Kevin Kavanagh, MD, a member of the Infection Control Today® Editorial Advisory Board, explains. "Although not typically considered a sexual disease, there is evidence that the virus can be present in semen early in the disease, possibly during an asymptomatic period. Although spread by this route has not been firmly established, epidemiological data and the clinical presentation of lesions support the contention that this can be a major route of spread. Initial outbreaks were associated with gay and bisexual men. In general, these communities had experience with the HIV epidemics and had high acceptance of public health measures, including vaccines. Working together with public health officials, the mpox pandemic was brought under control. Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the adoption of public health measures was not uniformly embraced throughout our society. The response and results achieved by the gay and bisexual communities to mpox should be emulated by others when dealing with COVID-19. Infection Control Today Feb. 23, 2023.

Health Watch USAsm – Meeting Presentations & Comments



Immune Debt Versus SARS-CoV-2 Immune Dysfunction

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh from Health Watch USAsm explains why Immune Dysfunction is thought by many to be the main driver of the surges in bacterial and viral infections the world is experiencing. Immune debt caused by lockdowns is an unlikely cause of the RSV surges. For

example, Sweden had two large surges of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) infections but did not have lockdowns and had little use of masking by the public. Dr. Kavanagh presents both epidemiological, clinical and laboratory evidence to support this etiology. The overriding message is that public health interventions, such as masking and social distancing protect individuals and communities and do not cause harm. Health Watch USAsm Meeting. Feb. 15, 2023.

<https://youtu.be/0UaveBICuPg>

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

CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Feb. 23, 2023. <https://www.healthwatchusa.org/HWUSA-Presentations-Community/PDF-Downloads/20230222-CDC-ACIP-PublicComment-updating-the-vaccine.pdf>

Health Watch USAsm – News Reports



Do masks really protect against COVID-19? Meta-analysis authors want to see more evidence

Kevin Kavanagh, M.D., the president and founder of the patient advocacy group Health Watch USA who's been closely following and analyzing the

pandemic from the beginning, cited The Conversation in his rebuttal of the Cochrane Library's findings.

"Meta-analysis is a less than optimal methodology to apply to the issue of masking," Kavanagh told Fierce Healthcare. "Almost all included studies varied widely in their methodology, since it is very hard to ethically have a non-masking control group."

Kavanagh noted that in some of the studies in the meta-analysis, individuals wore masks only part of the time and COVID-19 spread throughout a building.

"Masks worn by an asymptomatic carrier also protect others, but this was not evaluated in most of the studies," said Kavanagh. "Negative findings are not surprising in a meta-analysis with suboptimal research assumptions and which includes studies with widely varying methodologies." Kavanagh said that "surgical masks will not reliably stop an airborne pathogen." (However,) Kavanagh said: "After all masking and public health measures stopped SARS-1 in its tracks in Toronto, I would view (the Cochrane meta-analysis' findings) with a large degree of skepticism." Fierce Healthcare. Feb. 9, 2023.

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/do-masks-really-protect-against-covid-19-meta-analysis-authors-want-see-more-evidence>

Study: Protection from prior COVID infection almost as good as vaccines

In addition, researchers equated a two-dose mRNA vaccine to prior infection and didn't consider a booster, said Kevin Kavanagh, president and founder of patient advocacy group Health Watch USA, in an interview with Fierce Healthcare.

"I feel the meaning of the results of the study has been largely misinterpreted," Kavanagh said. "Infection may give similar or greater immunity than a two-dose vaccine, but both are inadequate at this point," he adds. Those results don't impress Kavanagh, he said. "If at the beginning of the pandemic, back in 2020, we announced that a vaccine would give protection for about 10 months, that it was only 36.1% effective in preventing infections with the tested BA.1 variant, and it would be expected to be less effective with the current circulating variants, few would view this as good news," he said. Kavanagh said "preventing hospitalizations and deaths is important, but we now know that long COVID is also a grave concern, one which can occur in mild disease. Data from the CDC Household Pulse Survey indicates it is even more common in young and middle-aged adults than those above the age of 60. The results of the article underscore the necessity for both vaccinated and previously infected to receive a bivalent booster to optimize one's immunity."

Fierce Healthcare, Feb. 22, 2023. <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payers/study-argues-protection-prior-covid-infection-almost-good-vaccines>

Health Watch USAsm – Articles of Interest

CBS News' medical contributor claims young people suffered unprecedented spike in heart attacks because of a lack of masking and vaccinations

"CBS News' medical contributor Celine Gounder insinuated Monday that the young people who suffered an unprecedented spike in lethal heart attacks during the first two years of the pandemic might only have themselves to blame." The researchers recognized that "infections such as the flu can increase risk for heart disease and heart attack," but noted that "the sharp rise in heart attack deaths is like nothing seen before." <https://www.theblaze.com/news/cbs-news-medical-contributor-blames-not-masking-and-not-getting-vaccinated-for-young-peoples-heart-attacks#toggle-gdpr>

Severe Fatigue and Persistent Symptoms at Three Months Following SARS-CoV-2 Infections During the Pre-Delta, Delta, and Omicron Time Periods: A Multicenter

Prospective Cohort Study (Another study reporting evidence that Vaccination helps to prevent Long COVID-19.)

"Prolonged symptoms following SARS-CoV-2 infection were more common among participants infected during the pre-Delta period compared with Delta and Omicron periods; however, these differences were no longer significant after adjusting for vaccination status. This suggests a potential beneficial effect of vaccination on the risk of developing long-term symptoms."

<https://academic.oup.com/cid/advance-article/doi/10.1093/cid/ciad045/7007177?login=false>

The haunting brain science of long Covid

"It is now clear from U.S. and U.K. investigations of approximately 2,000 previously hospitalized Covid patients that six months later more than half have problems managing finances and paying bills as well as completing everyday activities like preparing meals, bathing, getting dressed, or walking across a room. Autopsy studies show that the virus can persist in some people for many months even though they have no symptoms and test negative for the virus. An MRI study from George Washington University of people who had mild Covid-19 symptoms several months earlier found much less gray matter in their brains than they should have had. This tracks with PET scan studies of people with long Covid showing impaired cellular metabolism in the frontal lobe six months following acute Covid. Other long Covid studies using PET scans correlate this slower metabolism with numerous functional problems and symptoms — ongoing issues with smell, memory, cognitive abilities, chronic pain, and sleep disruption — that harms quality of life."

<https://www.statnews.com/2023/02/16/the-haunting-brain-science-of-long-covid/>

Worsening of asthma control after recovery from mild to moderate COVID-19 in patients from Hong Kong

"Mild-to-moderate COVID-19 among asthma patients, upon recovery, was associated with worsening of asthma symptoms, lower ACT score, a higher need for escalation of asthma maintenance therapy and more uncontrolled asthma."

<https://respiratory-research.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12931-023-02363-z>

Just How Bad Was Pandemic Strain on Emergency Wait Times? The Numbers Are In

"Patients are now waiting hours, days, and sometimes weeks in the ED. It's like asking a teacher to take on a whole new class of students when last year's class hasn't left yet. New data from two studies opens in a new tab or window we recently published in JAMA Network Open document what patients, nurses, and doctors already know: the levees have broken. The system has collapsed under the weight of acute care needs." MedPage Today.

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/opinion/second-opinions/103166>

ERs staffed by private equity firms aim to cut costs by hiring fewer doctors

"The hospital declined to discuss Valle's care, citing patient privacy. But 17 months before her

three-day ordeal, Tennova had outsourced its emergency rooms to American Physician Partners, a medical staffing company owned by private equity investors. APP employs fewer doctors in its ERs as one of its cost-saving initiatives to increase earnings, according to a confidential company document obtained by KHN and NPR."

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/02/11/1154962356/ers-hiring-fewer-doctors>

Assessing the impact of one million COVID-19 deaths in America: Economic and life expectancy losses

"We estimated that US life expectancy at birth dropped by 3.08 years due to the million COVID-19 deaths. Economic welfare losses estimated in terms of national income growth supplemented by the value of lives lost, was in the order of US\$3.57 trillion. US\$2.20 trillion of these losses were in the non-Hispanic White population (56.50%), US\$698.24 billion (19.54%) in the Hispanic population, and US\$579.93 billion (16.23%) in the non-Hispanic Black population. The scale of life expectancy and welfare losses underscores the pressing need to invest in health in the US to prevent further economic shocks from future pandemic threats." Nature.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-30077-1>

Two Years of U.S. COVID-19 Vaccines Have Prevented Millions of Hospitalizations and Deaths

"It has been two years since the first COVID-19 vaccine was given to a patient in the United States. Since then, the U.S. has administered more than 655 million doses — 80 percent of the population has received at least one dose — with the cumulative effect of preventing more than 18 million additional hospitalizations and more than 3 million additional deaths." The Commonwealth Fund. Dec. 13, 2022. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/blog/2022/two-years-covid-vaccines-prevented-millions-deaths-hospitalizations>

Effect of Higher-Dose Ivermectin for 6 Days vs. Placebo on Time to Sustained Recovery in Outpatients With COVID-19 - A Randomized Clinical Trial

"Among outpatients with mild to moderate COVID-19, treatment with ivermectin, with a maximum targeted dose of 600 µg/kg daily for 6 days, compared with placebo did not improve time to sustained recovery. These findings do not support the use of ivermectin in patients with mild to moderate COVID-19." <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2801827>

Doctors who touted ivermectin as COVID fix now push it for flu, RSV

Washington Post: "First, the group of doctors championed ivermectin as a COVID panacea. It failed to live up to the hype. Now, they're promoting the anti-parasitic to prevent and treat the flu and RSV. The Front Line COVID-19 Critical Care Alliance, formed in 2020 to "prevent and treat COVID," is touting ivermectin for common respiratory infections amid a dramatic drop in prescriptions for the drug as clinical trials undermined claims of its efficacy against COVID. There is no clinical data in humans to support using ivermectin for flu or RSV, according to the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention and other medical experts." Feb. 26, 2023.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2023/02/26/ivermectin-use-covid-flu-rsv/>

Brain Structure, Widespread Connectivity Changes Seen With Long COVID

— Gray matter atrophy, hyperconnectivity in patients with anxiety, depression

"Gray matter atrophy and severe disruption of brain functional connectivity were seen in long COVID patients with anxiety and depression about 3 months after acute mild SARS-CoV-2 infection." <https://www.medpagetoday.com/meetingcoverage/aan/103186>

Long COVID Now Looks like a Neurological Disease, Helping Doctors to Focus Treatments

The causes of long COVID, which disables millions, may come together in the brain and nervous system "People with long COVID have symptoms such as pain, extreme fatigue and "brain fog," or difficulty concentrating or remembering things. As of February 2022, the syndrome was estimated to affect about 16 million adults in the U.S. and had forced between two million and four million Americans out of the workforce, many of whom have yet to return. Long COVID often arises in otherwise healthy young people, and it can follow even a mild initial infection."

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/long-covid-now-looks-like-a-neurological-disease-helping-doctors-to-focus-treatments/>

Neurologic and neuroradiologic manifestations in neonates born to mothers with coronavirus disease 2019

"Neonates born to mothers with symptomatic COVID-19 showed an increased incidence of neurological abnormalities. Most of the mothers (96.4%) were unvaccinated before the COVID-19 diagnosis." [https://www.pedneur.com/article/S0887-8994\(22\)00268-5/fulltext](https://www.pedneur.com/article/S0887-8994(22)00268-5/fulltext)

Antidepressants can induce mutation and enhance persistence toward multiple antibiotics

"Here we demonstrate that antidepressants, one of the most frequently prescribed drugs, can induce antibiotic resistance and persistence. Such effects are associated with increased reactive oxygen species, enhanced stress signature responses, and stimulation of efflux pump expression."

<https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2208344120>

Upgrading PPE for staff working on COVID-19 wards cut hospital-acquired infections dramatically

"Until recently UK Infection Protection Control guidance recommended that healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 should use fluid resistant surgical masks type IIR (FRSMs) as respiratory protective equipment; if aerosol-generating procedures were being carried out (for example inserting a breathing tube into the patient's windpipe), then the guidance recommended the use of an FFP3 respirator. The guidance has recently been updated to oblige NHS organisations

to assess the risk that COVID-19 poses to staff and provide FFP3 respirators where appropriate."
<https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/upgrading-ppe-for-staff-working-on-covid-19-wards-cut-hospital-acquired-infections-dramatically>

Why we need to wear better masks

"The big picture: Fitted particle-filtering masks like N95s are up to 75 times more effective at preventing infection with COVID-19 than surgical masks, according to a study published recently in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences."

<https://www.axios.com/2022/01/11/n95-mask-protection-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. **For more information go to:** <https://healthconference.org>

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