

Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

15th Jun 2021

Isolation Tips

Why Covid has left us at a crossroads over loneliness - Kenneth Watt

After over a year of restrictions on how we work, socialise and interact with the rest of the world, many of us have endured periods of intense loneliness and even more experienced feelings of isolation. The impacts of loneliness are well documented. It is not just bad for our mental wellbeing, it can be devastating for our physical health and productivity, as well as communities and public services. As restrictions lift and we see groups of people back playing sport in parks and catching up with friends in beer gardens, loneliness is not going away for all. In fact, there is a risk that as some parts of society start to connect again, loneliness is further locked in for others.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/why-covid-has-left-us-at-a-crossroads-over-loneliness-kenneth-watt-3271271>

Befriending services could help tackle Scotland's loneliness crisis

In the last year, the levels of loneliness across Great Britain have grown. The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics found 7.2 per cent of people “often” or “always” felt lonely, up from five per cent before the pandemic. That’s around 3.7 million adults. But at the same time, the pandemic has also encouraged community spirit. Between March and June last year, 2.2 million people in Scotland volunteered as a befriender, either formally or informally, according to Volunteer Scotland.

<https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view/befriending-services-could-help-tackle-scotlands-loneliness-crisis>

Hygiene Helpers

Win a cow, avoid COVID: Philippines tempts vaccine hesitant

Last week, after ignoring her brother’s advice for months, Fannie Taladro Pestaño hurried to a school campus near her home in Las Piñas City, a suburb of the Philippines’ capital Manila, to line up for her first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Her brother, Johnny Rey Taladro, had been urging her to sign up for the immunisation drive.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/14/win-a-cow-avoid-covid-philippines-tempts-vaccine-hesitant>

Germans told to be patient as chemists start Covid vaccine pass scheme

Fully vaccinated Germans have been urged not to storm the country’s pharmacies in the rush to obtain a Covid digital vaccination pass made available in thousands of stores on Monday. The “Digitale Impfpass” or digital vaccination pass, is the official document to be used as part of the the European Union vaccine certificate scheme to facilitate travel across the bloc, which the European parliament agreed last month. The Association of Pharmacists issued an appeal to people to be patient, admitting the system was new and untried.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/14/germans-told-to-be-patient-as-chemists-start-covid-vaccine-pass-scheme>

Community Activities

‘A rumour can explode in one day’: Meet the pioneer fighting vaccine mistrust

When anthropologist Heidi Larson secured the seed funding to establish the Vaccine Confidence Project a decade ago, it was a humble set-up housed in a corner of the venerable London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in Bloomsbury. Now, in a global pandemic, her expertise as one of the world’s foremost authorities on anti-vaccine sentiment and the rumours, misinformation and

emotions that shape our perception of vaccines means that Professor Larson is in serious demand. In the past fortnight she has delivered the John Maddox Lecture at the Hay Festival, collected the prestigious Edinburgh Medal for her work to understand and tackle popular misconceptions of vaccines and joined UK health minister Matt Hancock and WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at a Science Museum summit to explore ways to boost confidence in the Covid-19 vaccine.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/optimist/vaccine-world/rumour-explode-pioneer-fighting-vaccine-mistrust-b939819.html>

Get Covid vaccine and chance to win a car as Moscow's death toll grows

The mayor of Moscow is offering people who receive a coronavirus jab the chance to win cars as daily deaths in the Russian capital hit a four-month high and suspicion of vaccines remains widespread. Officials said yesterday that 69 people had died from Covid-19 in Moscow in the preceding 24 hours, the most since early February. The city of 12 million people recorded 7,704 new cases, the highest figure since late last year. Sergei Sobyenin, the mayor, ordered all non-essential workers to remain home next week, with full pay. He also ordered food courts to close. Restaurants, bars and clubs will be barred from serving customers between 11pm and 6am. He has ruled out a lockdown.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/get-covid-vaccine-chance-win-car-moscow-ss0v2ft80>

Anti-vax groups rack up victories against Covid-19 push

The partisan divide over the country's pandemic response has reinvigorated the anti-vaccine movement nationwide, with mostly Republican lawmakers in nearly 40 states backing bills to restrict Covid-19 vaccine mandates or vaccine passports. Anti-vaccine fervor that was previously concentrated in specific communities — like Orthodox Jews in New Jersey and New York, and Somali immigrants in Minnesota — spread more widely during the pandemic as the U.S. government urged people to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/06/14/anti-vax-groups-covid-victories-493482>

How Kendall Toole Built A Mental Health Community During Covid-19 On Peloton

Kendall Toole, an instructor for Peloton, explained that, of course, the quality of the exercise is great and the people who make the content and work for the team at Peloton put out fantastic exercise classes and that is part of why it works. But, to her, “really kind of the secret sauce, especially through the pandemic, is that you could connect with people.” She notes that people feeling alone or isolated could bond together by doing the same exercise, and find like minded people for support, both in class and online, like someone else who is a first responder, or a mom, or even a healthcare worker.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jessicagold/2021/06/11/how-kendall-toole-built-a-mental-health-community-during-covid-19-on-peloton/?sh=768b979268ad>

Working Remotely

Fed-up young workers fear they need offices to save their careers

Managers hoping to lure employees into offices may find their youngest and newest staff are their strongest allies. Young white-collar staff feel caught between a rock and a hard place - they value quality of life over old-fashioned 9-5 commuting, but are even more worried about seeing their careers stall unless they head back into an office. That's encouraging many to be among the first to return to their desks. While experienced employees often have established professional networks and dedicated home offices, younger staff say the pandemic has left them under-informed and cut off from their teams. There are now growing concerns that they are missing out on career opportunities older colleagues took for granted.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/economy/fed-up-young-workers-fear-they-need-offices-to-save-their-careers>

Winners and Losers of the Work-From-Home Revolution

This year, two international teams of economists published papers that offer very different impressions of the future of remote work. The first team looked at an unnamed Asian tech company that went remote during the pandemic. Just about everything that could go wrong did go wrong. Working hours went up while productivity plummeted. Uninterrupted work time cratered and mentorship evaporated. Naturally, workers with children at home were the worst off. The second team surveyed more than 30,000 Americans over the past few months and found that workers were overwhelmingly satisfied with their work-from-home experience. Most people said it exceeded their expectations. This complexity makes more sense if we think of WFH as an invention that helps some people more than others. The remote-work revolution might be a good thing overall. But it will produce winners and losers.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/06/winners-losers-work-home-remote/619181/>

The Big Question: As pandemic subsides, is remote work here to stay?

With the pandemic subsiding in the U.S., the great workplace transition has begun. Many companies, particularly on Wall Street, are throwing open their doors and calling employees back to their desks. Other companies are embracing remote work or hybrid arrangements and cutting the size of their office footprints. You're the former chief talent officer at Netflix and now a human-resources consultant and author of an influential book on workplace culture, "Powerful: Building a Culture of Freedom and Responsibility." A lot of employees who've been working remotely this year are now wondering, "Wait, what's the point of the office?" How do you answer that question?

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-06-13/the-big-question-as-pandemic-subsides-is-remote-work-here-to-stay?srnd=premium>

How To Negotiate Permanent Work From Home Arrangements

Despite Zoom fatigue, employees want to continue working from home. They value the flexibility and have concerns over going back to the office before everyone is fully vaccinated. According to a new Harvard Business School Online survey, most Americans enjoy working remotely and want the option to continue doing so after the pandemic. In fact, 81% either don't want to go back to the office or prefer a hybrid schedule going forward. Another survey from Hibob shows that only 13% of employees said they wanted to go back to working in the office five days a week. Yet many managers worry about employee productivity when working remotely—mainly because they feel a loss of control. So, how do you approach your boss to negotiate permanent work-from-home arrangements?

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinecastrillon/2021/06/13/how-to-negotiate-permanent-work-from-home-arrangements/>

Virtual Classrooms

Consider This: Why Some Black And Hispanic Parents Want To Keep Remote Learning

As the risk from COVID-19 declines, many public school students and parents in Boston are embracing the return of in-person learning. But for some parents of color, remote learning is a matter of keeping their students psychologically safe. A recent survey by the Boston Public Schools found that more than half of Black families would likely send their child to a virtual school next fall. Forty-seven percent of Hispanic families said the same thing. Just 15 percent of white families showed a high level of interest.

<https://www.wbur.org/considerthis/2021/06/14/hispanic-black-parents-remote-learning>

Virtual School Opens a Divide That U.S. Parents Fill With Fury

From the moment that Covid forced schools across the U.S. to close and go virtual, warnings rang out about the toll on children. Now, as most school districts promise a full return in the fall, the country's two largest are testing out contrary approaches. New York City Public Schools, the biggest district with 1.1 million students, is sending students back to school with no alternative for remote

learning, which Mayor Bill de Blasio says is “the way education was meant” as he’s promised “gold standard” classroom safety measures. Los Angeles Unified School District, which serves more than 600,000 students, is offering everyone in-person attendance with continued masking and Covid testing, but it’s also allowing students to log on from home if that’s what works for their family.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/careersandeducation/virtual-school-opens-a-divide-that-us-parents-fill-with-fury/ar-AA11weD>

Research from Europe points to online tutoring as a potent weapon against learning loss

During the early days of the pandemic, with students around the world shut out of school buildings and many struggling to succeed in virtual classrooms, academics and philanthropies in several countries embraced a novel solution: online tutoring. In recent months, the first research studies on those initial efforts — one based in the United Kingdom, the other in Italy — have emerged, showing significant evidence of effectiveness.

<http://laschoolreport.com/research-from-europe-points-to-online-tutoring-as-a-potent-weapon-against-learning-loss/>

Socialising is hugely important, but virtual campuses help learning, too

The social elements of university help students succeed academically, so we must start transplanting them online, says Elizabeth Leheldt. "We should also encourage students to create their own backchannels for conversation and chat. We know that students are sometimes hesitant to speak or ask questions in class, so group texts where they can exchange ideas, ask questions or even discuss things wholly unrelated to class, without instructor mediation, may provide an outlet for more spontaneous and forthcoming interactions. These can become useful spaces for community building, and we might create other kinds of open-ended spaces within our courses, too."

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/socialising-hugely-important-virtual-campuses-help-learning-too>

Public Policies

Brazil extends validity of J&J COVID vaccine to 4.5 months

Brazil's health regulator Anvisa has extended the validity of the single-shot Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N) COVID-19 vaccine, prolonging its shelf life from 3 months to 4.5 months, giving the country more time to use a first batch due to arrive this week. The batch of 3 million doses was due to expire on June 27, but now Brazil has followed the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in extending the expiration dates by a month and a half.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-extends-validity-jj-covid-vaccine-45-months-2021-06-14/>

Chile faces setback to reopening as coronavirus cases soar

Chilean health authorities said on Monday they would extend a COVID-19 emergency through September to allow the government to impose restrictions, a setback in a country that has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world. The announcement comes as cases have soared in Chile to some of their highest levels since the pandemic began, despite 61% of citizens receiving at least one vaccine dose and 48% being fully vaccinated.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/chile-faces-setback-reopening-coronavirus-cases-soar-2021-06-14/>

PM announces four-week delay to Covid lockdown easing in England

Boris Johnson has halted the final easing of lockdown restrictions in England and ordered a four-week delay to speed up the vaccination programme, but signalled afterwards he would not tolerate any further suspension. The prime minister said 19 July was a “terminus date” and that all restrictions on social contact could be lifted, barring the emergence of a gamechanging new variant. The chief medical officer for England, Prof Chris Whitty, suggested that within four weeks the additional jabs would offer sufficient protection to halt a surge in hospitalisations and said there would come a point where the country would be able to live with the virus in relative normality. But Whitty and Johnson said a speeding up of second vaccine doses for the over-40s combined with a

four-week delay could prevent thousands of unnecessary deaths. Although the data will be reviewed after two weeks, No 10 said it was unlikely restrictions would change.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/14/pm-announces-four-week-delay-to-covid-lockdown-easing-in-england>

S.Korea eases COVID-19 restrictions on concerts, sports games

South Korea began easing restrictions on large concerts and sports events on Monday after announcing last week it would loosen a series of coronavirus curbs as the country pushes ahead with its vaccination drive. Up to 4,000 people will be allowed to attend K-Pop concerts and other cultural shows from Monday, up massively from a capacity limit of below 100 people since late last year, according to measures announced by health officials on Friday. Sports stadiums will be able to operate at a 30% to 50% capacity, depending on the districts, up from 10% previously.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/skorea-eases-covid-19-restrictions-concerts-sports-games-2021-06-14/>

Covid-19: US regulator raises “significant concerns” over safety of rapid lateral flow tests

The US Food and Drug Agency (FDA) has raised concerns about the safety and the marketing of rapid lateral flow covid-19 tests, which are the cornerstone of the UK’s mass testing programme. On 10 June,¹ the agency warned the public to stop using the Innova SARS-CoV-2 antigen rapid qualitative test for detecting infection and suggested the tests should be destroyed and binned or returned to the manufacturer. The FDA published a class 1 recall of the test after an investigation carried out between March and April uncovered “significant concerns that the performance of the test has not been adequately established, presenting a risk to health.” Class 1 is the most serious kind of recall and indicates that use of the tests may cause serious injury or death. In addition, the FDA said that “labelling distributed with certain configurations of the test includes performance claims that did not accurately reflect the performance estimates observed during clinical studies,” and that the test “has not been authorised, cleared, or approved by the FDA for commercial distribution or use in the US, as required by law.”

<https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1514>

Rishi Sunak will not extend furlough despite delay to end of lockdown

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has rejected calls for an extension of the furlough scheme, despite an expected delay to the lifting of lockdown. The support fund for people who’ve been unable to work during the pandemic is set to be wound down from July 1. It means the Treasury will no longer cover 80% of workers’ wages, reducing the offer to 70% with employers contributing 10%. The scheme will be reduced step-by-step until it completely finishes at the end of September.

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/06/14/rishi-sunak-will-not-extend-furlough-despite-delay-to-end-of-lockdown-14766430/>

India eases COVID rules as new cases dip to two-month low

Many Indian states have eased coronavirus restrictions, including the capital New Delhi, where authorities allowed all shops and shopping centres to open, as the number of new infections dropped to the lowest in more than two months. Experts have cautioned against a full reopening as India has vaccinated only about 5 percent of its estimated 950 million adults with the necessary two doses, leaving millions vulnerable.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/14/india-eases-covid-lockdown-rules>

South Africa rejects 2m J&J vaccines due to FDA decision

South Africa’s COVID-19 vaccine rollout has been hit by further delays as it will have to discard at least 2 million Johnson & Johnson vaccines produced in the country. The vaccines were found by the U.S Food and Drug Administration to be unsuitable for use due to possible contamination of their ingredients at a Baltimore plant. South Africa was expecting to use them to inoculate its health care

workers and people aged 60 years and older. This is the latest setback to South Africa's vaccine rollout which has so far given shots to just over 1% of its 60 million people.

<https://apnews.com/article/africa-south-africa-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-health-1abc76d588227f764f5f8d3a78bd7e35>

Maintaining Services

Covid hospital cases 'would match first peak' if June 21 Freedom Day went ahead

England faced a wave of Covid hospital cases as high as the first peak if Boris Johnson went ahead with the June 21 'Freedom Day', government advisors believe. The Prime Minister was forced to delay the easing of lockdown until July 19 after the Delta variant, said to be between 40% and 80% more transmissible than the Kent strain, had spread rapidly. Now, new modelling by the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M) - a SAGE subgroup - has revealed just how risky scrapping all social distancing could have been. Among the experts' worst case scenarios was that hospitalisations would reach around the peak of the first wave, when there were more than 3,000 new UK patients per day, compared to under 200 a day now.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-covid-hospital-cases-would-24317346>

J&J will export more COVID-19 vaccines to South Africa beyond 300,000 doses already promised - Aspen CEO

Johnson & Johnson will be exporting more ready-to-administer doses to the South African government beyond the 300,000 that was been announced by the local drug regulator on Sunday, CEO of Aspen Pharmacare said on Monday. Aspen is the local manufacturer of J&J's COVID-19 vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/jj-will-export-more-covid-19-vaccines-south-africa-beyond-300000-doses-already-2021-06-14/>

Coronavirus infections dropping where people are vaccinated, rising where they are not, Post analysis finds

States with higher vaccination rates now have markedly fewer coronavirus cases, as infections are dropping in places where most residents have been immunized and are rising in many places people have not, a Washington Post analysis has found. States with lower vaccination also have significantly higher hospitalization rates, The Post found. Poorly vaccinated communities have not been reporting catastrophic conditions. Instead, they are usually seeing new infections holding steady or increasing without overwhelming local hospitals. As recently as 10 days ago, vaccination rates did not predict a difference in coronavirus cases, but immunization rates have diverged, and case counts in the highly vaccinated states are dropping quickly.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/06/14/covid-cases-vaccination-rates/>

America's broken PPE supply chain must be fixed now

Almost everyone knows by now that the U.S. was ill-prepared to combat Covid-19. But few realize that the structural problems in the supply chain that plagued the government's response haven't been fixed. It's crucial to address these vulnerabilities now. There's no telling when the inevitable next health crisis will hit. Consider the government's disastrous distribution of emergency medical supplies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is in charge of the Strategic National Stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as N95 respirators, gloves, gowns, and face shields, along with ventilators and certain pharmaceuticals, such as antibiotics and antitoxins.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/06/14/covid-19-proved-america-ppe-supply-chain-must-be-fixed/>

Healthcare Innovations

Delta variant doubles risk of COVID hospitalisation - Scottish study

The Delta coronavirus variant doubles the risk of hospitalisation compared with the previously

dominant variant in Britain, but two doses of vaccine still provide strong protection, a Scottish study found on Monday. The study said early evidence suggested the protection from vaccines against the Delta variant, first identified in India, might be lower than the effectiveness against the Alpha variant, first identified in Kent, southeast England.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/delta-variant-doubles-risk-of-covid-hospitalisation-scottish-study/ar-AAL1NP5>

Seqirus Co-Authors First Study to Assess Simultaneous Administration of Seasonal Influenza Vaccine and COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate

Seqirus, a global leader in influenza prevention and a division of CSL Limited (ASX: CSL), today announced that the company co-authored the first study to demonstrate the safety, immunogenicity and efficacy profile of a COVID-19 vaccine when co-administered with a seasonal influenza vaccine.¹ The data is now available on medRxiv ahead of peer-review publication. The study was conducted by Novavax, Inc. as part of a Phase 3 clinical trial of NVX-CoV2373, its recombinant protein COVID-19 vaccine candidate, in the United Kingdom.¹ The co-administration sub-study enrolled 431 volunteers, all of whom received either an adjuvanted, trivalent seasonal influenza vaccine (aTIV) or a cell-based, quadrivalent seasonal influenza vaccine (QIVc) provided by Seqirus.¹ Approximately half of the volunteers also received NVX-CoV2373 while the remainder received the placebo. The study results suggest that efficacy of both the influenza vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine candidate appeared to be preserved.¹ No additional safety concerns were found with co-administration and adverse events were similar to the incidence and severity for each vaccine when administered separately.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/seqirus-co-authors-first-study-to-assess-simultaneous-administration-of-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-and-covid-19-vaccine-candidate-301311885.html>

UK study finds vaccines offer high protection against hospitalisation from Delta variant

COVID-19 vaccines made by Pfizer and AstraZeneca offer high protection of more than 90% against hospitalisation from the Delta coronavirus variant, a new analysis by Public Health England showed on Monday. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to announce a delay to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions in England due to the spread of the highly transmissible Delta variant of concern, first identified in India, which is also associated with a higher risk of hospitalisation among the unvaccinated.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/uk-study-finds-vaccines-offer-high-protection-against-hospitalisation-delta-2021-06-14/>

Delta variant doubles risk of hospitalization; Novavax vaccine highly effective in large trial

Novavax Inc on Monday said its COVID-19 vaccine was more than 90% effective, including against a variety of concerning variants of the coronavirus in a large, late-stage U.S.-based clinical trial. The study of nearly 30,000 volunteers in the United States and Mexico puts Novavax on track to file for emergency authorization in the United States and elsewhere in the third quarter of 2021, the company said. The protein-based vaccine was more than 93% effective against the more easily transmissible predominant coronavirus variants that have caused concern among scientists and public health officials, Novavax said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/delta-variant-doubles-risk-hospitalization-novavax-vaccine-highly-effective-2021-06-14/>

Professor Jason Leitch warns first dose of coronavirus vaccine only offers about 30% protection from 'horrid' Delta variant

Scotland's national clinical director stressed the need to get both vaccinations to offer "decent" protection and suggested eight to 10 weeks of progress thanks to the vaccine had been "lost" because of the variant, first identified in India. Speaking on the BBC's Good Morning Scotland, Prof

Leitch said the new strain of Covid-19 has “changed the game” in terms of the vaccine rollout because of the lack of protection offered by the first dose alone.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/covid-scotland-professor-jason-leitch-warns-first-dose-of-coronavirus-vaccine-only-offers-about-30-protection-from-horrid-delta-variant-3271772>

COVID-19: Delta variant increases hospitalisation risk but vaccine protection remains high, study suggests

The risk of being hospitalised with the Delta (Indian) variant of coronavirus is around double that of the Alpha (Kent) strain, but two vaccine doses still provide strong protection against it, new data suggests. However, the level of protection against the Indian variant of COVID-19 may be lower than with the Kent variant, early research published in The Lancet suggests.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-delta-variant-increases-hospitalisation-risk-but-vaccine-protection-remains-high-study-suggests-12332462>

Celltrion says trial shows antibody COVID-19 treatment to be safe and effective

South Korean drugmaker Celltrion Inc on Monday announced positive results for its experimental antibody COVID-19 treatment that it said was safe and reduced the treatment period by nearly five days in Phase 3 global clinical trials. The trials, which involved 1,315 participants, have taken place since January in 13 countries, including in South Korea, the United States, Spain and Romania, Celltrion said in a statement. The treatment slowed severe symptoms of COVID-19 in more than 70% of patients, including the high-risk group with underlying conditions. It also cut the recovery period by 4.9 days, the company said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/celltrion-says-trial-shows-antibody-covid-19-treatment-be-safe-effective-2021-06-14/>

Covid-19: Vaccine booster study begins in Cambridge

Clinical trials have begun in Cambridge to see which Covid-19 vaccine works best as a third “booster” jab. Researchers at the Addenbrooke's Hospital site are recruiting about 180 participants for a national trial, which will test seven vaccines. The Cov-Boost study will give people a third dose of a vaccine to see whether it offers better protection against the virus than the standard two injections. Prof Krishna Chatterjee called the study an “exciting opportunity”. The government-funded trial, led by the University of Southampton, is taking place at 18 sites across the UK and is said to be the first study in the world to provide vital data on the impact of a third dose on patients' immune responses.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-57467632>

Extra Covid vaccine may help protect transplant patients

A small study offers the first hint that an extra dose of Covid-19 vaccines just might give some organ transplant recipients a needed boost in protection. Even as most vaccinated people celebrate a return to near normalcy, millions who take immune-suppressing medicines because of transplants, cancer, or other disorders remain in limbo — uncertain how protected they really are. It's simply harder for vaccines to rev up a weak immune system. Monday's study tracked just 30 transplant patients but it's an important step toward learning if booster doses could help.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/06/14/extra-covid-vaccine-may-help-protect-transplant-patients/>

Delta variant Covid symptoms ‘include headaches, sore throat and runny nose’

The data, collected as part of the app-based Zoe Covid symptom study, suggests that the Delta variant first detected in India feels like a “bad cold”, according to Tim Spector, a professor of genetic epidemiology at King's College London, who is leading the work. “Covid is ... acting differently now, it's more like a bad cold,” he said. “People might think they've just got some sort of seasonal cold, and they still go out to parties ... we think this is fuelling a lot of the problem. So, what's really important to realise is that since the start of May, we've been looking at the top symptoms in all the

app users, and they're not the same as they were. So, the number one symptom is headache ... followed by sore throat, runny nose and fever."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/14/delta-variant-covid-symptoms-include-headaches-sore-throat-and-runny-nose>

Association Between Bitter Taste Receptor Phenotype and Clinical Outcomes Among Patients With COVID-19

Bitter taste receptors (T2Rs) have been implicated in sinonasal innate immunity, and genetic variation conferred by allelic variants in T2R genes is associated with variation in upper respiratory tract pathogen susceptibility, symptoms, and outcomes. Bitter taste receptor phenotype appears to be associated with the clinical course and symptom duration of SARS-CoV-2 infection. A prospective cohort study was performed from July 1 through September 30, 2020, at a tertiary outpatient clinical practice and inpatient hospital in the United States among 1935 participants (patients and health care workers) with occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2. This cohort study suggests that T2R38 receptor allelic variants were associated with participants' innate immune response toward SARS-CoV-2. The T2R phenotype was associated with patients' clinical course after SARS-CoV-2 infection

https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/articlepdf/2780134/barham_2021_oi_210336_1620833698.03215.pdf