



# **Editorial Health and Well-Being through COVID-19 Vaccination: Physical, Oral, and Psychological Effects**

Kelvin I. Afrashtehfar <sup>1,2,\*</sup>, Carlos A. Jurado <sup>3</sup>, Salem H. Abu-Fanas <sup>1</sup> and Mohamed A. Jaber <sup>1,\*</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Clinical Sciences Department, Ajman College of Dentistry, Ajman University, Ajman City P.O. Box 346, United Arab Emirates
- <sup>2</sup> Department of Reconstructive Dentistry and Gerodontology, School of Dental Medicine, University of Bern, 3010 Bern, Switzerland
- <sup>3</sup> Department of Prosthodontics, The University of Iowa College of Dentistry and Dental Clinics, Iowa City, IA 52242, USA
- \* Correspondence: kelvin.afrashtehfar@unibe.ch (K.I.A.); mohamed.jaber@ajman.ac.ae (M.A.J.)

## 1. Introduction

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and its evolving variants have spurred a worldwide effort to control its transmission and reduce its impact [1–3]. At the forefront of this effort is the administration of vaccines, which have been proven to be safe and highly effective in preventing severe outcomes from the virus [4,5]. This editorial offers valuable insights into the physical, oral, and psychological adverse reactions associated with COVID-19 vaccines, and delves into their mechanisms of their action. Additionally, the manuscript examines the impact of emerging variants on vaccine efficacy and the ethical and legal considerations surrounding their use. The authors also emphasize the ongoing need for monitoring and research to keep pace with the dynamic landscape of the pandemic and the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines.

# 2. COVID-19 Immunization: Physical, Oral, and Psychological Adverse Reactions

Like any medical intervention, the administration of COVID-19 vaccines can elicit a range of physical, oral, and psychological adverse reactions. Physical adverse reactions may include erythema, tenderness, swelling, pain, fever, chills, headache, myalgia, arthralgia, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and lymphadenopathy at the injection site [6,7]. Oral adverse reactions can encompass xerostomia, thirst, and alterations in gustation and olfaction [8,9]. Psychological adverse reactions can include vaccine hesitancy [10,11], and anxiety and fear related to the vaccine and its potential adverse reactions [12,13]. However, it is essential to note that most adverse reactions reported have been mild and temporary, and the long-term effects of COVID-19 vaccination remain unknown.

While it is normal to experience some degree of discomfort after receiving a vaccine, healthcare providers should be vigilant in monitoring and reporting any severe or unusual reactions to the appropriate authorities. Individuals who experience symptoms such as headache, abdominal pain, leg swelling, or dyspnea within three weeks of vaccination are generally advised to seek immediate medical attention [14].

Individuals must have accurate and reliable information about the benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccination to make informed decisions about their health and well-being [15]. Healthcare providers play a pivotal role in educating individuals about the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines and addressing any concerns they may have. The ongoing monitoring and research of COVID-19 vaccines will continue to provide important insights into their safety and effectiveness, helping to mitigate potential adverse reactions associated with them.



Citation: Afrashtehfar, K.I.; Jurado, C.A.; Abu-Fanas, S.H.; Jaber, M.A. Health and Well-Being through COVID-19 Vaccination: Physical, Oral, and Psychological Effects. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2023**, 20, 3117. https://doi.org/10.3390/ ijerph20043117

Received: 5 February 2023 Accepted: 8 February 2023 Published: 10 February 2023



**Copyright:** © 2023 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/ 4.0/).

#### 3. COVID-19 Prevention Vaccination: Rare Adverse Events and Causality

Serious adverse events, including thromboembolic events, stroke, myocardial infarction, and sudden death, have been reported in rare cases following COVID-19 vaccination [16,17]. Although the incidence of such events remains low, the underlying causality is unclear. Most thromboembolic events have been reported in women under the age of 60, leading researchers to consider a potential connection to the vaccine [18]. However, a definitive causal relationship between these events and COVID-19 vaccination has yet to be established through further investigation and study. It is essential to be aware that some individuals may also experience alterations in their menstrual cycle due to the vaccine [19,20], which could impact hormonal levels.

#### 4. Anti-COVID Vaccination: Mechanisms of Action

The COVID-19 vaccines work by triggering an immune response against the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus [21,22]. The vaccines can either deliver viral components, such as viral proteins, or genetic material delivered by a vector, such as a benign virus. These mechanisms allow the immune system to recognize and respond to the virus in the case of future exposure. This process is critical in building immunity against the virus, thus reducing the risk of severe illness and death.

As the SARS-CoV-2 virus continues to evolve, it is essential to understand how this may impact the efficacy of current vaccines. In some instances, booster shots may be necessary to maintain protection against new virus variants [23,24]. To stay ahead of the virus, ongoing monitoring and research are essential in assessing the impact of new variants on vaccine efficacy, while also ensuring the continued safety of COVID-19 vaccines.

### 5. Coronavirus Vaccination: Ethical and Legal Considerations

The rollout of COVID-19 vaccines under experimental use authorization has sparked important ethical and legal considerations related to health and life insurance coverage [25,26]. There is a potential risk that individuals may not be covered for certain conditions if an experimental vaccine is determined to be a contributing factor. This raises concerns for many individuals and highlights the need for clear and transparent communication between vaccine recipients, healthcare providers, and insurance companies. Individuals must take the time to carefully review their insurance policies prior to receiving the vaccine and to have open discussions with their healthcare providers and insurance companies about any concerns they may have [27]. By doing so, individuals can better understand their rights and responsibilities and make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

#### 6. Take Home Message

In conclusion, COVID-19 vaccination is a critical component in the fight against the pandemic and is crucial for maintaining overall public health and safety. Despite the potential physical, oral, and psychological adverse reactions associated with the COVID-19 vaccines, as well as the impact of emerging variants, and the unknown long-term effects, the benefits of vaccination are vast. Most importantly, thus far, these benefits have been demonstrated to outweigh any perceived risks. Healthcare providers and public health authorities must work together to ensure that the administration of COVID-19 vaccines is safe and effective while providing accurate information and support to individuals as they make informed decisions about their health and well-being. A collaborative effort between healthcare providers, government bodies, and the public is essential in ensuring widespread vaccine coverage, and ultimately a path toward herd immunity and the end of the pandemic.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- Chatterjee, S.; Bhattacharya, M.; Nag, S.; Dhama, K.; Chakraborty, C. A Detailed Overview of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron: Its Sub-Variants, Mutations and Pathophysiology, Clinical Characteristics, Immunological Landscape, Immune Escape, and Therapies. *Viruses* 2023, 15, 167. [CrossRef]
- Chen, J.; Huang, B.; Deng, Y.; Wang, W.; Zhai, C.; Han, D.; Wang, N.; Zhao, Y.; Zhai, D.; Tan, W. Synergistic Immunity and Protection in Mice by Co-Immunization with DNA Vaccines Encoding the Spike Protein and Other Structural Proteins of SARS-CoV-2. *Vaccines* 2023, 11, 243. [CrossRef]
- 3. Afrashtehfar, K.I.; Jurado, C.J.; Al-Sammarraie, A.; Saeed, M.H. Consequences of COVID-19 and Its Variants: Understanding the Physical, Oral, and Psychological Impact. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2023. *accepted*.
- 4. Federico, M. How Do Anti-SARS-CoV-2 mRNA Vaccines Protect from Severe Disease? Int. J. Mol. Sci. 2022, 23, 10374. [CrossRef]
- Mohammed, H.; Pham-Tran, D.D.; Yeoh, Z.Y.M.; Wang, B.; McMillan, M.; Andraweera, P.H.; Marshall, H.S. A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis on the Real-World Effectiveness of COVID-19 Vaccines against Infection, Symptomatic and Severe COVID-19 Disease Caused by the Omicron Variant (B.1.1.529). *Vaccines* 2023, *11*, 224. [CrossRef]
- Loosen, S.H.; Bohlken, J.; Weber, K.; Konrad, M.; Luedde, T.; Roderburg, C.; Kostev, K. Factors Associated with Non-Severe Adverse Reactions after Vaccination against SARS-CoV-2: A Cohort Study of 908,869 Outpatient Vaccinations in Germany. *Vaccines* 2022, 10, 566. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Nguyen, D.C.; Dao, T.L.; Truong, T.M.D.; Nguyen, T.H.; Phan, T.N.; Nguyen, H.M.; Pham, T.D.; Nguyen, X.B.; Nguyen, T.B.; Hoang, V.T. Short-Term Adverse Effects Immediately after the Start of COVID-19 Booster Vaccination in Vietnam. *Vaccines* 2022, 10, 1325. [CrossRef]
- 8. Di Spirito, F.; Amato, A.; Di Palo, M.P.; Contaldo, M.; D'Ambrosio, F.; Lo Giudice, R.; Amato, M. Oral Lesions Following Anti-SARS-CoV-2 Vaccination: A Systematic Review. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2022**, *19*, 10228. [CrossRef]
- 9. Di Spirito, F.; Caggiano, M.; Di Palo, M.P.; Contaldo, M.; D'Ambrosio, F.; Martina, S.; Amato, A. Oral Lesions in Pediatric Subjects: SARS-CoV-2 Infection and COVID-19 Vaccination. *Appl. Sci.* **2022**, *12*, 8995. [CrossRef]
- Romate, J.; Rajkumar, E.; Gopi, A.; Abraham, J.; Rages, J.; Lakshmi, R.; Jesline, J.; Bhogle, S. What Contributes to COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy? A Systematic Review of the Psychological Factors Associated with COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy. *Vaccines* 2022, 10, 1777. [CrossRef]
- Galanis, P.; Vraka, I.; Katsiroumpa, A.; Siskou, O.; Konstantakopoulou, O.; Katsoulas, T.; Mariolis-Sapsakos, T.; Kaitelidou, D. First COVID-19 Booster Dose in the General Population: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Willingness and Its Predictors. *Vaccines* 2022, 10, 1097. [CrossRef]
- Wieteska-Miłek, M.; Szmit, S.; Florczyk, M.; Kuśmierczyk-Droszcz, B.; Ryczek, R.; Kurzyna, M. COVID-19 Vaccination in Patients with Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension and Chronic Thromboembolic Pulmonary Hypertension: Safety Profile and Reasons for Opting against Vaccination. *Vaccines* 2021, 9, 1395. [CrossRef]
- Del Riccio, M.; Bechini, A.; Buscemi, P.; Bonanni, P.; on behalf of the Working Group DHS; Boccalini, S. Reasons for the Intention to Refuse COVID-19 Vaccination and Their Association with Preferred Sources of Information in a Nationwide, Population-Based Sample in Italy, before COVID-19 Vaccines Roll Out. *Vaccines* 2022, *10*, 913. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 14. Araja, D.; Krumina, A.; Nora-Krukle, Z.; Berkis, U.; Murovska, M. Vaccine Vigilance System: Considerations on the Effectiveness of Vigilance Data Use in COVID-19 Vaccination. *Vaccines* **2022**, *10*, 2115. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 15. Valero-Martínez, C.; Martínez-Rivera, C.; Zhen-Duan, J.; Fukuda, M.; Alegría, M. Attitudes toward COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake: A Qualitative Study of Mostly Immigrant Racial/Ethnic Minority Older Adults. *Geriatrics* **2023**, *8*, 17. [CrossRef]
- 16. Mani, A.; Ojha, V. Thromboembolism after COVID-19 Vaccination: A Systematic Review of Such Events in 286 Patients. *Ann Vasc Surg.* 2022, *84*, 12–20.e1. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 17. Hsieh, M.-H.; Yamaguchi, Y. Immune Response in Regard to Hypersensitivity Reactions after COVID-19 Vaccination. *Biomedicines* **2022**, *10*, 1641. [CrossRef]
- 18. Abrignani, M.G.; Murrone, A.; De Luca, L.; Roncon, L.; Di Lenarda, A.; Valente, S.; Caldarola, P.; Riccio, C.; Oliva, F.; Gulizia, M.M.; et al. COVID-19, Vaccines, and Thrombotic Events: A Narrative Review. *J. Clin. Med.* **2022**, *11*, 948. [CrossRef]
- Dellino, M.; Lamanna, B.; Vinciguerra, M.; Tafuri, S.; Stefanizzi, P.; Malvasi, A.; Di Vagno, G.; Cormio, G.; Loizzi, V.; Cazzato, G.; et al. SARS-CoV-2 Vaccines and Adverse Effects in Gynecology and Obstetrics: The First Italian Retrospective Study. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2022, 19, 13167. [CrossRef]
- Mínguez-Esteban, I.; García-Ginés, P.; Romero-Morales, C.; Abuín-Porras, V.; Navia, J.A.; Alonso-Pérez, J.L.; de la Cueva-Reguera, M. Association between RNAm-Based COVID-19 Vaccines and Permanency of Menstrual Cycle Alterations in Spanish Women: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Biology* 2022, 11, 1579. [CrossRef]
- Sharma, E.; Revinipati, S.; Bhandari, S.; Thakur, S.; Goyal, S.; Ghose, A.; Bajpai, S.; Muhammad, W.; Boussios, S. Efficacy and Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines—An Update. *Diseases* 2022, 10, 112. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 22. Tofarides, A.G.; Christaki, E.; Milionis, H.; Nikolopoulos, G.K. Effect of Vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 on Long COVID-19: A Narrative Review. *Life* **2022**, *12*, 2057. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Al Kaabi, N.; Yang, Y.; Eldin Hussein, S.; Yang, T.; Abdalla, J.; Wang, H.; Lou, Z.; Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention; Bakkour, A.; Arafat, A.; et al. Efficacy and Safety of a Booster Vaccination with Two Inactivated SARS-CoV-2 Vaccines on Symptomatic COVID-19 Infection in Adults: Results of a Double-Blind, Randomized, Placebo-Controlled, Phase 3 Trial in Abu Dhabi. *Vaccines* 2023, 11, 299. [CrossRef]

- 24. Briciu, V.; Topan, A.; Calin, M.; Dobrota, R.; Leucuta, D.-C.; Lupse, M. Comparison of COVID-19 Severity in Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Patients during the Delta and Omicron Wave of the Pandemic in a Romanian Tertiary Infectious Diseases Hospital. *Healthcare* 2023, *11*, 373. [CrossRef]
- 25. Scendoni, R.; Fedeli, P.; Cingolani, M. The State of Play on COVID-19 Vaccination in Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women: Recommendations, Legal Protection, Ethical Issues and Controversies in Italy. *Healthcare* **2023**, *11*, 328. [CrossRef]
- Pratici, L.; Singer, P.M. COVID-19 Vaccination: What Do We Expect for the Future? A Systematic Literature Review of Social Science Publications in the First Year of the Pandemic (2020–2021). Sustainability 2021, 13, 8259. [CrossRef]
- 27. Bîrsanu, S.-E.; Plaiasu, M.C.; Nanu, C.A. Informed Consent in Mass Vaccination against COVID-19 in Romania: Implications of Bad Management. *Vaccines* 2022, *10*, 1871. [CrossRef]

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.