

## Rapid Response: BMJ

[Link: <https://www.bmj.com/content/371/bmj.m4037/rr-20>]

### Re: Will covid-19 vaccines save lives? Current trials aren't designed to tell us

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Dear Editor,

Trial experiments and protocols set for COVID-19 vaccination did not take into consideration of many direct and indirect consequences of mass vaccination.

Here I would like to bring attention to an urgent and very important issue of its indirect effect. Apart from the direct side effect after vaccination, if any; the secondary effect that might be caused due to mutation of the virus after mass vaccination needs attention too. After the initiation of vaccine programme, almost all countries experienced a sudden surge of transmission and most countries had to impose strict lockdown measures.

Professor Paul Bieniasz from Rockefeller University, USA, expressed his concern that vaccines themselves can also drive viral mutations and hence COVID-19 vaccines can add fuel to the evolution of mutation of Coronavirus. According to him the time between initial vaccination and the time of second shot to maximize the immune response might serve as a sort of breeding ground for the virus to acquire new mutations [1].

A highly populated country India was having a steady decrease for five months. India did not have any lockdown. Though neighbouring countries Pakistan and Bangladesh experienced the 2nd wave this winter but India did not. India passed major festive seasons where social distancing was very difficult to be maintained, still cases and deaths continued to decline. Surprisingly, vaccination started on 16th January and from around 16th February, India started showing a rise in cases. Now there is a steep rise in deaths too [2]. As India nearly managed the disease without any vaccine or lockdown, it attracted global attention. However, scientists failed to associate any obvious cause for the sudden surge in the recent period when winter passed. India's neighbouring countries Pakistan and Bangladesh also started a rise in cases in recent period, after vaccination started, though they already experienced a 2nd wave last winter.

For Brazil, vaccination started in mid-January and a sharp rise in cases is observed since mid-February. Such a steep rise in deaths in Brazil that happened for the last one month never happened in the whole period of pandemic. It already reached twice the height of previous peaks [3]. Globally, the cases started increasing after 5 weeks of a steady decline and coincidentally, the period of rise matches when major vaccination programmes were initiated worldwide. Some countries are now showing a decline, where lockdown and seasonal temperature are playing strong roles. Even for the UK and Israel, where massive vaccination took place, the total deaths in the last three months after vaccination now reached the overall death of the past 10 months before vaccination [2].

Such observation and analysis raises major worries especially for highly populated developing countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Brazil and the African continents among others and needs urgent attention.

Reference:

1. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/02/10/965940914/covid-19-...>
2. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>
3. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/brazil/>

**Competing interests:** No competing interests