Growing Number of Doctors Say They Won't Get COVID-19 Booster Shots

PREMIUM EXPERT VIEW

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A vial of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is seen in a file photograph. (Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

A growing number of doctors say that they will not get COVID-19 vaccine boosters, citing a lack of clinical trial evidence.

“I have taken my last COVID vaccine without RCT level evidence it will reduce my risk of severe disease,” Dr. Todd Lee, an infectious disease expert at McGill University, wrote on Twitter.

Lee was pointing to the lack of randomized clinical trial (RCT) results for the updated boosters, which were cleared in the United States and Canada in the fall of 2022 primarily based on data from experiments with mice.

Lee, who has received three vaccine doses, noted that he was infected with the Omicron virus variant–the vaccines provide little protection against infection–and described himself as a healthy male in his 40s.

Dr. Vinay Prasad, a professor of epidemiology and biostatics at the University of California, San Francisco, also said he wouldn’t take any additional shots until clinical trial data become available.

“I took at least 1 dose against my will. It was unethical and scientifically bankrupt,” he said.

Allison Krug, an epidemiologist who co-authored a study that found teenage boys were more likely to suffer heart inflammation after COVID-19 vaccination than COVID-19 infection, recounted explaining to her doctor why she was refusing a booster and said her doctor agreed with her position.

She called on people to “join the movement to demand appropriate evidence,” pointing to a blog post from Prasad.

“Pay close attention to note this isn’t anti-vaccine sentiment. This is ‘provide [hard] evidence of benefit to justify ongoing use’ which is very different. It is only fair for a 30 billion dollar a year product given to hundreds of millions,” Lee said.

Dr. Mark Silverberg, who founded the Toronto Immune and Digestive Health Institute; Kevin Bass, a medical student; and Dr. Tracy Høeg, an epidemiologist at the University of California, San Francisco, joined Lee and Prasad in stating their opposition to more boosters, at least for now.

Høeg said she did not need clinical trials to know she’s not getting any boosters after receiving a two-dose primary series, adding that she took the second dose “against my will.”

“I also had an adverse reaction to dose 1 moderna and, if I could do it again, I would not have had any covid vaccines,” she said on Twitter. “I was glad my parents in their 70s could get covid vaccinated but have yet to see non-confounded data to advise them about the bivalent booster. I would have liked to see an RCT for the bivalent for people their age and for adults with health conditions that put them at risk.”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted emergency use authorization to updated boosters, or bivalent shots, from Pfizer and Moderna in August 2022 despite there being no human data.

Observational data suggests the boosters provide little protection against infection and solid shielding against severe illness, at least initially.

Five months after the authorization was granted, no clinical trial data has been made available for the bivalents, which target the Wuhan strain as well as the BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants of Omicron. Moderna presented efficacy estimates for a different bivalent, which has never been used in the United States, during a recent meeting. The company estimated the booster increased protection against infection by just 10 percent.

The FDA is preparing to order all Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines be replaced with the bivalents. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which issues recommendations on vaccines, continues advising virtually all Americans to get a primary series and multiple boosters.

Professor Calls for Halt to Messenger RNA Vaccines

A professor, meanwhile, became the latest to call for a halt to the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which are both based on messenger RNA technology.

"At this point in time, all COVID mRNA vaccination program[s] should stop immediately," Retsef Levi, a professor of operations management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said in a video statement. "They should stop because they completely failed to fulfill any of their advertised promise[s] regarding efficacy. And more importantly, they should stop because of the mounting and indisputable evidence that they cause unprecedented level of harm, including the death of young people and children."

Levi was referring to post-vaccination heart inflammation, or myocarditis. The condition is one of the few that authorities have acknowledged is caused by the messenger RNA vaccines.

Pfizer and Moderna have not responded to requests for comment.

Levi pointed to research including a study that found nearly 3 in 10 children who received Pfizer's vaccine experienced heart effects, and a study that detected spike antigens in the blood of vaccinated youth.

Other experts, including Dr. Joseph Fraiman and Dr. Peter McCullough, have previously called for a halt to the administration of the vaccines.

Fraiman told The Epoch Times that the halt should happen until clinical trials prove the benefit of the vaccines outweigh the harms.

"We need to figure out ... if their benefits outweigh harm or if harm outweighs benefits," he said. "The only thing that can answer that question is going to be a randomized trial."

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