

# Misinformation Study Is Full of Misinformation

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✓ Fact Checked

September 13, 2023

## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › A mixed-methods study published in JAMA Network Open claims to have collected evidence of “widespread, inaccurate, and potentially harmful assertions made by physicians across the country” during the pandemic
- › The study is a prime example of misinformation propaganda and wrongly labels many legitimate discussions about vaccine safety, ivermectin, mask wearing and the COVID-19 lab-leak theory as false
- › Even the mainstream Washington Post took issue with it in an article titled, “Not all COVID ‘Misinformation’ Is Equal – or Even Misinformation”
- › The six University of Massachusetts, Amherst, researchers who wrote the featured paper only contributed to circulating misinformation by trying to – inaccurately – point the finger at others
- › The JAMA study is packed with outrageous examples of truths being targeted as misinformation, including topics like natural immunity, jab-induced myocarditis and the risks of mask mandates in children

The misinformation wars continue, this time with a mixed-methods study published in JAMA Network Open.<sup>1</sup> The study itself is a prime example of misinformation propaganda, yet claims to have collected evidence of “widespread, inaccurate, and potentially harmful assertions made by physicians across the country” during the pandemic.

The physicians made comments counter to the status quo on the topics of four major themes, which you'll recognize as those commonly targeted by pro-narrative outlets:

- Disputing vaccine safety and effectiveness
- Medical treatments “lacking scientific evidence”
- Disputing mask-wearing effectiveness
- Other “unsubstantiated claims” relating to virus origin, government lies and conspiracy theories

Often, this inaccurately labeled “misinformation” turned out to be true, but that didn't dissuade the study's authors from publishing the misleading paper. One indication that the JAMA “study” is far more propaganda than science? Even the mainstream Washington Post took issue with it, in an article titled, “Not all COVID ‘Misinformation’ Is Equal – or Even Misinformation.”<sup>2</sup>

## **Harmful JAMA Study ‘Overdiagnoses Misinformation’**

“Overdiagnosing “misinformation” – as the study does – will do more harm than good,” The Washington Post reported. The six University of Massachusetts, Amherst, researchers who wrote the featured paper therefore only contributed to circulating misinformation by trying to, inaccurately, point the finger at others.

“The study undermines its own purpose by wrongly classifying value judgments and some scientifically valid points as misinformation,” the Post continues.<sup>3</sup> According to the study authors, “The most common theme identified was physicians discouraging the public from receiving COVID-19 vaccines. Promoting fear and distrust of the vaccine and reliance on “natural” immunity were common subthemes.”<sup>4</sup>

One social media post from February 2022 specifically called out by the study stated, “It's time to recognize natural immunity as at least as good as vaccination and end the mandates.”<sup>5</sup> Even vaccination proponent Dr. Paul Offit, director of the vaccine education

center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, took issue with the study's attempt to call this misinformation. The Washington Post reported:<sup>6</sup>

*"Paul Offit – who has decades of experience fighting anti-vaccine misinformation – called foul at the JAMA study author's classification of this statement as misinformation. The first part about natural immunity is true, he said. And the call to end vaccine mandates was one view in a legitimate debate – a value judgment, not a fact."*

It seems the JAMA researchers aren't aware that COVID-19 infection – i.e., natural immunity – offered better protection against symptomatic omicron infection more than one year later than three doses of COVID-19 shots did after one month.

To put it into numbers, previous infection was 54.9% effective against symptomatic omicron infection after more than 12 months, while three doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 shot was only 44.7% effective a month later. The same held true for three doses of Moderna's COVID-19 shot, which was only 41.2% effective after one month, compared to 53.5% effectiveness for natural immunity more than a year later.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, bringing up natural immunity's effectiveness is still being targeted. Why? The denial of natural immunity during the pandemic was, in fact, deemed unprecedented by Dr. Scott Atlas, a former White House COVID-19 Task Force adviser, who told The Epoch Times:<sup>8</sup>

*"Our continued denial of superior protection in recovered individuals, with or without vaccination, compared to vaccinated individuals who've never had the infection ... the denial of that is simply unprecedented in modern history. Proven fact and decades of fundamental immunology are somehow denied. If we are a society where the leaders repeatedly deny the fact, I'm very concerned about the future of such a society."*

## **True Statements Labeled Misinformation**

The JAMA study is packed with outrageous examples of truths being targeted as misinformation. Suggestions of COVID-19 shot risks is a category in itself. In one instance, a family medicine physician posted this on Facebook on October 31, 2021:<sup>9</sup>

*“Super safe and super effective. Especially in children (insert sarcastic eyeroll). So safe that JAHA [Journal of the American Heart Association] published two articles about jab induced myocarditis this month.”*

Misinformation? Hardly. Soon after mRNA shots for SARS-CoV-2 became widespread, reports of myocarditis, or inflammation of the heart muscle, began to emerge.<sup>10</sup> The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control wrote in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ):<sup>11</sup>

*“[P]ostmarketing studies have suggested an association between mRNA SARS-CoV-2 vaccines (BNT162b2 [Pfizer-BioNTech] and mRNA-1273 [Moderna]) and myocarditis, among other adverse events after immunization, which has raised concern regarding the safety of mRNA vaccines, specifically among younger populations.”*

Data published in JAMA Cardiology by physicians from the Navy, Army and Air Force also revealed a higher-than-expected rate of myocarditis in U.S. military personnel who received a COVID-19 jab.<sup>12</sup>

And a real-world case-control study from Israel<sup>13</sup> revealed that the Pfizer COVID-19 jab is associated with a threefold increased risk of myocarditis,<sup>14</sup> leading to the condition at a rate of 1 to 5 events per 100,000 persons.<sup>15</sup>

## **Ivermectin – Now Vindicated – Also Targeted**

“Promoting unapproved medications for prevention or treatment” was another theme the JAMA authors tried to pass off as misleading. Claims about ivermectin were chief among them, including a YouTube video posted by an anesthesiologist October 20, 2021, which stated:<sup>16</sup>

*“A couple I knew came down with COVID-19 ... I recommended ivermectin, wrote a prescription for it. And again, you know it’s a off-label use, we use off-label drugs all the time as physicians. The FDA has not contraindicated ivermectin for the treatment of COVID-19.*

*It does not have a black-box warning or anything, so it is ridiculous to make any issue of a physician prescribing ivermectin as an off-label use. Especially given the data from India and other countries in the world where ivermectin has been found quite effective in curtailing their COVID problems.”*

Flagging this sharing of information and attempting to censor it by labeling it misinformation stifled the effective care of many with COVID-19. “Respectful scientific discourse and debate is how science was done prior to COVID, and something broke when COVID arrived,” Shira Doron, an epidemiologist at Tufts University Medical Center, told The Washington Post.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, in August 2023, a study published in Cureus<sup>18</sup> vindicated ivermectin as a treatment for COVID-19. “Reductions in excess deaths over a period of 30 days after peak deaths averaged 74% in the 10 states with the most intensive IVM [ivermectin] use,” the study found.<sup>19</sup> It used Peruvian national health data from Peru’s 25 states to evaluate ivermectin’s effects.

A natural experiment was set in motion in May 2020, when Peru authorized ivermectin for COVID-19. The significant reduction in excess deaths noted “correlated closely with the extent of IVM use,” the researchers noted.

Adding further support for its effectiveness, “there was a 14-fold reduction in nationwide excess deaths” when ivermectin was freely available, “and then a 13-fold increase” in excess deaths in the two months after, when ivermectin use was restricted.<sup>20</sup>

## **Questioning Mask Effectiveness? Also Misinformation**

Another sentient point wrongly singled out in the study came from a family medicine physician, who stated on YouTube, “One of the most heartbreaking things about the pandemic has been what’s happening to the social interactions, the nonverbal cues ... masks are not a natural thing for babies to have to interface with ...”<sup>21</sup>

It’s hard to argue against this point, but the study authors did, despite the fact that many experts raised concerns that masks are likely to cause psychological harm to children and interfere with development.<sup>22</sup> The Washington Post reported:<sup>23</sup>

*“The JAMA paper also labeled as misinformation statements questioning the efficacy of masks – but that’s just one side of a complex debate, argues [Monica] Gandhi [an infectious disease doctor at University of California San Francisco] ... there’s disagreement about the costs and benefits of universal masking, especially masking children in day care or at school.”*

## **COVID Lab-Leak Theory Still Being Targeted**

February 26, 2023, The Wall Street Journal reported that the U.S. Energy Department had revised its assessment of the origin of SARS-CoV-2, concluding the pandemic “most likely arose from a laboratory leak.”<sup>24</sup>

I first [raised the lab leak theory](#) February 4, 2020, but it wasn't until June 2021 that Facebook finally reversed its censorship policy on this topic, stating, “In light of ongoing investigations into the origin of COVID-19 and in consultation with public health experts, we will no longer remove the claim that COVID-19 is man-made or manufactured from our apps.”<sup>25</sup>

Yet, the JAMA paper is still promoting the misleading propaganda that discussing the origins of SARS-CoV-2 is off limits. One of their targeted pieces of misinformation stated, “they made it so that anyone who questioned that theory, the idea of a lab leak, was treated as a fringe scientist ... a conspiracy theorist. When they knew full well that so many of the top virologists in the world believed that the lab leak was a real possibility.”<sup>26</sup>

This, again, is true. In April 2020, [NewsGuard classified mercola.com as fake news](#) because we reported SARS-CoV-2 virus as potentially having been leaked from the biosafety level 4 laboratory in Wuhan City, China, the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak.

## The Biggest Attack on Free Speech in US History

The misinformation bullies are getting their day in court, and it seems justice will finally be served. In what's being described as "the most important free speech lawsuit of this generation," the federal government was sued for working with social media companies to censor Americans during the pandemic.<sup>27</sup>

U.S. District Judge Terry A. Doughty issued a preliminary injunction, siding with the Plaintiffs that the U.S. government colluded with social media companies to censor free speech.

"If the allegations made by Plaintiffs are true, the present case arguably involves the most massive attack against free speech in United States' history," Doughty wrote. "In their attempts to suppress alleged disinformation, the Federal Government, and particularly the Defendants named here, are alleged to have blatantly ignored the First Amendment's right to free speech."<sup>28</sup>

Topics that were clearly censored by the government, which "used its power to silence the opposition," included many of those targeted by the JAMA study:<sup>29</sup>

Opposition to COVID-19 vaccines

Opposition to COVID-19 masking and lockdowns

Opposition to the lab-leak theory of COVID-19

Opposition to the validity of the 2020 election

Opposition to President Biden's policies

Statements that the Hunter Biden laptop story was true

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## Opposition to policies of the government officials in power

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It's important to be aware that when academic journals, media or organizations talk about tackling "misinformation" and "disinformation," it's a code phrase for censorship. It's also part of a globalist agenda to control free speech, alter the perception of truth and reality, and spread its carefully orchestrated propaganda.

Will truth and free speech ultimately prevail? At least one media outlet has taken a step in the right direction by calling out the numerous inaccuracies in the JAMA misinformation study. Hopefully many others will follow suit.

## Sources and References

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- <sup>4</sup> [JAMA Netw Open. 2023;6\(8\):e2328928. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.28928, Qualitative Analyses](#)
- <sup>5, 9, 16, 21, 26</sup> [JAMA Netw Open. 2023;6\(8\):e2328928. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.28928, Table 4](#)
- <sup>7</sup> [N Engl J Med 2022; 387:21-34 DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa2203965, Figure 3](#)
- <sup>8</sup> [The Epoch Times January 16, 2022](#)
- <sup>10</sup> [Rumble, Safe and Effective: A Second Opinion September 28, 2022, 37:18](#)
- <sup>11</sup> [CMAJ November 21, 2022, 194 \(45\) E1529-E1536; DOI: doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.220676, Interpretation](#)
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- <sup>14</sup> [MedPage Today August 25, 2021](#)
- <sup>18, 20</sup> [Cureus August 8, 2023](#)
- <sup>19</sup> [Cureus August 8, 2023, Results](#)
- <sup>22</sup> [Express April 11, 2021](#)
- <sup>24</sup> [Wall Street Journal February 26, 2023 \(Archived\)](#)
- <sup>25</sup> [Reason June 4, 2021](#)
- <sup>27</sup> [Fox News March 29, 2023](#)
- <sup>28</sup> [State of Missouri, Et al. Versus Joseph R. Biden Jr., Et al. Memorandum Ruling on Request for Preliminary Injunction July 4, 2023, Page 2](#)
- <sup>29</sup> [State of Missouri, Et al. Versus Joseph R. Biden Jr., Et al. Memorandum Ruling on Request for Preliminary Injunction July 4, 2023, Page 154](#)