

Thank You, Scientists

Category: Gratitude

written by Lisa Sieczkowski | November 11, 2021

Today, I am grateful. After eighteen months of fear, uncertainty, anger, weariness and despair – today, I feel hope. It is finally the day that the two youngest members of my immediate family have been vaccinated against COVID-19, making our family circle of protection complete.

As a pediatric hospitalist, I have seen plenty of acute COVID and MIS-C. I have nearly lost my mind trying to home-school my children in the early days of the pandemic, while also working full time. I have felt unduly burdened when I was the only doctor on service willing or able to take care of COVID-positive patients. I have felt frustration and anger when parents have refused testing or vaccination for their children and themselves. I have felt helpless and heartbroken when observing how this disease disproportionately impacts certain socioeconomic and racial groups.

I am grateful for the development of a safe and effective vaccine, accomplished on an unprecedented timeline and accessible to everyone in our country who wants it. I am equally incredulous that so many are refusing protection for themselves and their children, and I'm angered by the falsehoods propagated by these same individuals.

Yet, today, I choose to focus on gratitude. I am so grateful that my seven- and ten-year-old children hopped into the car and, with almost no consideration of their own fear of needles, received a vaccine that will protect not only them, but also their grandparents, their classmates, their teachers and everyone else they contact. I am grateful for everyone who has taken seriously the impact their actions will have on society and, in particular, its most fragile and vulnerable members.

I am grateful and proud to be part of a profession that cares about all members of society, even and especially those who scorn and reject and decry our hard-earned expertise. I am grateful for skepticism, for no one is infallible and those who question science force us to be rigorous. I am completely confident in how rigorous this science is; the numbers of unvaccinated versus vaccinated people who become ill, end up in the hospital and require ICU care or mechanical ventilation are quite clear. What is not clear to me is how people can ignore or try to manipulate these facts in order to suit their own agendas.

Today, though, I am grateful. The five humans who live in my house are all vaccinated against COVID-19. We have done the hard work and avoided infection thus far, and now we have taken the next step to prevent serious complications should we become infected in the future.

Thank you, scientists. I am grateful for you.

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