

Vaccine Vertigo

Category: Unvaccinated

written by Reetu Grewal | September 3, 2021

It's dizzying, as I go round and round with my patients about COVID vaccination. I've heard all the reasons for why a patient doesn't want to be vaccinated. I come prepared with my evidence-based rationale. Back and forth we go.

They say, "It wasn't tested long enough," and I say, "It went through the same process as any other vaccine, only in this case we completed the process in record time due to increased funding, willing volunteers, and an acute crisis that kept scientists working 24/7."

Then they say, "But I just got over COVID, I have antibodies," and I say, "You may have some protection for now but not for the long term, and not as much as if you got vaccinated."

Then they say, "But people are dying from the vaccine," and I ask, "Do you know how many people out of the millions vaccinated have died as a direct result of the vaccine?"

Then they say, "But I don't take the flu shot," and I say, "This vaccine isn't like the flu shot."

Then they say, "But I'm young and healthy," and I say, "COVID doesn't care."

Then they say, "But a Facebook post says it's unsafe," and I say, "Would you like Facebook to take over your diabetes care?"

Over and over, point and counterpoint, we discuss, like a dance, circling around, but never getting closer. Many times I feel like I get nowhere. Sometimes I am successful, which gives me hope. Unfortunately, I've seen that sometimes it takes one of my patients getting seriously ill or dying before their family, friends or themselves decide to get vaccinated.

Day after day, month after month, I have these conversations, and I start to doubt myself. I take my oath to my patients seriously: I do my best to treat them with the best care I can provide. But after these vaccine discussions it leaves me questioning whether I'm doing enough. When did their trust in me erode and social media's influence take over? Why am I not more successful in my vaccination efforts? How can I keep my patients and community safe?

The weight of these things pulls me down, drains my energy, and keeps my head spinning. What keeps me going back in for another round is knowing that I'm not alone in this fight, and I want to do everything I can to help my fellow healthcare workers.

Reetu Grewal

Jacksonville, Florida