

Ten Little Soldier Boys

Category: Omicron

written by Jennifer Caputo-Seidler | January 14, 2022

“Seven little soldier boys chopping up sticks; one chopped himself in halves and then there were six.

“Six little soldier boys playing with a hive; a bumblebee stung one and then there were five.

“Five little soldier boys going in for law; one got in chancery and then there were four.

“Four little soldier boys going out to sea; a red herring swallowed one and then there were three.”

This child’s rhyme, on which the Agatha Christie novel *And Then There Were None* is based, has replayed in my mind ever since omicron arrived in the state of Florida. It’s a dark replacement for the mantra “We’re all in this together.”

Between March 2020 and November 2021, my group of 35 hospitalists experienced five COVID infections. In December 2021, in just the first two weeks of the omicron surge, six of our hospitalists came down with COVID. As one colleague after another went out on quarantine, I was left wondering “Am I next? Is today the day I get COVID?”

This feeling of the inevitability of being infected wasn’t present during previous surges. Even in the early days of the pandemic, when so much was unknown about the virus and we were afraid of running out of PPE, I didn’t feel condemned to contracting it.

Omicron feels different. For the first time, it feels as though two vaccines, a booster, and continued masking won’t be enough to keep me safe.

One little soldier boy left all alone; he went out and got COVID and then there were none.

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