

Addressing COVID Vaccine Hesitancy in Parents.

Why isn't the evidence
enough?



*I asked our
support group
of vaccine
hesitant
parents.*

Fears over menstrual changes and infertility in their teen daughters.

Lack of FDA approval.

Poor efficacy and risk of side effects.

Fear of mRNA vaccines and a lack of an alternative vaccine.

Small sample size in study.

The biggest hurdle is that parents think COVID is harmless for children

There are several outspoken MDs with no experience in caring for covid patients telling parents on social media that covid is harmless.

They use mortality statistics and leave out morbidity. Issues like secondary infection, immune dysregulation, and long covid are not mentioned.

They also do not compare the mortality statistics to diseases we already vaccinate for, which covid has already proven more lethal than some on the schedule.

Proximity bias. "My friends kids got covid and they were fine." Statistically this is the likely case, but it doesn't mean covid is safe.

*The power of
the anecdote.
How
antivaxxers
scare parents.*

A clip of a child with health issues can be shared as a vaccine reaction millions of times, despite no evidence of the child being vaccinated.

Anecdotes evoke emotional response.

We can use this to our advantage. We should share stories of families who were negatively affected by their children getting covid.

I share my own experience on twitter in effort to show that covid infection has real consequences to healthy children. I use it as a reply to people who say covid is harmless to healthy children. I post in in the comments of the biggest antivax influencers.

I share my own experience

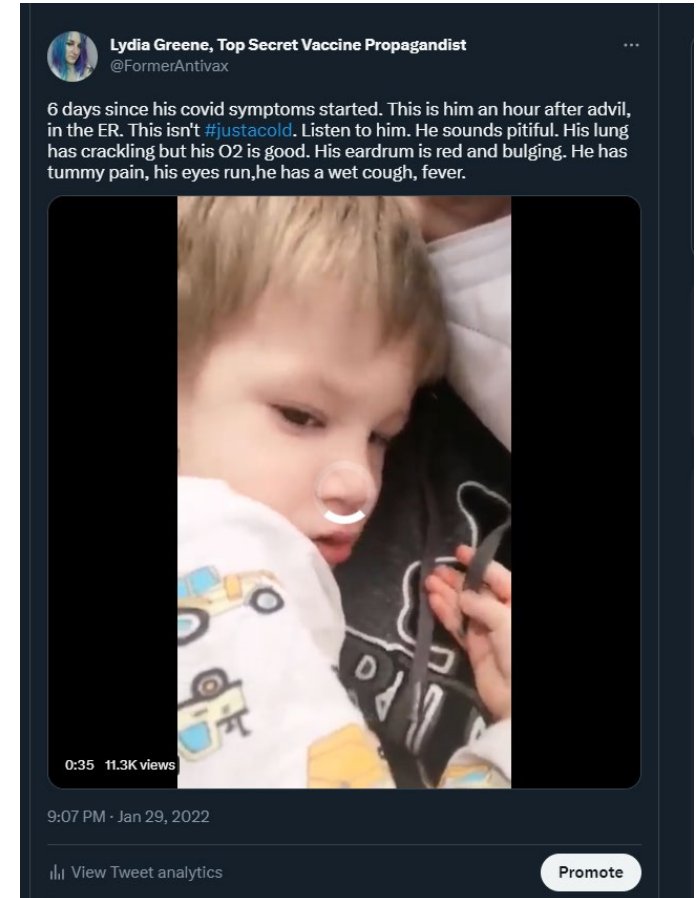
As a formerly antivax parent, I learned in real time the value of vaccination.

My older children were vaccinated before they caught COVID. They had mild symptoms.

My youngest had COVID twice before he could be vaccinated and both cases were miserable. His first required a trip to the hospital.

Both times he suffered strange long covid symptoms in the weeks after. Severe, random fatigue spells where he would have to stop what he was doing and sit or lay down.

It is worth getting a vaccine to prevent this.



*Who are the
purveyors of
Pediatric COVID
Vaccine
misinformation?*

DR VINAY PRASAD MD, Oncologist

260K Twitter Followers

Claims that masks don't work and even advocates against them in healthcare settings. This is so dangerous for the immunocompromised, including his CANCER PATIENTS.

Dr Prasad claims the AAP doesn't focus on other causes of the death in kids. On the day he said that the AAP launched a water safety ad campaign for the summer.

He claims that vaccines are more dangerous for children than COVID-19, despite never treating children with COVID-19 and not being a pediatrician.

He called masks child abuse, despite never treating children who have suffered abuse.

Dr. Prasad allows anti-vaxxers to spread misinformation in all of his comment sections, while blocking all his colleagues who constructively criticize him. #blockedbyvinay is a popular medtwitter hashtag.

Dr Marty Makary MD, MPH

230K Followers

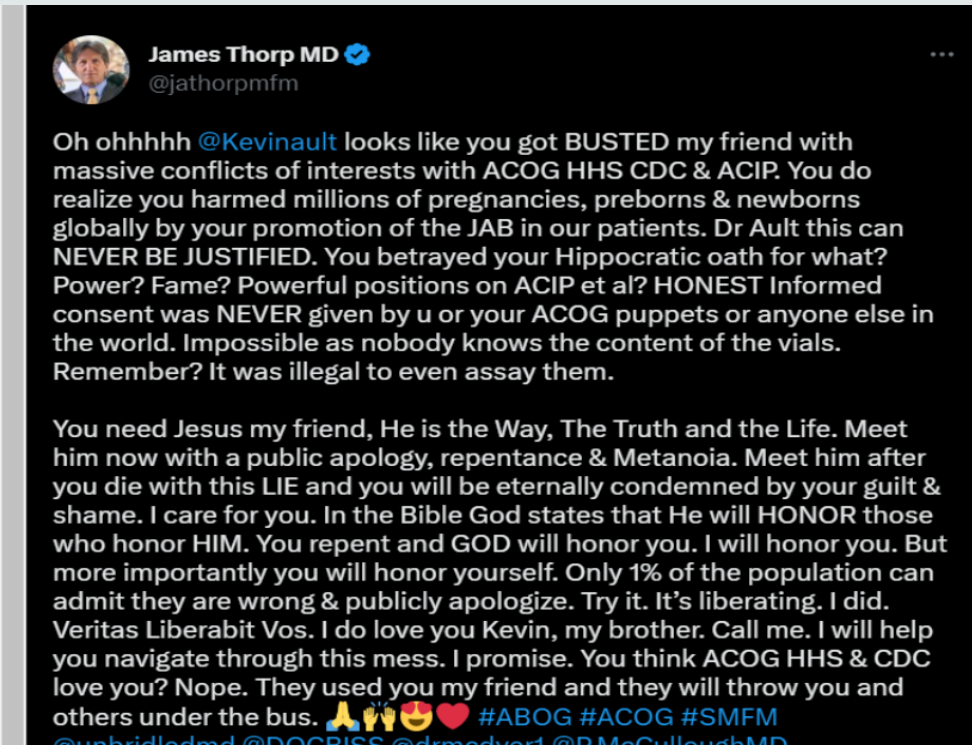
- Not a pediatrician (Are we surprised?)
- Dr. Makary claimed COVID-19 was over several times. He was wrong.
- Claimed that healthy children don't die from COVID-19. 1/4 of pediatric COVID deaths were in healthy children (CDC).
- Claimed that only three children died from COVID-19, when it was hundreds at the time, he made the claim. The tally is 1,800 in March 2023.
- Glosses over morbidity caused by COVID-19 in children, like long COVID-19 and MIS-C. Morbidity is a reason we vaccinate children for other diseases. COVID-19 is no different in that respect.

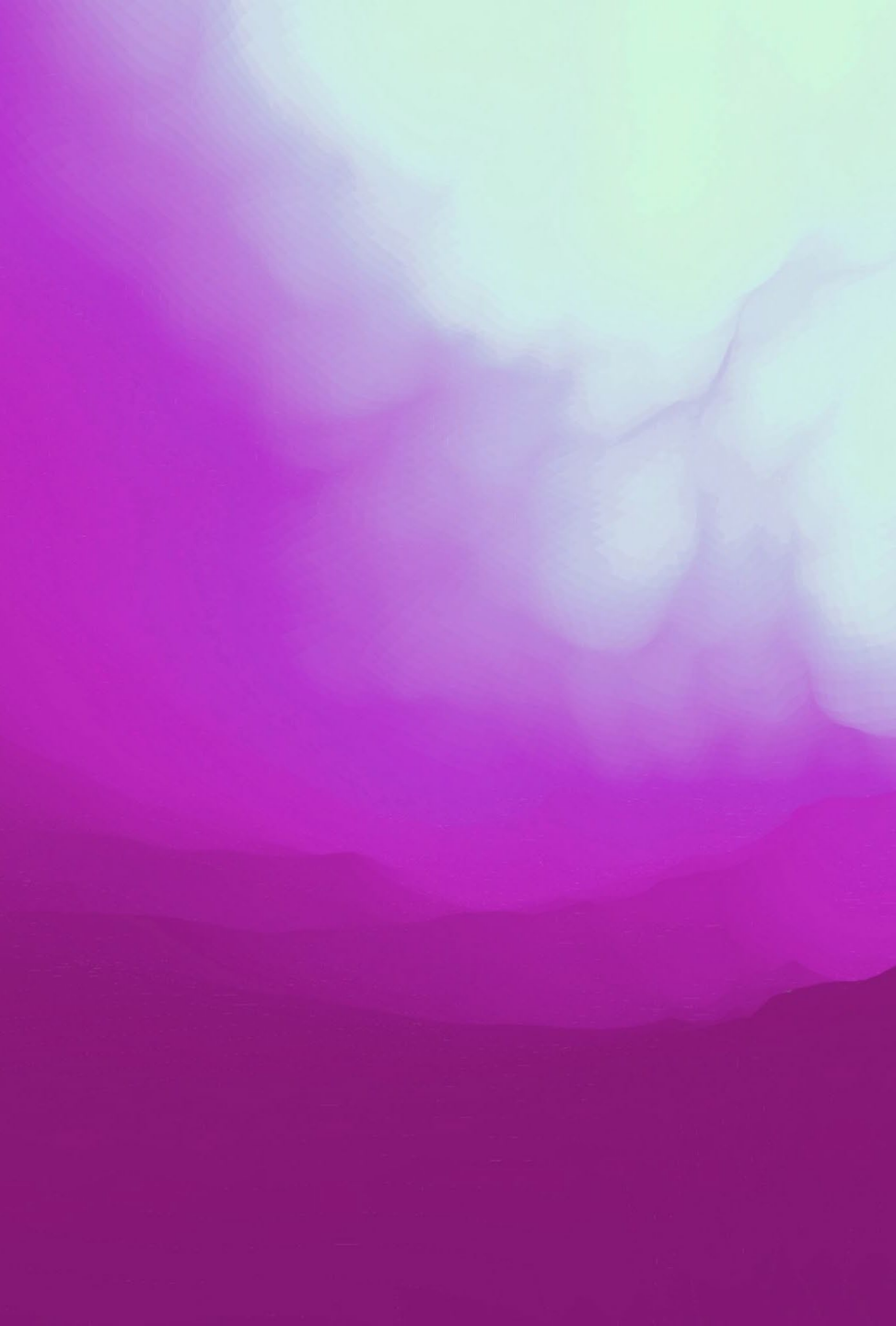


Dr. Tracy Hoeg MD PhD. 72K followers.

- Tracy manipulates data to make parents believe that covid vaccines are more dangerous than covid itself.
- She has claimed that COVID is no big deal in children despite being very afraid for her teenager when he had it.
- This type of amnesia is common among covid skeptical doctors.
- She shares rare case studies to scare parents out of vaccination.
- In typical crank fashion, claims you don't need vaccines just a healthy lifestyle. This trope can be applied to all vaccinations and is driving hesitancy for the entire schedule.


*Boards are toothless.
I have made several
reports.*





*Knowing where
parents get this
information is key.*

Parents are not just pulling this information from bad conspiracy sites. These are medical professionals that are creating hesitancy.



10 7 47 58.7K



Allison Krug MPH @KrugAlli · Apr 28

...and how this plays into dating, mutual respect, risk-taking behaviors (not just sex, but drugs, smoking, any pill offered by a friend to try, even what might look like a harmless med, one pill can kill message, etc.).

6 2 36 80.7K



Allison Krug MPH @KrugAlli · Apr 28

I personally think it is well past time to have open conversations about how much we're reaching for medications to manage through life vs old-school time in nature, reflection, self-awareness, spirituality, connections with other humans, adult role models, sports, exercise, ...

27 30 111 47.7K



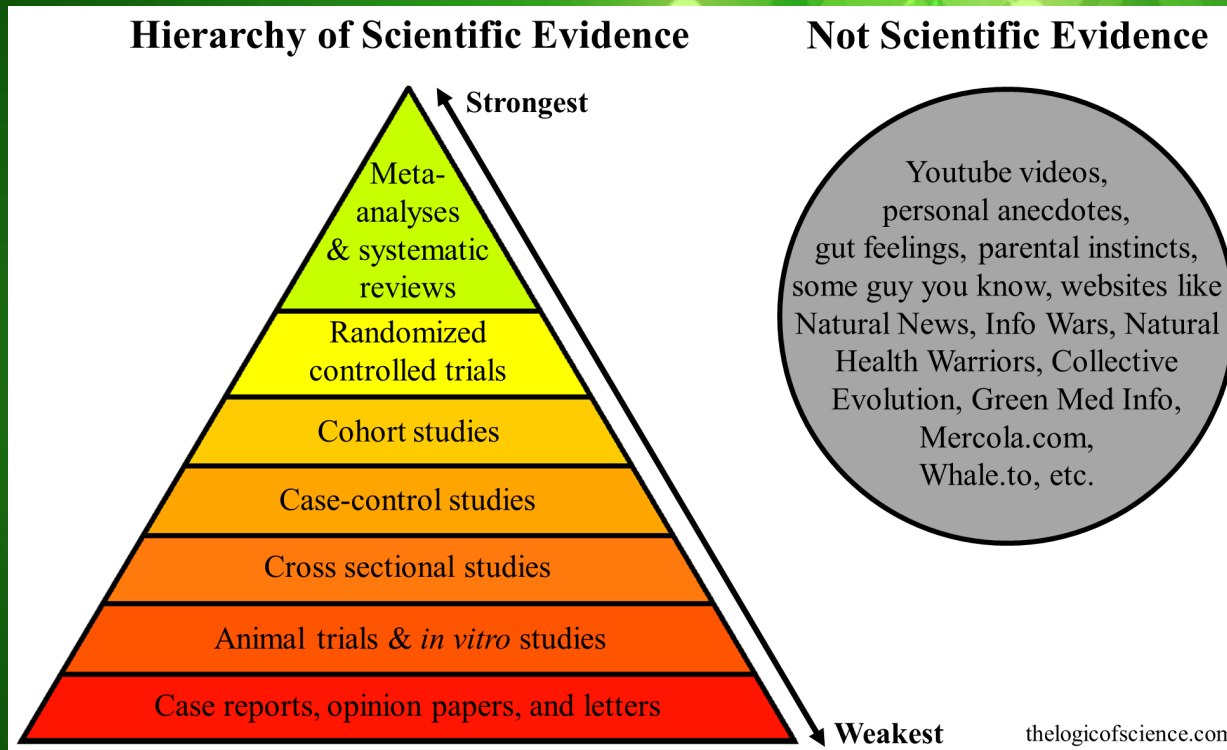
Allison Krug MPH @KrugAlli

...self-regulation regarding social media use, intentionality when choosing friends and how time is spent, courage, grit, self defense skills, walking to the bus in the rain by choice vs begging for a ride...the list goes on. How are we building fortitude in our kids today?

6:37 AM · Apr 28, 2023 · **44.4K** Views

Here we have a covid contrarian MPH, scaring parents about HPV vaccines. They scare parents and then offer a magic wand.

Diet and healthy lifestyle are FRIENDS with vaccination.




*How do they
sound so
convincing?*

*They abuse the hierarchy of
evidence.*

*Covid Contrarian Doctors lean
on VAERS Reports.*


Antivaxxers like to use VAERS as evidence that vaccines cause all kinds of health issues and side effects. The data is unverified, and causation is not linked. I remind them that life still happens after vaccination.




I give them a more reliable database like the Vaccine Safety Datalink.



I remind them of the bigger picture. If you give 1 million people a simple glass of water, a few will get cancer, have a miscarriage, get diabetes, and even die. It wasn't the water



Here's another example. Every time ice cream sales rise so does the occurrence of sunburn. Does ice cream cause sunburn? No. What is the actual connection? Hot sunny weather increases ice cream sales and sunburn.



Every negative symptom has a rate of occurrence in a population. VAERS data is analyzed and they look for signals above baseline.

HOW I SIMPLIFY THESE CONCEPTS FOR HESITANT PEOPLE.

WHAT HELPED ME VACCINATE WITH CONFIDENCE?

Vaxopedia. Dismantles each trope. Even regarding COVID-19 vaccines.

Reading other former antivax stories.

Knowing that the doctors and pediatricians I know vaccinated their kids against COVID-19.

Seeing with my own eyes that my children were ok. The first vaccine is the hardest.





WHAT CAN WE DO ON A PUBLIC LEVEL?

- The message that covid is mild and harmless is out there. Parents need to know the morbidity associated with COVID-19. Compare with diseases we already vaccinate for.
- Get personal. Anecdotes work both ways. Are your kids vaccinated? Share your experience with that and be honest. Include side effects. This builds credibility.
- Public health needs to venture into the community, where children and families are. Example: Have a booth, give out popsicles at a park or event. Talk to parents.
- Hear something wrong? Say something. Unfortunately, there are medical professionals that believe these myths. Correct them. As a nursing student I have had to do this. It's not easy.
- Expose the grift. Most of these COVID contrarians have a Patreon, book, or substack that they make income off of.

WHAT CAN HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS DO?

Listen

- Listen. I know it's easy to try to downplay fears in an effort to stomp them out. It doesn't work. Never look angry or annoyed. This shuts the conversation down immediately.

Ask

- Ask them to bring you their biggest fear so you can go over it together. Empathize. "Wow that is really scary. I'm glad you're telling me this." "Let me look into that, we will talk about it next time." Just do one fear at a time, as Gish gallop is an antivax defense mechanism.
- (My doctor told me to google my daughter's medication, and report back all the scary stuff to her.)

Be Patient and Available

- Be patient. You're not going to extinguish their fears in one visit, and you want them to come back to YOU. Maybe they just do one vaccine. Can they call the office if they are scared? Especially the first vaccine, you want to be there if they have any questions. Set up an email account, specifically for their antivax questions, so all your patients can ask you a question anytime they want. You can answer at your leisure.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE PURVEYORS OF
DISINFORMATION?

Follow me on
twitter.
[@backtothevax](#) and
[@formerantivax](#)

Read Dr Jonathan
Howards book, We
Want Them
Infected.