

On Child Vaccines, Why Are the Experts Being Bullied to Follow ‘The Science’?

By [Jonathan Cook](#)

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Science and Medicine](#)

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In some of my recent articles, I have been trying to gently highlight what should be a very obvious fact: that “the science” we are being constantly told to follow is not quite as scientific as is being claimed.

That is inevitable in the context of a new virus about which much is still not known. And it is all the more so given that our main response to the pandemic – vaccination – while being a relatively effective tool against the worst disease outcomes is nonetheless an exceedingly blunt one. Vaccines are the epitome of the one-size-fits-all approach of modern medicine.

Into the void between our scientific knowledge and our fear of mortality has rushed politics. It is a refusal to admit that “the science” is necessarily compromised by political and commercial considerations that has led to an increasingly polarised – and unreasonable – confrontation between what have become two sides of the Covid divide. Doubt and curiosity have been squeezed out by the bogus certainties of each faction.

My latest: We are not conquerors of our bodies, the planet, or the universe – and if we imagine we are, we will soon find out that the battle we’re waging is one we can never hope to win <https://t.co/Krdxw7hq8M>

— Jonathan Cook (@Jonathan_K_Cook) [April 19, 2021](#)

All of this has been underscored by the latest decision of the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation, the British government’s official advisory body on vaccinations. Unexpectedly, it has defied political pressure and demurred, for the time being at least, on extending the vaccination programme to children aged between 12 and 15.

The British government appears to be furious. Ministers who have been constantly demanding that we “follow the science” are [reported](#)ly ready to ignore the advice – or more

likely, bully the JCVI into hastily changing its mind over the coming days.

And liberal media outlets like the Guardian, which have been so careful until now to avoid giving a platform to “dissident” scientists, are suddenly subjecting the great and the good of the vaccination establishment to harsh criticism from doctors who want children vaccinated as quickly as possible.

Watching this confected “row” unfold, one thing is clear: “the science” is getting another political pummelling.

Peek behind the curtain

There are a few revealing snippets buried in the media reports of the JCVI’s reasons for delaying child vaccinations – information that challenges other parts of the vaccination narrative that have been unassailable till now.

One concerns long Covid, fear of which has probably been the main factor driving parents to push for their children to be vaccinated – given that Covid poses little immediate threat of serious illness to the vast majority of children. Of long Covid in children, the JCVI [argues](#), according to the Guardian, that “the impact of the symptoms may be no worse than those seen in children who have not actually had Covid”.

What to make of that? We know that over the past few decades a small but growing proportion of children have been suffering from long-term chronic fatigue syndromes – often following a viral infection. This may relate to more general immunity problems in children that, like other chronic disease, doctors have been largely baffled by – and may even be contributing to.

Is long Covid another fatigue syndrome, and one that many of these children would have suffered from if they had been infected with a different virus, like flu? Don’t hold your breath waiting for a debate on that question, let alone an answer, any time soon.

Then there is this. The Guardian reports that the JCVI was [concerned](#) about “the unknown longer-term consequences of a rare side-effect [myocarditis – heart inflammation] seen with mRNA vaccines such as the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna shots. ... What makes the JCVI uneasy is that there is little long-term follow-up on vaccinated children.”

“Unknown longer-term consequences”? A lack of “follow-up” on vaccinated children? These sound more like the criticisms of the tin-foil hat-wearers than the cautious advice of vaccination experts.

Or is it just that we have been given a fleeting peek behind the curtain of official medical debate to see an uncertainty that has been actively concealed from us. “The science” is not quite as solid as the scientists or politicians would have us believe, it seems.

Piling on the pressure

What sensible view should we, the public, take when that “scientific” consensus suddenly solidifies – possibly as soon as next week – behind exactly what the politicians are demanding.

The government and parts of the media are clearly going to keep piling the pressure on the

JCVI. The committee's efforts to avoid being drawn into a highly charged and politicised debate about vaccinating children is written all over the caveats and get-out clauses in its decision on Friday.

The government's stated aim in wanting to vaccinate children is to avoid "disruption" to children's education, as though this is about the well-being of pupils. But we need to be honest: the disruptions were imposed on schools by politicians and educators not for the sake of children but for the sake of adults, frightened by our own vulnerability to Covid.

The JCVI has embarrassed the government by reminding us of this fact in relation to child vaccinations. Not only have we deprived children of a proper education over a year or more and opportunities to develop physically, mentally and emotionally through their school life, clubs, trips and sport, but now, suggests the JCVI, we want to inject them with a new drug whose long-term consequences are not fully understood or, it seems, being properly investigated.

All of this will be unmentionable again as soon as the JCVI can be arm-twisted into agreeing to the government's demands. We will be told once again to blindly "follow the science", to obey these political dictates as we were once required to obey the spiritual dictates of our clerics.

Censoring testimony

"Follow the science" is a mantra designed to shut down all critical thinking about how we respond to the pandemic – and to justify censorship of even well-qualified dissenting scientists by corporate media and their social media equivalents.

For example, YouTube has [excised the testimony](#) of medical experts to the US Congress who have been trying to bring attention to the potential benefits of ivermectin, a safe, long-out-of-patent medicine. Instead the corporate media is derisively describing it as a "[horse drug](#)" to forestall any discussion of its use as a cheap therapeutic alternative to endless, expensive vaccine booster shots.

(And by the way, before the "follow the science" crowd work themselves into a lather, I have no particular view on the usefulness of ivermectin, I simply want experts to be allowed to discuss it in public. Watch, for example, this farcical segment below from the Hill in which the presenters are forced, while discussing the media furore about podcast star Joe Rogan's use of ivermectin to treat his Covid, to avoid actually naming the drug at the centre of the furore for fear of YouTube censorship.)

To want more open debate, not less, about where we head next, especially as western states have vaccinated significant majorities of their populations, is often being treated as the equivalent of "Covid denial".

Where this new authoritarian climate leads is apparent in the shaming of anyone who tries to [highlight](#) that our responses to Covid are following a familiar big-business-friendly pattern: focus all attention on expensive, short-term, resource-hungry quick fixes (in this case, vaccines) and ignore important, long-term, sustainable solutions such as improving the population's health and immunity to this pandemic and the ones likely to follow.

My latest: Most politicians and doctors have ignored the amassing evidence of Vitamin D's dramatic effects on Covid hospital patients. Might it be because the vitamin is made in the mystical touch of sun on skin rather than by white-coated lab technicians? <https://t.co/gsh4xEOzd5>

— Jonathan Cook (@Jonathan_K_Cook) [February 15, 2021](#)

An obesity epidemic – obesity is a key factor in susceptibility to severe Covid, though you would hardly know it from the media coverage – is still not being tackled, even though the obesity epidemic, unlike Covid, has been growing as a public health threat for many decades. Why? Because the corporate food industry, and more especially the fast-food and sugar industries, and the corporate health industries are financially invested in it never being tackled.

There is no serious *media* debate about the role of health in tackling Covid because the corporate media are invested in exactly the same consumption model as the food and health corporations – not least, they heavily depend on corporate advertising.

Which is why the media hurried to [amplify attacks](#) on Jonathan Neman, head of the salad fast-food restaurant chain Sweetgreen, for supposedly “[downplaying the importance of vaccines](#)”, as soon as he pointed out the statistical fact that 78 per cent of people admitted to hospital for Covid are obese and overweight. He [asked](#) quite reasonably:

What if we made the food that is making us sick illegal? What if we taxed processed food and refined sugar to pay for the impact of the pandemic? What if we incentivized health?

Politicians, of course, have no interest in taking action against the corporate food industry both because they depend on campaign donations from those same corporations and because they want good press from the corporate media.

Studies on immunity

Another topic that has been made all but taboo is the issue of natural immunity. A series of recent [studies](#) suggest that those who have caught and recovered from Covid have a [better response](#) to the delta variant than those who have been vaccinated only.

Those who have recovered appear to be many times less likely to get reinfected, suggesting natural immunity confers stronger and longer-lasting protection against Covid than vaccines, including preventing hospitalisation and transmission to others.

That may have significant implications for our reliance on vaccines. For instance, vaccines may be playing a part in creating new, more aggressive variants, given that the vaccinated have been wrongly encouraged to see themselves as at less risk of catching Covid but are in fact more likely than those who have recovered to transmit the disease.

If that is the case, the current orthodoxy preferring vaccines has turned reality on its head.

Perhaps, not surprisingly, these studies have received almost no coverage. They conflict with every single message the politicians, media and “follow the science” crowd have been promulgating for months.

How much that narrative has been engineered can be seen in the role the World Health Organisation played early on, as the vaccines were being rolled out, in secretly trying to rewrite medical history. Uniquely in the case of Covid, they pretended that herd immunity could only be achieved through vaccination, as though natural immunity did not count.

I've had run-ins with Off-Guardian of late, but they're right to highlight the WHO mucking about with the established definition of 'herd immunity'. This kind of thing does nothing but undermine trust in science and scientists
<https://t.co/SgEMqnptZu>

— Jonathan Cook (@Jonathan_K_Cook) [January 2, 2021](#)

Highlighting this new study does not mean that letting Covid rip through the population is the best strategy, or that vaccinations do not help prevent illness and the spread of Covid.

But it does undermine the simple-minded, and novel, insistence that vaccination is the only safe way to protect against a virus, or even the best.

It does undermine the case increasingly being promoted by politicians and the media that the unvaccinated should be treated as a threat to society and accorded second-class status (watch the video below).

It does undermine the demand for vaccine passports as a prerequisite for “normal life” being restored.

My latest: Does social solidarity only count when it gets us back to the pub? It's time for a real debate about the values behind 'immunity passports'
<https://t.co/FqowlZ7L0Z>

— Jonathan Cook (@Jonathan_K_Cook) [March 5, 2021](#)

And it hints at an additional reason the JCVI may have been reluctant to rush into testing a new generation of vaccines on children for a disease that is rarely serious for them and to which they will have stronger immunity if they catch it rather than being vaccinated against it.

Glaring vacuum

What these studies and others suggest is that we need a more open, honest debate about the best way forward, a more inclusive debate rather than what we have at the moment: accusations, arrogance and contempt – *from both sides*.

The left should not be siding with media corporations to shut down debate, even Covid denial; they should be pushing for more persuasive arguments. And the left should not be cheering on the bullying or stigmatising of people who are hesitant about taking the vaccines, either for themselves or their children.

BREAKING: A judge revokes a Chicago mom's custody of her 11-year-old son after she admits that she is unvaccinated. The dad is vaccinated, and will retain custody until she is. RT IF YOU SUPPORT THE JUDGE'S DECISION TO PUT THE CHILD'S SAFETY BEFORE HER MOM'S DANGEROUS IGNORANCE!

— Occupy Democrats (@OccupyDemocrats) [August 30, 2021](#)

Enforce a glaring vacuum in the public discourse, as has happened with Covid, and two things are guaranteed: that politicians and corporations will exploit that vacuum to increase their power and profits; and a significant section of the public will attribute the worst, most cynical motives to those enforcing the vacuum.

The very act of gagging anyone – but most especially experts – from conducting certain kind of conversations is bound to increase political alienation, cynicism and social polarisation. It creates no kind of consensus or solidarity. It creates only division and bitterness. Which, putting my cynic's hat on for a moment, may be the very reason why it seems to be our leaders' preferred course of action.

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This essay first appeared on Jonathan Cook's blog: <https://www.jonathan-cook.net/blog/>

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