

Woman Raises Questions after Mom's Death Certificate References Vaccine. Experts Warn About Drawing Conclusions.

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A Chapel Hill woman who says her mother died of a stroke 48 hours after receiving the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine spoke to WRAL News about her concerns and the questions she has about her mother's death. The state and a UNC doctor, though, warn about drawing any conclusions yet.

Becca Ingle is understandably devastated after her mother's sudden death two weeks ago. She says her mother was in good health, but started feeling very ill shortly after getting the vaccine. She wants to know if her mother's death could be connected to the vaccine. The state is investigating this case and so is WRAL.

As a college professor who worked in person with her students at Appalachian State University and spent lots of time caring for her two grandchildren, 63-year-old **Virginia Ellington** was counting the days until she could be vaccinated against COVID-19.

“I have texts from her saying how excited she was to get it,” her daughter, Ingle, said.

Ingle said her mother and father got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine on the morning of Monday, March 8, at the Watauga Health Center in Boone.

Ellington started feeling very tired and even asked her husband about possible vaccine side effects, Ingle told WRAL News.

Ellington went to work the next day but was still feeling unwell, according to her family. On Wednesday, March 10, she stayed in bed. A little while later, her husband returned to the bedroom to find her unresponsive.

“He tried giving her CPR, and he called 911, and they said she was gone when they got there,” Ingle said.

Ingle said the local doctor, who did a preliminary examination, told the family that her mother died of a stroke. The local medical examiner, a paramedic and a teacher who signed the death certificate, wrote that the vaccine was one of the “significant conditions contributing to her death.”

“We were all shocked when we saw that was even on there,” Ingle said.

Ingle shared her questions about the vaccine and her mother’s death on TikTok. The post has had more than 4 million views, but it received mixed reviews. TikTok even placed a warning on it.



“It just breaks my heart that this is what happened and this is what it takes to share her story,” Ingle said.

Ingle says her mother was in good health prior to her death.

“It (the vaccine) definitely escalated things,” she said. “Whether she was going to have a stroke in 30 years or whether she was going to have it now, it definitely triggered it.”

Ingle says high blood pressure and strokes run in her family.

Dr. Stephan Moll, a medical professor, researcher and hematologist at UNC Health, believes connecting the vaccine to a stroke is a rush to judgment.

“The vaccine is appropriate for everybody independent of the family history or their personal history,” he said.

He thinks mention of the vaccine should not have been included on the death certificate.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 795,000 people in the United States have strokes every year. North Carolina has one of the highest rates, at 26,000 per year, or 70 per day.

“Some people will develop a stroke and have had the vaccine,” Moll said, “but that’s a coincidental occurrence. Even an association, that’s a rare one. It should not sway away anybody from getting the vaccine.”

The CDC has found no evidence of a connection between the vaccines and strokes. Moll says the only way to know for sure is to do an autopsy.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has referred Ellington’s case to the Office of the State Medical Examiner for an autopsy. Agency officials told WRAL News:

“The death investigation for this case is in the preliminary stage, which is why the death certificate says ‘pending.’ After an autopsy examination by one of our regional autopsy centers, the preliminary results do not show that this death was related to a vaccine or vaccination.”

Susan Hawkins, the local medical examiner who signed the death certificate and made the reference to the vaccine as a factor, declined comment to WRAL News and referred all questions to the state.

The final state medical examiner’s report could take several months to complete, and more answers should be clear at that time.

That portends a painful wait for a daughter seeking answers.

“I’m not here to say you shouldn’t take it,” Ingle said. “I’m just saying raise awareness. You should check on your loved ones if you are getting it.”

Johnson & Johnson provided this statement to WRAL News:

“There is no greater priority than the safety and well-being of the people we serve. We carefully review reports of this nature that involve individuals receiving our medicines, or in this instance, a vaccine.”

Company officials go on to say that these reports are evaluated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and other health authorities that are monitoring the overall safety of the vaccine rollout.

Recognizing this story may generate a lot of interest, the family issued a statement saying, “As the family mourns their loss, please respect their need for privacy.”

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