

THIS IS BULLSHIT: SILVER TAKES THE GOLD FOR COVID GUFF [UPDATE-1]

[NB: Check the byline, thanks. Update at bottom of post. /~Rayne]

I'm sure my neighbors wondered what the hell was going on here Friday. The weather was nice enough that my windows were wide open exposing those within hearing to my vented spleen. There was so much crap in my social media I couldn't help yell, "Bullshit, bullshit, absolute bullshit!" I can only hope they thought I was yelling about the Olympics.

What really set me off was dangerous twaddle from someone who should long ago have learned not to opine without data.

Because he refuses to stick to his lane using data to support his case, Nate Silver has become anathema, all of his own doing. His bullshit tweet Friday about COVID can get people killed if they pay him any heed at all.

Honestly as long as you're vaccinated and not in some sort of special circumstance you should choose to live your life ~however you want under COVID but don't mistake overcaution for virtue or wisdom.

– Nate Silver (@NateSilver538) July 30, 2021

No data offered here to support this swag – it's pure opinion.

For the last couple of months we've known we haven't been dealing with the same virus variant which began the pandemic; we're now up against a far more transmissible version the features of

which researchers are still analyzing.

In its pandemic coverage, the Washington Post reported the Centers for Disease Control acknowledged in an internal memo “the war [against COVID] has changed”:

... The document strikes an urgent note, revealing the agency knows it must revamp its public messaging to emphasize vaccination as the best defense against a variant so contagious that it acts almost like a different novel virus, leaping from target to target more swiftly than Ebola or the common cold.

It cites a combination of recently obtained, still-unpublished data from outbreak investigations and outside studies showing that vaccinated individuals infected with delta may be able to transmit the virus as easily as those who are unvaccinated. Vaccinated people infected with delta have measurable viral loads similar to those who are unvaccinated and infected with the variant. ...

In other words our past assumptions about SARS-CoV-2 no longer work; this isn't a virus with a replication factor of R2 (in which one infected person infects two more on average) but an R-naught much higher.

Let's revisit what was known at the end of June this year about the Delta variant in this explainer I've shared before:

Here I breakdown the mutations within the #DeltaVariant of SARS-CoV-2 and how these amino acid changes are important to be aware of related to the virus's ability to infect & be detected by antibodies. <https://t.co/TwzGcGA33z>

– Rob Swanda (@ScientistSwanda) June 30, 2021

It's the change in charge and in the amino acid described in Rob Swanda's video above which may be responsible for both the high level of virus load found in both unvaccinated *and vaccinated* individuals. Think of the electrostatic charge as acting like a magnet, attracting more virus to receptors, combined with a change to the spike protein which may allow the virus to attack host cells more quickly and not be recognized quite as rapidly by vaccinated persons' immune systems. You'll grasp why vaccinated persons are infectious and spreading the virus along with unvaccinated carriers.

For another overview which offers a fairly basic explanation of the process by which viruses mutate and then disperse as well as an overview of the Delta variant, see this MedCram video from July 20:

If you watch this video, do pay special note to dates on materials cited. There's one graph in particular addressing the spread of Delta in the UK based on data from June; the spread of Delta is so aggressive that data wasn't accurate by the time of this video a month later.

This article in BBC provides a graph showing the trend from mid/late June in the UK; Delta's spread continued along that rapid uptick, resulting in more hospitalizations though vaccinations kept the rate from matching the last COVID surge. The MedCram video (at 5:17) does attribute the increase to the Delta variant.

Note also the differences in population testing positive for Delta – now much younger – and the admissions. While vaccinated individuals are still unlikely to need hospitalization as documented outbreaks like that in Provincetown MA show, they can still get the virus. We still don't yet know what the long-term repercussions are among vaccinated individuals who have asymptomatic or mild cases of COVID. We do know that previous variants have caused damage among infected individuals even though they had

asymptomatic or mild cases, and younger people including children were among those who were injured.


But now that we know vaccinated persons can both be infected with Delta and spread it, vaccinated persons can't simply "choose to live [their] life ~however [they] want under COVID" because they pose a danger to individuals who can't be vaccinated or are immune compromised.

That's someone like Montel Williams, living with a compromised immune system, fully vaccinated, did everything right to protect himself, and yet someone infected him through thoughtless carelessness:

Don't listen to bullshit from unqualified hacks who don't have skin in the game. Pay attention to credentialed virologists, epidemiologists, public health professionals who are on top of the data related to COVID and the peer-reviewed research about its variants.

Above all continue to wear masks and maintain some level of social distancing even if you're vaccinated, not just because you may become mildly ill but because you may infect others who may not be able to be vaccinated – particularly children – or who may be immune compromised.

This tweet shows the difference between an infected young teen's lungs and health lungs; imagine this happening to younger children, unable to be vaccinated while vaccines have yet to be approved for use among those under age 12:




Children are affected by COVID. These are the lungs of a 13 y.o. unvaccinated boy with COVID compared to a vaccinated person. The white areas are damaged lung. #TheySurvivedCovid but their life will never be the same.
pic.twitter.com/nI43DkKALa

– Cleavon MD 🇺🇸 (@Cleavon_MD) July 28, 2021

Prevent this from happening to more children by encouraging vaccination. The sooner we reach 70% or more vaccinated, the faster we can halt the emergence of the next highly-transmissible and damaging SARS-CoV-2 variant.

UPDATE-1 – 2:40 PM ET 31-JUL-2021 –

When some denialist throws a 99% survival rate statistic in your face, sit them down and share this.



△ ICU nurse, tired of the “99% survival rate” argument, shows what many COVID patients go through TO survive
pic.twitter.com/a2yVpvAYq3

– Marjorie Gaylor Queen (@Tim_Tweeted)
July 30, 2021

Oh, was I suppose to provide a trigger warning? COVID doesn't provide them, oops.

The video above only addresses patients who've been hospitalized. At least one recent study suggests an average 13-14% of persons who recover from COVID have symptoms lasting weeks and months, some of which are debilitating and reflect permanent damage COVID does to the body.

Freedom. Woo. Choose to live your life however you want. Good luck getting out of bed freely after hospitalization, or keeping your job while suffering from brain fog and other cognitive impairment found in long COVID.