As many readers already know, I haven’t taken much interest in either the details of the Covid illness or the vaccines deployed against it. Over the last two years, fierce debates have raged over lockdowns, masking, and social distancing, as well as disputed medical treatments, but I’ve only slightly participated and paid little attention. Partly as a consequence, my views on most of these matters are vaguely conventional, probably not too far from what might be promoted in the pages of the *New York Times* or the *Economist*.

But many of the columnists and contributors on our alternative media webzine have followed a very different path. They have regularly made these issues the centerpiece of their writings, usually providing fierce opposition to the conventional narrative both on Covid itself as well as the vaccines and other prophylactic measures, and a large fraction of our most energetic commenters have done the same.

Indeed, a few months ago Mike Whitney published a 9,000 word interview with me regarding my views, which quickly provoked a quarter-million words of overwhelmingly hostile responses, which also filled two additional anti-vaxxing open threads of similar length:

- *Are the Opponents of the Covid Injections “Anti-Vaxx Crackpots”?*[3]  
  *Interview with Ron Unz*  
  Mike Whitney • *The Unz Review* • August 1, 2021 • 9,000 Words

However, my perspective has recently shifted to some extent. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. ranks as one of the top figures in America’s anti-vaxxing movement, and I read his #1 Amazon bestseller in November, discovering that it was filled with fascinating material entirely new to me.
Although I strongly endorsed it in my review, I also emphasized that none of his arguments had persuaded me to change my mind on Covid or vaxxing.

- **American Pravda: Vaxxing, Anthony Fauci, and AIDS**[4]
  
  Ron Unz • The Unz Review • December 6, 2021 • 6,100 Words

But although my views haven’t changed, I’m far less willing to dismiss those who challenge them. Kennedy’s 200 pages on HIV/AIDS made absolutely astonishing claims about a subject I’d never previously investigated, and once I did a substantial amount of additional reading and research, I concluded that the author was probably correct and everything I’d always thought I’d known about the illness had been mistaken. Prior to the Covid outbreak, AIDS had spent almost four decades as the world’s highest-profile disease, and such a sweeping reversal in my beliefs naturally left me very suspicious about all sorts of other medical matters, certainly including Covid, vaxxing, and public health dogma in general.

- **American Pravda: AIDS and the Revival of the Duesberg Hypothesis**[5]
  
  Ron Unz • The Unz Review • December 29, 2021 • 4,100 Words

- **American Pravda: Our Public Health Problems**[6]

- Ron Unz • The Unz Review • January 10, 2022 • 5,500 Words

According to media reports[7], Kennedy’s book has now sold over 500,000 copies despite spending weeks on back-order, and it seems likely to become the central text of those challenging the establishment program on Covid and vaccines. I regard this as a very positive development.

Despite the enormous hostility of the media responses, including a harsh attack[8] in leftist Counterpunch a few days ago, Kennedy’s position certainly seem far more moderate than so many of the outrageous claims I had seen on the Internet during the last year or two. As I wrote in my review:

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Surprisingly enough, and very contrary to my expectations, Kennedy’s stated position on vaccines seemed rather mild, quite different from the wild fear-mongering so regularly encountered on the Internet. He claimed that many vaccines weren’t properly tested, often had harmful side-effects, and were promoted mostly due to the profiteering of greedy pharmaceutical corporations and their subverted governmental regulators, accusations far more moderate—and far more plausible—than I had assumed he would make. While it’s not at all uncommon for wild-eyed anti-vaxxers to warn of millions—or even billions!—of deaths due to the current Covid vaccination drive, I didn’t see any such egregious claims in the carefully-documented chapters of this book.
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https://www.unz.com/runz/covid-deaths-and-vaxxing-deaths/?display=footnoted
Unlike some of his more extreme supporters, Kennedy seemed to fully admit that Covid is a dangerous disease, but correctly emphasized its extreme age-skew. He pointed out that the vaccines have proven far less effective than originally predicted, and he noted that they were rushed into widespread release without sufficient testing, which may eventually lead to major future health problems. The legal fig-leaf that allowed the normal regime of patient trials to be set aside was the claim that no other medical treatment existed, and this probably explains the widespread attacks on the use of IVM. Moreover, the vaccination of children or the youthful seems very misguided[9] given mildness of the illness for those age-cohorts.

Mandatory vaccination efforts enforced by serious legal or employment sanctions are the explosive flashpoint of the anti-vaxxer movement, but these never made any sense to me[10]. The vaccines appear ineffective in preventing infection or transmission, and their main benefit is to greatly reduce the risk of serious illness or death. So the vaccinated have little to fear from those who reject the needle, while the latter can make an informed—or perhaps emotional—choice in weighing the risks of a relatively untested vaccine against those of severe Covid illness. Given the extreme paranoia of a considerable slice of anti-vaxxers, heavy governmental pressure may even be proving counter-productive.

When the Covid epidemic reached America in early 2020, the Trump Administration was caught flat-footed. In the past, closely-related disease epidemics such as SARS in 2002 and MERS in 2012 had almost entirely bypassed our country, largely remaining confined to China and the Middle East respectively, so top Trump advisors seemed to assume the same would be true of Covid.

After that proved incorrect, President Trump and his supporters in the media began indulging in massive wishful thinking, sometimes suggesting that the dangerous viral epidemic was just a hoax or that it would miraculously disappear by itself. This unfortunate narrative soon became widespread across the Internet and social media, with legions of “Flu Hoaxers” claiming that Covid was hardly more dangerous than the annual flu and that our dishonest mainstream media was promoting a hoax by inflating a non-existent threat. Wild rumors and totally distorted information misled enormous numbers of individuals into believing and promoting this nonsense, not least on the pages of our own website, so I was very pleased to see that Kennedy’s book steered clear of this pitfall.

Determining the exact cause of a death is sometimes difficult, and numerous activists have emphasized that the diagnostic protocols at hospitals may lead to the over-reporting of unrelated deaths as Covid. But under-reporting might also have occurred, and the most solid numbers to consider would obviously be total deaths, so I made the following comment[11] last May, which I’ve subsequently repeated a half-dozen times:
But here’s a listing of TOTAL American deaths from all causes over the last few years, taken directly from the CDC website:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,626,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2,712,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2,744,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2,813,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2,839,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2,854,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>3,384,426</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You’ll notice that the numbers are fairly steady until 2020 when they suddenly jumped by well over 500,000.

If I didn’t know any better, I’d almost think that America had been struck by a dangerous disease epidemic that year.

It’s obviously just a matter of personal opinion whether an extra half-million deaths in 2020 is a big number or a small number...

Deaths for 2021 are still being tabulated, but the total has already reached 3,361,993, so the figure seems likely to surpass the value for 2020, indicating that well over a million extra Americans have died as a result of the Covid epidemic, very different from the claims of the Flu Hoaxers.

Although outright Flu Hoaxery has mostly subsided over the past half year, many of its proponents and fellow travelers have shifted their energies into the anti-vaxxing movement, which now includes a significant slice of the American population. These activists have been inspired by the obvious corruption of our medical establishment, and the severe climate of social media censorship employed against them has probably strengthened their conviction that they have truth on their side.

America’s ruling elites in government and media have proven themselves so exceptionally corrupt, dishonest, and incompetent that it sometimes becomes very difficult to separate reality from propaganda, even in the case of public health statistics. Moreover, although I’m very skeptical of the more conspiratorial claims advanced by Kennedy and his allies of malevolent elite plots to use vaccine mandates to impose a tyrannical social regime, I’ve encountered enough “surprises” in recent years that I can’t entirely dismiss such claims. So although I generally support the orthodox narrative on vaccine effectiveness, I do so with some caution. Fortunately, some recent information clarified this situation.

Our very lightly moderated website draws a wide variety of commenters, ranging from the totally deranged to the highly erudite. A longtime and very level-headed participant calling himself “Niceland” is an Icelander, and his past remarks regarding Covid issues in his own country have always proven reliable. Iceland is a small and homogeneous nation, having a total
population no larger than that of a mid-size American city and a political culture of extreme Scandinavian rectitude. Its ruling elites may sometimes make mistakes or be misled, but they are generally benevolent rather than hostile, and have close personal ties to the well-educated population that they lead. For such reasons, I’d assign Niceland’s recent remarks[12] on vaxxing issues in his country a great deal of credibility, being much less likely to be tainted by propaganda than claims by our own media or government.

My views towards Icelandic health officials haven’t changed. And while the vaccines provide little if any protection against infection or transmission they do indeed provide considerable, even good protection against serious outcomes from covid disease.

This is easy to see when over half of hospitalizations from covid disease come from our small group of unvaxxed, probably less than 10% of the population. Last week we had 7 people in ICU – 6 of them unvaxxed. After the main vaxx campaign last summer – death rate from covid dropped like stone.

The main focus over here is on our main hospital, it’s in crisis mode after the new Omikron variant spread like wildfire and Delta isn’t gone yet either. So it’s easy to understand why our doctors and health officials keep pressuring vaccines, booster shots etc. That’s their job description and what they believe is the correct thing to do.

I think they would benefit from reading Robert Kennedy’s book and Mr Unz articles. And the verdict is possibly still out – was it all worth it? (like vaccinating young children) This is very difficult to access right now. Long covid exists and we honestly don’t know how serious it is. And much about side effects from these new vaccines is unclear.

Anti-vaxxers have frequently highlighted numerous anecdotal horror stories about deaths and injuries allegedly due to Covid vaccinations, claiming that the widespread nature of this situation has been covered up by our dishonest government and media. The public VAERS database contains such self-reported incidents, but activists have argued that these merely represent the smallest tip of the iceberg, with the true figures being perhaps 20 or 40 times greater, implying an enormous number of deaths. However, 90% of Iceland has been vaccinated, using the same products as America, and nothing like that seems to have been noticed there, leading me to greatly doubt the reality of those dramatic claims.

A few days ago, I brought this telling Iceland information to the attention of a couple of individuals deeply concerned about vaccine safety, but they remained doubtful. According to some critics, vaxxing injuries are related to particular batches, and they suggested that perhaps tiny Iceland had been spared any of the bad ones. They seemed quite convinced that vaxxing might have already killed 100,000 Americans, or perhaps even several times that figure. Indeed, that same day someone pointed me to a lurid article published on the Global Research
website, which summarized its shocking conclusions about America’s medical disaster in the following boldface, all-caps statement:

**THAT’S OVER 1 MILLION DEATHS IN JUST THE FIRST YEAR OF THE COVID-19 “VACCINES”!**[13]

Such numbers seemed totally outlandish to me, so I decided to see what solid estimates I could obtain.

Nearly all the anecdotal cases of vaxxing deaths involve fatal heart attacks or strokes, and our vaccination drive began at the very end of 2020. So comparing that year’s fatality categories with those of 2021 might reveal an important pattern. The CDC aggregates such mortality statistics and I found some of them in the table of a 2021 *JAMA* publication[14]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case of death</th>
<th>No. of deaths by year</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total deaths</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,712,630</td>
<td>2,744,248</td>
<td>2,811,163</td>
<td>2,815,005</td>
<td>2,834,838</td>
<td>3,358,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td></td>
<td>635,342</td>
<td>635,290</td>
<td>647,437</td>
<td>603,361</td>
<td>635,941</td>
<td>690,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td></td>
<td>595,910</td>
<td>598,038</td>
<td>599,108</td>
<td>599,274</td>
<td>599,461</td>
<td>598,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>345,323</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unintentional injuries</td>
<td></td>
<td>146,571</td>
<td>161,374</td>
<td>169,316</td>
<td>167,127</td>
<td>173,040</td>
<td>192,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td></td>
<td>140,323</td>
<td>142,142</td>
<td>146,383</td>
<td>147,810</td>
<td>150,005</td>
<td>159,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic lower respiratory diseases</td>
<td></td>
<td>155,041</td>
<td>154,596</td>
<td>160,201</td>
<td>159,486</td>
<td>156,970</td>
<td>151,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer disease</td>
<td></td>
<td>110,561</td>
<td>116,103</td>
<td>121,404</td>
<td>122,019</td>
<td>121,499</td>
<td>133,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td></td>
<td>79,535</td>
<td>80,058</td>
<td>81,564</td>
<td>84,946</td>
<td>87,647</td>
<td>101,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influenza and pneumonia</td>
<td></td>
<td>57,082</td>
<td>51,537</td>
<td>55,672</td>
<td>59,120</td>
<td>48,783</td>
<td>52,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney disease</td>
<td></td>
<td>49,939</td>
<td>50,046</td>
<td>50,633</td>
<td>51,386</td>
<td>51,565</td>
<td>52,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td></td>
<td>44,193</td>
<td>44,965</td>
<td>47,173</td>
<td>48,344</td>
<td>47,511</td>
<td>44,834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Leading causes are classified according to underlying cause and presented according to the number of deaths among US residents. For more information, see the article by Heron. Source: National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System: mortality statistics (http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/deaths.htm). Data for 2015-2019 are final; data for 2020 are provisional.

*Deaths with confirmed or presumed COVID-19, coded to intentional non-natural death cause categories, are included. This is consistent with the ICD-10 codes U07.1-U07.9 as the underlying cause of death.

Apparently there was a significant jump in heart disease deaths during 2020, rising by about 5% or 30,000 from the 2019 figure, while stroke deaths increased by 9,000 or 6%. Since the vaccination drive hadn’t yet begun, it could not have been responsible, so the most likely explanation was that patients avoided medical treatment for fear of Covid, or perhaps that over-burdened hospitals were unable to provide their usual level of care.

The article noted that although the separate mortality statistics had historically been provided annually, the Covid epidemic led the government to begin producing them on a monthly basis for release by the CDC, and I located a useful chart on the Health System Tracker website summarizing these[15]:

https://www.unz.com/runz/covid-deaths-and-vaxxing-deaths/?display=footnoted
I also located a chart on the Statista website providing the same information[16], including in numerical form and also more recently updated. Except for Covid, all the other mortality categories for the July through November 2021 months are constant projected extrapolations and should not be used. But the months from March-June 2020 can be compared with March-June 2021 as shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Stroke</th>
<th>Heart Attack</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Stroke</th>
<th>Heart Attack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Jan-21</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>2,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Feb-21</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>2,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar-20</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>Mar-21</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>2,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr-20</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>2,332</td>
<td>Apr-21</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>1,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-20</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>2,019</td>
<td>May-21</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>1,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun-20</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>1,957</td>
<td>Jun-21</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>1,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-20</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>2,034</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug-20</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-20</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>1,983</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-20</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>2,022</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-20</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-20</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>2,310</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combining these two mortality categories, the average daily deaths for March to June were 2,537 during 2020 and 2,335 during 2021, representing a decline of about 8%, or 73,000 deaths extrapolated to a full year. So America’s overall rate of fatal strokes and heart attacks began dropping significantly as soon as the vaccination drive began.

Obviously, these figures are merely preliminary, representing only a few months’ worth of data, and we will need to wait until the 2021 full year figures are available to form a solid opinion.
But given these results, I consider it very unlikely that vaxxing has killed large numbers of Americans, let alone anything like the 100,000 or more victims some have claimed.

In sharp contrast, when I had previously examined the deadly impact of Vioxx, the evidence seemed quite strong[17]:

A cursory examination of the most recent 15 years worth of national mortality data provided on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website offers some intriguing clues to this mystery. We find the largest rise in American mortality rates occurred in 1999, the year Vioxx was introduced, while the largest drop occurred in 2004, the year it was withdrawn. Vioxx was almost entirely marketed to the elderly, and these substantial changes in national death-rate were completely concentrated within the 65-plus population. The FDA studies had proven that use of Vioxx led to deaths from cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes, and these were exactly the factors driving the changes in national mortality rates.

The impact of these shifts was not small. After a decade of remaining roughly constant, the overall American death rate began a substantial decline in 2004, soon falling by approximately 5 percent, despite the continued aging of the population. This drop corresponds to roughly 100,000 fewer deaths per year. The age-adjusted decline in death rates was considerably greater.

I find it ironic that the pro-vaxxers seem not to have heavily focused upon these important recent health statistics and have instead relied upon denunciations and demands for censorship and deplatforming, naturally leading anti-vaxxers to assume that the establishment has no strong evidence for its case and possibly nefarious motives.

Meanwhile, critics of the orthodox position on Covid and vaxxing should recognize that their opponents possess overwhelming political and media power, and hence they should be extremely careful to fight their battles only on the most solid and defensible grounds. Making wild, unsubstantiated accusations will merely damage their credibility, destroying one of their very few assets.

As Kennedy demonstrates in his important book, the falsehoods of the leaders of our public health establishment have been enormous, but attacking them with dubious claims or engaging in unnecessary hyperbole serves to obscure this reality.

Related Reading:

- RFK Jr. as America’s #1 HIV/AIDS Denier and the Sounds of Media Silence[18]
- Chinese Melamine and American Vioxx: A Comparison[19]

https://www.unz.com/runz/covid-deaths-and-vaxxing-deaths/?display=footnoted
Source References

[1] two additional => https://www.unz.com/announcement/covid-to-vaxx-or-not-to-vaxx/


[10] these never made any sense to me => https://www.unz.com/mwhitney/the-conspiracy-theorists-were-right-it-is-a-poison-death-shot/?showcomments#comment-4911301


