



**Dr KK Aggarwal**  
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**HCFI DR KK AGGARWAL RESEARCH FUND**

## Coronavirus Updates

### **Reduced Risk of Hospitalization in Adolescents Following Pfizer COVID Vaccine**

The Pfizer BioNTech COVID vaccine decreased hospitalization during the Omicron in children aged 5 to 11 years by 68% in a US study. Among adolescents, the omicron-related hospitalization reduced by nearly 40%. But against the Delta variant, the vaccine effectiveness in preventing hospitalization among adolescents was around 93%. Despite lower protection against Omicron hospitalizations, vaccination prevented critical illness caused by either variant... (Source: *New England Journal of Medicine*, March 30, 2022)

### **Second Booster Dose for 50+ and Immunocompromised Persons**

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized a second booster dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or the Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for people aged 50 years and older at least 4 months after taking the first booster dose. Immunocompromised persons such as those with solid organ transplant are also eligible to receive a second booster dose of the vaccines; 12 years and older for Pfizer and 18 years and older for Moderna at least 4 months after the first booster dose... (Source: *US FDA*, March 29, 2022)

### **WHO Sounds a Note of Caution About the “XE” Omicron Variant**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has cautioned about a new variant of Omicron. The XE variant of Omicron is 10% more transmissible than the BA.2 subvariant. It is a recombinant strain and hybrid of the BA.1 and BA.2 sublineages of the Omicron variant. According to the WHO, “The XE recombinant (BA.1-BA.2), was first detected in the UK on January 19 and less than 600 sequences have been reported and confirmed since”. There are currently three recombinant or hybrid variants XD, XE and XF. XD is a Delta and BA.1 recombinant detected in France, Denmark and Belgium and XF is the recombinant of Delta and BA.1 detected in Britain... (Source: *Express.co.uk*, April 1, 2022)

### **Hearing Loss and COVID-19 Vaccines**

Cases of hearing loss and other auditory disturbances like tinnitus, though rare, have been reported among COVID-19 vaccinated people. The WHO is reviewing this association. According to a WHO newsletter, globally 164 cases of hearing loss and 367 cases of tinnitus have been reported among COVID-19 vaccinated people. Majority of the tinnitus cases were reported after the Pfizer vaccine... (Source: *Medscape*, March 31, 2022)

*With inputs from Dr Monica Vasudev*

