



Dr. Steve's Field of Vision

Omicron: Mother Nature's Effective Vaccine?

After two years of living life under the cloud of a world-wide pandemic with over 66 million reported cases in the United States and in the neighborhood of 875,000 deaths, (<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/>) Mother Nature may have come to our rescue in the form of Omicron.

Data emerging from South Africa, the United Kingdom and the U.S. indicate that, although Omicron is substantially more infectious, it is also much less virulent in terms of causing serious disease and death. (<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.01.11.22269045v1>)

It appears that those contracting Omicron have mild symptoms that last only a few days, and hospitalization and death rates are not mimicking the rapid rise in cases. It is predicted by our public health experts that we will experience a blizzard of infections, but after a few weeks we will finally be left with the herd immunity that has so far eluded us. What excellent news! (<https://youtu.be/U3W84wb5jKo>)

Even though you may be vaxed and boosted, or, you may have natural immunity from a prior COVID-19 infection, experts are saying that all of us will likely become infected with Omicron. This is due to the fact that the Omicron coronavirus variety has substantially mutated. Those who study such things are demonstrating over fifty mutations overall with Omicron. As many as thirty-two of those mutations are on the spike protein itself with up to twelve on what is known as the "receptor binding domain". The receptor binding domain is the target of the original genetically engineered mRNA vaccines. You may read about the mutations here if you are the inquisitive sort, but it is pretty technical: <https://covariants.org/variants/21K.Omicron>

All these mutations essentially render the protection afforded by vaccine or naturally acquired immunity substantially compromised. I have written about the immune response to vaccination and natural immunity and how the immune system response is specific to the "bug" to which we are exposed. My explanation is easy reading and you might find it interesting and it may answer some of your questions as to why you are likely to be infected with Omicron. You may read what I wrote here if interested: <https://files.secure.website/wscfus/8484651/29425384/covid-19-points-to-ponder.pdf>

History has a way of repeating itself and we appear to be living through just such a repetition. After about eighteen months of ravaging the United States, the virus responsible for the 1918 Spanish Influenza Pandemic mutated into a very mild variant and the pandemic drew to an end.

Interestingly, the number of Americans who lost their lives in the 1918 pandemic was where we are now in terms of COVID deaths: 875,000. The difference, however, was we had a population of about 100 million in 1918 versus the approximately 330 million we have now. Imagine that, almost 1% of the population of the U.S. killed in a world-wide pandemic. By comparison, with 330 million Americans our percentage loss is 0.3%.

Comparisons mean little when one has lost a cherished friend or family member.

We are not completely in the clear yet. Yes, Omicron seems to be a mild brother of his predecessors. But, if you are one of the vulnerable you may still have significant illness.

In spite of being fit (I rode my bicycle in excess of 3,300 miles in 2021), under 65, with a normal body mass index, no history of diabetes or hypertension and having man made protection, I became infected with COVID-19 the day after Christmas. My course should have been uneventful, as I had the classic symptoms reported for Omicron: stuffy nose, sore throat, muscle aches and fatigue.

Unfortunately, a fungal infection of my lungs that I had as a child acquired by helping my grandfather clean his pigeon coops predisposed me to a different path. The scar tissue from that illness compromised my lung function.

My blood oxygen levels began to sink and I was hospitalized on oxygen for seven days. Eventually, my doctors put me on an experimental rheumatoid arthritis drug that has been shown to have some degree of success in quieting the cytokine storm (the over-reaction of the immune system to infection) that was kicking my butt.

I am home now and on the mend.

Is Omicron Mother Nature's natural vaccine sent to bring us the herd immunity that will end the pandemic? Time will tell. But, the emerging data suggests "yes" at this point.

We aren't out of the woods yet . . . but our hike is leading us to the meadow at the edge of the forest.

Dr. Steve Troyanovich
Chiropractic Physician
Clinician Researcher
January 14, 2022