Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Jan. 31, 2022


COVID-19 vaccinations among children ages 5 to 11 fall to record low, CDC data show

Bloomberg (2/3, Levin) reports “COVID-19 vaccinations among children ages 5-11 have fallen to the lowest levels since the shots were first approved,” according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The data show that “the seven-day average of first doses fell to about 37,062 on Jan. 28, marking the slowest one-week period since the government approved the vaccines for those children on Nov. 2,” and “just 31% of kids 5-11 have gotten a shot, compared with 75% of the total population.”

Commission: Without urgent intervention, U.S. will see more than 1.2 million fatal opioid-related overdoses during the next decade

MedPage Today (2/2, Grant) reports, “Experts are warning that without urgent intervention, the U.S. will see more than 1.2 million fatal opioid-related overdoses during the next decade,” and consequently “are calling for immediate action to curtail the epidemic in North America.” The Stanford-Lancet Commission on the North American Opioid Crisis has created a “model of the opioid crisis” estimating that “there will be 1,220,000 fatal opioid overdoses in the U.S. from 2020 to 2029, underlining the value of their evaluations of the current crisis and recommendations for the future.” The commission has also “identified unique ‘domains’ of the epidemic and provided tailored recommendations for each one.” The executive summary, supporting documents, and a related editorial were published online Feb. 2 in The Lancet.
Unvaccinated adults 23 times more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 during Omicron wave than adults who were vaccinated and boosted, CDC study finds

The Hill (2/1, Sullivan) reports “unvaccinated adults were 23 times more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 during the Omicron wave than adults who were vaccinated and boosted, according to a study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that “found by far the highest rates of cases and hospitalizations among unvaccinated people, followed by vaccinated but not boosted people, with vaccinated and boosted people having the most protection.” The study also found that “hospitalizations were 5.3 times higher among the unvaccinated than vaccinated but not boosted.”

MedPage Today (2/1, Walker) reports, “Overall, unvaccinated adults were more likely to be hospitalized..., admitted to an ICU..., and require mechanical ventilation.”

Healio (2/1, Downey) reports for the study, researchers “assessed COVID-19 incidence, hospitalization and mortality rates from Nov. 7, 2021, through Jan. 8, 2022” in Los Angeles County.

FDA grants full approval to Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine

The Wall Street Journal (1/31, Loftus, Sylvers, Fidler, Subscription Publication) reports that on Monday, the Food and Drug Administration granted full approval to Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine Spikevax for use in adults aged 18 and older. The move makes it the second vaccine to receive full approval after the Pfizer-BioNTech shot.

The AP (1/31, Perrone) reports the approval “was bolstered by real-world evidence from the more than 200 million doses administered in the U.S. since the FDA cleared the shot in December 2020.”

Reuters (1/31, Erman, Khandekar) reports, “Nearly 75 million people have already received Moderna’s two-dose vaccine in the United States, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

“Stealth” Omicron variant appears to have growth advantage, may drag out current surge

The New York Times (1/30, Zimmer) reports, “In recent days, headlines about a ‘stealth’ Omicron
variant have conjured the notion that a villainous new form of the coronavirus is secretly creating a disastrous new wave of COVID-19. This “scenario is highly unlikely, scientists say.” However, “the new variant, which goes by the scientific name BA.2 and is one of three branches of the Omicron viral family, could drag out the Omicron surge in much of the world.”

Reuters (1/28, Smout) reported, “The BA.2 subtype of the Omicron coronavirus variant appears to have a substantial growth advantage over the currently predominant BA.1 type, Britain’s U.K. Health Security Agency said on Friday.” The agency “said that there was an increased growth rate of BA.2 compared with BA.1 in all regions of England where there were enough cases to compare them, and that ‘the apparent growth advantage is currently substantial.’”

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