

Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Aug. 22, 2022

Read *AMA Morning Rounds*®' most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of Aug. 22, 2022–Aug. 26, 2022.

Almost 40% of people hospitalized in U.S. with Omicron subvariant were vaccinated and boosted

Bloomberg Law (8/25, Muller, Subscription Publication) reports, “Almost 40% of people hospitalized in the U.S. with the COVID subvariant that circulated this spring were vaccinated and boosted, highlighting how new strains have mutated to more readily escape the immunity offered by current shots,” according to findings from the CDC. Bloomberg Law adds, “From the end of March through May, when the Omicron BA.2 and BA.2.12.1 subvariants were dominant in the U.S., weekly hospitalization rates increased for all adults—with those over 65 hit the hardest

Psilocybin helps heavy drinkers cut back or quit drinking entirely

The AP (8/24, Johnson) reports, “The compound in psychedelic mushrooms helped heavy drinkers cut back or quit entirely in the most rigorous test of psilocybin for alcoholism,” investigators concluded in a study in which “93 patients took a capsule containing psilocybin or a dummy medicine, lay on a couch, their eyes covered, and listened to recorded music through headphones.” Participants “received two such sessions, one month apart, and 12 sessions of talk therapy.”

NBC News (8/24, Sullivan, Syal, Lynch, Smith) reports the study revealed that “more than 80% of those who were given the psychedelic treatment had drastically reduced their drinking eight months after the study started, compared to just over 50% in the antihistamine control group,” according to findings published online Aug. 24 in *JAMA Psychiatry*. In fact, “at the end of the trial, half of those who received psilocybin had quit drinking altogether, compared to about one-quarter of those who were

given the antihistamine.”

USPSTF announces guidelines on use of statins to prevent first heart attack or stroke

CNN (8/23, Christensen) reports, “The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force [USPSTF] on Tuesday announced its latest guidelines on the use of statins to prevent a first heart attack or stroke,” publishing the recommendation statement in JAMA. While these “recommendations are virtually unchanged from prior guidance,” they are “now supported by additional research, the group said.” What’s more, “the recommendations are a little more conservative than guidelines put out by the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association.”

MedPage Today (8/23, Lou) reports the task force “maintained distinct recommendations for statins determined by a person’s age and 10-year CVD risk according to the pooled cohort equations.” However, “the latest update takes away language about the preferred low-to-moderate dosing of statins in people with no history of CVD.” Additionally, the “new guidelines are...notable for the 7.5% PCE threshold for statin initiation—a slightly more conservative choice compared with the 5% risk cutoff for shared decision-making on statins as endorsed by the 2018 American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology guideline.”

Dr. Fauci to step down as NIAID director

The New York Times (8/22, Stolberg) reports that on Monday, Anthony Fauci, M.D., “said...that he intended to leave government service in December to ‘pursue the next chapter’ of his career, and that he would step down as President Biden’s top medical adviser and the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which he has led for 38 years.”

During a “wide-ranging interview” with the Washington Post (8/22, A1, Abutaleb), Dr. Fauci “spoke about his impending departure.”

Editor’s Note: Read the full statement on Dr. Fauci’s plans to step down from AMA President Jack Resneck Jr., M.D.

FDA authorizes Novavax’s COVID-19 vaccine for adolescents ages 12 to 17

CNN (8/19, Howard) reported the FDA “authorized Novavax’s COVID-19 vaccine on Friday for emergency use in adolescents.” Novavax’s protein-based “vaccine was authorized for adults in July,” and with this “latest emergency use authorization, it also will be available as a two-dose primary series for ages 12 to 17.” In the “age group, ‘overall, the clinical efficacy of the vaccine is around 80%,’ said” Novavax Global Corporate Affairs Senior Vice President Silvia Taylor.

*AMA Morning Rounds news coverage is developed in affiliation with Bulletin Healthcare LLC.
Subscribe to Morning Rounds Daily.*