

Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Sept. 5, 2022

Read *AMA Morning Rounds*®' most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of Sept. 5, 2022–Sept. 9, 2022.

Consumption of artificial sweeteners may be tied to higher risk of CVD

Cardiovascular Business (9/8) reports “artificial sweeteners may be associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), according to” research that “examined data from the NutriNet-Santé Study.” Investigators “focused on the answers of more than 100,000 French participants” and found that “overall, after an average follow-up period of nine years, there were 1,502 cardiovascular events.” The findings published in *The BMJ* also showed “total artificial sweetener intake was linked to a heightened risk of CVD, and participants who reported consuming high amounts of these sweeteners were much more likely to suffer from cerebrovascular disease.”

People who report psychological distress before infection at greater risk of long COVID

NBC News (9/7, Bendix) reports “people who felt stressed, anxious, lonely, depressed or worried about COVID before getting infected were at higher risk of developing long-term symptoms from their illness,” according to results from a survey study of “nearly 55,000 people in the United States and Canada.” The study published online in *JAMA Psychiatry* “showed that people who reported psychological distress before they got infected had a 32% to 46% increased risk of long COVID,” and people “who reported high levels of two or more types of psychological distress...had a 50% increased risk.”

STAT (9/7, Trang) reports the researchers “found that psychological stressors...were more predictive of...patients’ likelihood of experiencing long COVID than classically associated physical factors.”

Administration considering annual COVID-19 vaccinations as updated boosters roll out

The Washington Post (9/6, Sun) reports White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha “said Tuesday the newly reformulated Omicron-targeting boosters mark an ‘important milestone in the U.S. pandemic response, moving the country to a point where a single annual coronavirus shot should provide a ‘high degree of protection against serious illness all year.’” Such “cadence would be similar to that of the annual flu shot, which could be administered at the same time.”

Bloomberg (9/6, Griffin, Baumann, Wingrove) reports that “health officials held a briefing Tuesday after regulators cleared the new generation of coronavirus inoculations and threw open eligibility—calling on people age 12 and older to get another dose if they haven’t had one in the past two months.” COVID-19 “vaccinations will likely shift to an annual injection—tailored to the latest strains—for the majority of the population, with more frequent doses offered for higher-risk people, the officials said.”

The Hill (9/6, Weixel) reports, “The ‘bivalent’ booster shots from both Pfizer and Moderna are expected to be widely available this week, and officials said 90% of Americans will live within five miles of vaccination sites.”

Research suggests 3,800-9,800 steps per day are needed to reduce dementia risk

CNN (9/6, LaMotte) reports that to reduce the risk for dementia, people “need between 3,800 and 9,800 [steps] each day,” according to findings published online in a brief report in JAMA Neurology. The study found that people aged 40-79 “who took 9,826 steps per day were 50% less likely to develop dementia within seven years.” In addition, people with a pace of over 40 steps a minute “were able to cut their risk of dementia by 57% with just 6,315 steps a day.”

Experts predict autumn surge in COVID-19 cases will not be as bad as prior years

The Washington Post (9/3, A1, Achenbach, Sun) reported “infectious-disease experts are guardedly optimistic that the spread of COVID-19 this autumn and winter won’t be as brutal as in the previous two years of the pandemic.” Modeling of “coronavirus scenarios from multiple research teams, shared



in recent weeks with federal officials, foresee stable or declining hospitalizations in early fall.” While “a new variant remains the biggest wild card,” there are still “several factors—including the approval...of reformulated boosters and the buildup of immunity against the latest strain of the virus—” that “could suppress some of the cold-season spread, experts say.”

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