Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Oct. 10, 2022


COVID-19 public health emergency extended through January 11

The AP (10/13, Seitz) reports the Biden Administration on Thursday “said...that the COVID-19 public health emergency will continue through Jan. 11 as officials brace for a spike in cases this winter.” The Administration “said it would provide 60 days notice before it ends the public health emergency.”

FDA authorizes updated bivalent COVID-19 booster shots for children as young as five

The Washington Post (10/12, McGinley) reports that on Wednesday, the FDA “authorized updated coronavirus booster shots for children as young as 5, making it likely the shots will be available shortly.” The agency “gave emergency use authorization to the Pfizer-BioNTech updated booster shot for children 5 to 11,” and it “also authorized the updated Moderna booster for children 6 to 17.”

The New York Times (10/12, LaFraniere, Weiland) reports CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky “quickly signed off on the new booster shots, the final step to making them available to young children around the country.”

The AP (10/12, Neergaard) reports children “group will get kid-size doses of the new Omicron-targeting booster—and they can receive it at least two months after their last dose, whether that was their primary vaccination series or an earlier booster, the FDA said.”


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USPSTF recommends screening all children aged eight and older for anxiety

According to the New York Times (10/11, Pearson), on Oct. 11, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) “recommended for the first time that primary care” physicians “screen all children ages eight to 18 for anxiety, new guidance that highlights the ongoing mental health crisis among American youth.” Additionally, the USPSTF “reaffirmed its position that all adolescents ages 12 to 18 should be screened for depression.” By “making its recommendations, the task force hopes to reduce the number of children whose mental health conditions go undetected and untreated.”

Reuters (10/11, Steenhuysen) reports the task force’s recommendations “come at a time of rising rates of diagnosed mental health disorders among American young people.” It recommended “using screening questionnaires to identify children at risk, noting that studies show that children with such conditions benefit from treatment that may include cognitive behavioral therapy or psychotherapy.” The USPSTF, however, “found insufficient evidence to recommend routine screening of asymptomatic children or adolescents for suicide risk.”

HealthDay (10/11) provides links to the evidence report for depression, the final recommendation statement for depression, the evidence report for anxiety, and the final recommendation statement for anxiety, all of which are published in JAMA.

Influenza cases rising in U.S. ahead of potentially severe season

ABC News (10/10, Kekatos) reports, “Influenza cases are rising in the United States as the country prepares for a potentially severe season.” In “the week ending Oct. 1— the latest date for which data is available—there were 969 cases of influenza A and 52 cases of influenza B reported to the” CDC, which “is a 303.75% increase from the 240 influenza A cases and a 79.3% increase from the 29 influenza B cases reported the week ending Aug. 6, the data shows.” Furthermore, “over the same period, the percent positivity rate has risen from 0.49% to 2.5%.”

Colonoscopy may reduce risk of colorectal cancer less than expected, study finds
CNN (10/9, Goodman) reports, “Colonoscopy may reduce the risk of dying of colorectal cancer by as much as 50%, but there’s a catch: It only works if you get the scan.” This is “the big takeaway message from the first randomized trial of colonoscopy, published Sunday in The New England Journal of Medicine.”

MedPage Today (10/9, Bassett) reports that in the Northern-European Initiative on Colorectal Cancer (NordICC) trial, “individuals invited to undergo screening colonoscopy had a lower risk of colorectal cancer compared with those who did not undergo screening...though the reduction was lower than researchers had expected.” The researchers “are suggesting several potential explanations for these ‘discouraging results,’ including the fact that less than half of the participants (42%) actually underwent colonoscopy.”

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