Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Nov. 7, 2022

Read AMA Morning Rounds®’ most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of Nov. 7, 2022–Nov. 11, 2022.

SARS-CoV-2 reinfections may lead to health complications similar to initial infection

The Washington Post (11/10, Cha) reports researchers in a study on SARS-CoV-2 reinfection “said a second, third or further infections can lead to health complications just as the first can.” The study published in Nature Medicine involved “an analysis of electronic medical records in the VA’s national health care database” and “found that patients with reinfections tended to have more complications in various organ systems both during their initial illness and longer term, and they were more likely to be diagnosed with long COVID than people who did not get another infection.” These findings also “applied regardless of people’s vaccination status or whether they were boosted.”

Reuters (11/10, Lapid) reports patients with reinfection “had a more than doubled risk of death and a more than tripled risk of hospitalization compared with those who were infected with COVID just once.” Also, they “had elevated risks for problems with lungs, heart, blood, kidneys, diabetes, mental health, bones and muscles, and neurological disorders.”

Deaths from infective endocarditis doubled among people aged 15 to 44

HealthDay (11/9) reports, “The risk for death from infective endocarditis (IE) increased twofold among young U.S. residents aged 15 to 44 years during 1999 to 2020,” investigators concluded in findings published online in a research letter in the Journal of Internal Medicine. For the study, investigators “characterized trends in mortality rates from IE among young U.S. residents (aged 15 to 44 years) and in relation to drug abuse using the Multiple Cause of Death Data from the U.S. Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention between 1999 and 2000.”

A separate HealthDay (11/9, Thompson) article reports the investigators “ascribe the increase in fatal heart infections to the growing number of people between 15 and 44 who are injecting opioid drugs.”

Many adults in U.S. report sleep problems, disturbances, study shows

CNN (11/8, LaMotte) reports, “Americans are failing in their endless quest for adequate slumber, leading to deficits that can impact health, according to a” study that “analyzed sleep data on over 9,000 Americans age 20 and older collected by the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey between 2017 and March 2020.” Nearly “30% of respondents had trouble falling or staying asleep and about 27% were very sleepy during the day, according to the study.” The findings published in JAMA Network Open also revealed that “over 30% of adults reported an hour of sleep debt...while nearly 1 in 10 adults had a sleep debt of two hours or more.”

Adolescents who vape are starting younger, vaping more intensely, study finds

CNN (11/7, Howard) reports on research finding that though a smaller percentage of teens use e-cigarettes, “those who do vape are starting younger and they’re using e-cigarettes more intensely.” According to the study, among teens who “only use e-cigarettes, the percentage who used the products within the first five minutes of waking up in a day was less than 1% between the years 2014 and 2017, but that shifted to 10.3% from 2017 through 2021.” Additionally, “among adolescents who currently use any type of tobacco product, the proportion whose first-ever use of a product at a young age was an e-cigarette increased from 27.2% in 2014 to 78.3% in 2019, and remained at 77% in 2021.” The findings were published in JAMA Network Open.

U.S. grappling with early surge in flu, RSV infections, hospitalizations

The Washington Post (11/4, Nirappil) reported the U.S. “continues to experience an unusually high and early uptick in flu and respiratory syncytial virus infections, straining a health care system trying to recover from the worst of the coronavirus pandemic.” Although “new coronavirus cases have leveled
off in recent weeks, federal health officials warned Friday they are confronting elevated levels of other viruses that are roaring back as pre-pandemic life returns and many Americans, particularly children, lack immunity.” The CDC “issued an advisory about respiratory viruses to thousands of health care providers in an attempt to bolster testing, treatment and vaccination.”

The AP (11/4, Stobbe, Babwin) said, “Reports of flu are already high in 17 states, and the hospitalization rate hasn’t been this high this early since the 2009 swine flu pandemic, according to the” CDC. The article added, “So far, there have been an estimated 730 flu deaths, including at least two children.”