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## FACTS, OPINIONS AND FAKE NEWS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

The covid-19 pandemic that broke out in 2019 has brought a lot of trouble to people all over the world. There are many sick and dead people from the virus. The world is mobilizing its forces to produce a vaccine. And in December 2020, a vaccine against the virus was approved.

### FACTS:



<https://quincy-network.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/07/coronavirus-Covid-19-vaccine-blue.jpg>

The European Union's medicines regulator has recommended the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine for use in the bloc's 27 states.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) authorized the drug for the EU's nearly 448 million inhabitants after it went into circulation in the UK and the US.

Hours after the EMA's decision, the European Commission gave its own formal approval for the use of the jab.

Distribution could begin in some EU states as early as Sunday-27<sup>th</sup> of December.

More than 311,000 lives have been lost to the pandemic across the bloc.

Fears of a new surge in cases among people gathering for the Christmas and New Year holidays have prompted partial lockdowns in countries like Germany and the Netherlands.

*The threat of a new, more infectious Covid-19 variant spreading from the UK has also seen several EU states suspend travel from Britain.*<sup>[1]</sup>

[1]<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-55401136>

## OPINIONS:

Alberto Giubilini, Senior Research Fellow, Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, University of Oxford.

COVID-19 vaccination should be mandatory – at least for certain groups. This means there would be penalties for failure to vaccinate, such as fines or limitations on freedom of movement.

The less burdensome it is for an individual to do something that prevents harm to others, and the greater the harm prevented, the stronger the ethical reason for mandating it.

Being vaccinated dramatically reduces the risk of seriously harming or killing others. Vaccines such as the Pfizer, AstraZeneca or Moderna ones with 90-95% efficacy at preventing people from getting sick are also likely to be effective at stopping the virus from spreading, though possibly to a lower degree. Such benefits would come at a very minimal cost to individuals.<sup>[2]</sup>

People should take the coronavirus vaccine when it becomes available, immunologist Luke O’Neill has said, adding that he would be “first in line” when it comes out. Prof O’Neill said the development of four vaccines to combat Covid-19 would lead to new approaches for other infectious diseases. “This will galvanise the drug companies.”<sup>[3]</sup>



When asked if he would get the vaccine himself, he said he would be “the first in line.” “We should all line up,” he added. Prof O’Neill said he understood that people were anxious or were hesitant but he said vaccine was very low risk. “This is a very dangerous virus, we need to remember that all the time.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Some people think that vaccines have not been tested enough to find that there are no side effects after vaccination.

Vageesh Jain, NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow in Public Health Medicine, UCL

Mandatory vaccination does not automatically increase vaccine uptake. An EU-funded project on epidemics and pandemics, which took place several years before COVID-19, found no evidence to support this notion. Looking at Baltic and Scandinavian countries, the project’s report noted that countries “where a vaccination is mandatory do not usually reach better coverage than neighbor or similar countries where there is no legal obligation”.

[2]<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/should-covid-vaccines-mandatory-two-19345538>

[3]<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/immunologist-rejects-idea-covid-19-vaccines-were-approved-too-fast-1.4451739>

[4]<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/covid-19-vaccine-i-ll-be-first-in-line-says-luke-o-neill-1.4417855>

According to the Nuffield Council of Bioethics, mandatory vaccination may be justified for highly contagious and serious diseases. But although contagious, Public Health England does not classify COVID-19 as a high-consequence infectious disease due to its relatively low case fatality rate.<sup>[2]</sup>

FAKE NEWS:



While the world battles between optimistic news of vaccines rolling out globally and the horror of new strains of the coronavirus being discovered, some people on social media have come out with a ploy to spread panic in these sensitive times.

According to the claim made by some using an edited picture, injecting the COVID-19 vaccine will turn humans into zombies.

A screenshot of a television news bulletin has gone viral on social media, which shows blood splattered around in a decrepit hospital ward. There is a 'CNN' logo in the picture that attempts to legitimize the bizarre headline - "Breaking News: Hospitals on lockdown as first Covid vaccine patients start eating other patients," with a text at the bottom reading "Nancy Pelosi arrested for DUI". This claim has gone viral on Facebook. Some people are also sharing it on Twitter

This is a spoof photo, with the time stamp reading '4:20 PM' meant to be used as a meme.

Interestingly, the Nancy Pelosi news item surfaced online a while back, which was later found to be a false claim when checked for facts. Having said that, the consequences of fake news of this sort are far-reaching, especially with a lot of pseudoscientific news against vaccinations doing the rounds globally.<sup>[5]</sup>

[5]<https://www.businesstoday.in/coronavirus/fake-news-covid19-vaccine-wont-turn-you-into-a-zombie/story/426130.html>