

MIS-C cases on the rise in children with at least 3,000 reported and 36 dead

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As schools around the country continue to reopen with full backing of the Biden administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the unwavering support of the unions, doctors have begun reporting a frightening trend: a concerning uptick in the number of MIS-C cases among children and adolescents.

MIS-C, or Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome, is on the rise among children. It is an acute medical condition observed in children who have either been diagnosed with COVID-19, or who were in close contact with a person who contracted the virus, often appearing weeks after infection. Parents don't often connect their child's symptoms of MIS-C to their previous infection of COVID-19.

Children who develop MIS-C experience symptoms such as fever, heart palpitations, rapid breathing, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, enlarged lymph nodes or redness and/or swelling of the eyes, lips, tongue, hands or feet. Any combination of these symptoms can make diagnosing MIS-C that much more difficult, as it has the tendency to imitate other diseases, such as Kawasaki Disease and Toxic Shock Syndrome.

MIS-C affects the major organs of the body such as the heart, lungs, kidneys or brain. In some cases, the progression of the condition can cause heart dysfunction and cardiogenic shock, effectively impeding the heart's ability to circulate enough blood to the entire body. Additionally, children can develop cardiomyopathy, a stiffening of the heart muscle, or experience an abnormal heartbeat. Still others require respiratory support from a ventilator or the amputation of limbs.

The most comprehensive study of MIS-C cases in children to date was published April 6 in *JAMA*

Pediatrics. Researchers reported that the vast majority of young children and adolescents who went on to develop MIS-C had only mild or asymptomatic forms of COVID-19. In fact, of the 1,000 cases studied, 75 percent did not display coronavirus symptoms.

As of April 1, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 3,185 MIS-C cases (an increase of 568 from the 2,617 cases reported as of the beginning of March) and 36 deaths, and over 3 million children have been diagnosed with COVID-19. The initial increase in MIS-C cases arose out of the winter wave of COVID-19 cases, as people began to gather with their families over the holidays.

More recently, the increase in cases is due to a ruthless drive to reopen schools, affecting mostly children and adolescents between the ages of 1 and 14. In Los Angeles, for example, MIS-C cases were up by 35 percent during the first two weeks of February. This trend has been repeating itself throughout the country in such states as South Carolina, Michigan, Illinois and Colorado, to name a few.

Not only has there been a rise in the number of MIS-C cases, but doctors are finding that young patients' conditions are more severe than during the first wave. A number of hospitals throughout the country are reporting an increase in cases.

Dr. Roberta DeBiasi, chief of infectious diseases at Children's National Hospital in Washington D.C., told the *New York Times*, "We're now getting more of these MIS-C kids, but this time, it just seems that a higher percentage of them are really critically ill." During the hospital's first wave, about half the patients needed treatment in the intensive care unit, she said, but now 80 to 90 percent are being treated there.

Of children admitted to Children's Hospital of Colorado, as many as two-thirds have been treated in

the ICU. In Los Angeles, the 35 percent rise in MIS-C cases coincided with an ICU admittance rate of 41 percent. The impact on the children and their families has been devastating. California leads the country in the number of MIS-C cases, with well over 300 to date.

In late February, the WSWS wrote on Dae'Shun Jamison of Shelby, Michigan, a 10-year-old boy with autism, whose legs and hands were amputated after developing complications from MIS-C. Although Dae'Shun tested positive for COVID-19 in early December, he was asymptomatic. Symptoms of MIS-C did not appear for approximately two weeks after his initial infection. In one of the latest updates on Dae'Shun's GoFundMe account, his mother reports that he had to have a feeding tube inserted into his stomach to increase his nutritional intake to aid in his body's healing process. As of the update, he has spent over three months at the local children's hospital.

Despite the revelations of MIS-C on the rise, these harrowing facts are not a major issue for President Biden and the financial oligarchy he represents. The administration had as one of its main objectives the reopening of schools by the end of April so that parents can return to work to continue to produce profits for major corporations and the ultra-rich. The push by former President Trump to fully reopen the economy has been seamlessly embraced by the Democratic administration. Speaking to an 8-year-old student and her mother at a town hall meeting, where the mother declared that her daughter was worried about contracting the disease and dying, Biden blatantly lied, saying "kids don't get COVID very often. It's unusual for that to happen."

Further distorting the truth, the CDC has fallen in line behind the current administration to falsely claim that, not only do children not contract COVID-19, but that schools can be reopened "safely" in the midst of this medical and social catastrophe, with little risk to them.

Implicated in this conspiracy against students and their families are the trade unions. In Chicago, Mayor Lori Lightfoot spearheaded a campaign along with American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten and Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) President Jesse Sharkey to reopen the schools, against the wishes of the vast majority of teachers, who not only feared for their own lives and the lives of their family members, but of their students and their

students' families. While corporate media outlets denounced teachers as being lazy or selfish, Lightfoot, Weingarten and Sharkey rammed through a "deal" that they coerced teachers to accept. Soon after, other school districts throughout the country, whether Democrat or Republican, were pushing through similar contracts.

Dr. Grant Schulert, a pediatric rheumatologist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, recently told CNN, "Most of our children are recovering pretty well, but we don't know whether this is going to have long-term effects, particularly on the heart. That's what we're most concerned about and most want to understand."

Dr. Larry Kocielek, an associate medical director at Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago, warned, "I think all children are at risk. Like with every aspect of this pandemic, people just can't get comfortable."

Adding fuel to the fire is the spread of new and more contagious variants such as the B.1.1.7 variant that Dr. Michael Osterholm warned earlier this week is spreading quickly at school sites. Educators and the working class as a whole must organize a fight back against the deadly push into unsafe workplaces and schools. Join and help build our international network of Rank and File Safety Committees at wsws.org/edsafety.



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