Omicron is not “mild”

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As the Biden administration abandons any pretense of stopping the spread of COVID-19, the White House and the corporate media have adopted a new slogan to justify the mass infection of the population: The Omicron variant that is overwhelming hospitals and killing hundreds of Americans daily is “mild.”

“A case of COVID-19 for a fully vaccinated and boosted person will most likely mean no symptoms or mild ones similar to the common respiratory viruses,” US President Joe Biden said on December 21, effectively equating the pandemic that has killed 855,000 Americans with the common cold.

Omicron will result in “legions of asymptomatic, mild and untested cases,” writes financial executive Rob Arnott in a column in the *Wall Street Journal*, prompting him to ask, without irony, “Should I try to catch the Omicron variant of Covid to advance the cause of herd immunity?”

“Omicron Is Milder,” declares David Leonhardt in a *New York Times* column published Wednesday, which uses the term “mild” eight times.

“Because it is milder than earlier versions of the virus, Covid now appears to present less threat to most vaccinated elderly people than the annual flu does,” Leonhardt says, adding, “Covid increasingly resembles the kind of health risk that people accept every day.”

All of this, however, is, according to Maria Van Kerkhove, the technical lead of COVID-19 response at the World Health Organization, “dangerous” misinformation.

“To suggest that Omicron is ‘just a mild’ disease is dangerous,” Van Kerkhove said. “Case # are astounding…even with lower risk, we will see hospitals overwhelmed.

“Omicron is not mild. Omicron is not the common cold. And that rhetoric that is out there, the narrative that is out there, is dangerous and it is deadly.

“Omicron and Delta are infecting individuals, they’re putting people in hospitals, and if you have huge numbers of cases, you will have increased hospitalization.

“This virus, Omicron, will reach vulnerable populations, it will reach older populations, and will see increasing deaths among those individuals. So to suggest that Omicron is just a mild infection, is just really dangerous.”

“New year, new delusion. ‘It’s mild.’ It’s turtles all the way down,” sighed virologist Kristian G. Anderson, comparing the endless stream of misinformation about COVID-19 to an infinite regression.

As developmental biologist Malgorzata Gasperowicz pointed out over a month ago, “A virus that spreads more rapidly, even if milder, could cause much more deaths.” But Omicron is “not mild” because “Transmission. Is. The most important.” And Omicron is massively transmissible.

Her warnings have been proven catastrophically correct by the spread of the disease:

• On Thursday, there were 126,000 COVID-19 patients hospitalized in the United States. By the end of the day today, the number of people hospitalized will exceed the highest level ever. Overwhelmed hospitals are cancelling elective procedures and prematurely discharging ill patients, while those coming to emergency rooms are forced to wait for hours.

• The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention projects that, over the next month, the death toll will shoot up rapidly, reaching 3,500 per day toward the end of January—close to the highest since the pandemic began.

• Child COVID-19 hospitalizations have soared, with 672 children being hospitalized each day in the United States, more than double the week before.

• There is no indication that Omicron involves a reduction in the incidence of Long COVID, potentially meaning millions of people will be debilitated for

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months, years or their entire lives.

The reality is that use of the term “mild” to describe COVID-19 does not come from the lexicon of scientists studying the disease, but from the advertising business.

The US Food and Drug Administration has long warned that “Tobacco products that are labeled or advertised with the term ‘mild’... mislead the public into thinking that these products cause fewer health problems than other cigarettes. However, they still pose a heavy health risk.”

The technique used by big tobacco companies to sell death in the form of cigarettes has now been co-opted by the media and federal government to sell death in the form of mass illness.

There are certain tropes used by the American media to make the inhuman and immoral seem familiar and ordinary. “Enhanced” interrogation. “Targeted” killing. “Moderate” Al-Qaeda-linked militias sponsored by the US in Syria.

So, too, the enormous power of the American media has been used to make the population accept death on a massive scale. One article by Ezekiel Emanuel, whose previous claim to fame was his statement that “society” would be “better off” if people did not live past 75, states that the government should no longer even bother counting COVID-19 deaths.

But for all the endless spin, for all the endless lies and cover-ups, the pandemic is real. Close to a million people are dead in the US alone. And hundreds of thousands more will die unless urgent action is taken.

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