

# Wisconsin records first child death from MIS-C, condition triggered by COVID-19 infection

William Quartermaine  
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On February 18, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported that a child in southeastern Wisconsin had died from complications related to COVID-19. Specifically, the child passed away from Multiple Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), a supposedly “rare” condition that is still little understood by doctors and scientists. No details were made public save the fact that the child was under 10 years old.

Overall, 183 children in the state have been diagnosed with MIS-C, with 33 new cases reported since the start of 2022. As of January 31, there had been 6,851 cases of the syndrome confirmed in the United States by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Occurring two to six weeks after a child has been diagnosed as positive for COVID-19, MIS-C can appear even when the child has mild symptoms from the disease or even no symptoms at all. The condition has a number of harrowing effects on children, including heart palpitations, ragged breathing, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, chronic fatigue, migraines, as well as physical swelling of the face, hands and feet. The eyes, lips and tongue can also swell, causing difficulty eating, swallowing and speaking. The deadliest possible impacts include cardiac dysfunction and inflammation, which can stop the equal circulation of blood throughout the body and potentially shutting it down.

The impact of COVID-19 on children as they continue to be forced back into school through the “herd immunity” policy, adopted at every level of government, continues to be disastrous.

Dr. Katherine Clouser of New Jersey operates one of the very few pediatric COVID recovery centers and has spoken about the toll this is taking on children throughout the country. Speaking with the *Daily Mail*

she noted, “Kids typically bounce back from illnesses really well. ... For some reason, this one [COVID-19] is really having a bad effect on the body. It’s affecting many body cells, the lungs, the muscles and the stomach. Everything.”

Clouser also spoke of children’s growing wariness toward in-person schooling and anxiety spending time in crowded classrooms and hallways while the disease continues to run rampant with hardly any mitigation measures. Continuing, she wrote, “They’ve never been anxious about school before and all of a sudden, now they are, and they’re just having a harder time bouncing back.”

A disease that is continuing to infect and kill more than 2,000 people every day in the US has traumatized countless children physically, emotionally and mentally as they trudge to and from school every day. Children are, indeed, having a harder time bouncing back to not only going to school, but dealing with the reality they could—at any moment—come down with a deadly disease that could force them into the hospital and which they could pass on to their families, including parents and elderly relatives who are even more vulnerable to COVID-19.

It is estimated that more than 200,000 children in the US have lost a parent or caregiver to the virus. According to social epidemiologist Rachel Kidman of Stony Brook University, between February 2020 and February 2021, approximately 40,000 children in the US were orphaned by the pandemic. According to Kidman’s study, this comes out to about one orphaned child for every 13 COVID-19 deaths nationally.

According to the Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health, almost 1,100 children in the state had lost a parent or caretaking grandparent due to COVID-19 as of June 2021. These are the most recent

numbers available, but given the surge in the Delta and Omicron variants after last summer, the number of children who have lost a primary guardian has likely doubled.

The Wisconsin child's death occurred "some time last month," according to Tom Haupt, a respiratory disease epidemiologist at the state's Department of Health Services. Most likely, the death occurred at the height of the Omicron surge, when all 72 counties in Wisconsin were at "critically high" levels of transmission for four full weeks. This category had to be created toward the end of 2021 to track the massive outbreak as it was occurring in real time. The death also coincides with schools being reopened again after the winter holidays, showcasing yet again how the rise in total cases and deaths is inextricably linked to the opening of schools and relaxing of almost all mitigation measures.

MIS-C remains mysterious. When asked if there were particular signs to be aware of in children who may be more vulnerable to it, Haupt ominously told the *Journal Sentinel* that "there is no way to tell if it's brewing." Greg Dumari, a pediatric infectious disease doctor with UW Health in Madison, said he needed to treat children who have come down with the condition with blood thinners, steroids and even heart medication to help quell the cardiac conditions that flame up when symptoms become aggressive. There is also still no way to tell which child might come down with MIS-C, with very little information on children of certain weights, heights, genders, etc., being less or more vulnerable to the syndrome.

Headlines on the impact of the pandemic have disappeared from the front pages of newspapers and websites, while measures to end the pandemic are being loosened and eventually dispensed with altogether. Cases of MIS-C are dismissed as "rare" and "unprecedented" and hardly even reported. This is not a coincidence. As the US ramps up its imperialist war drive against Russia, it is seeking to funnel domestic anger and rage at the ruling class' handling of the pandemic into nationalism and destruction.

Even one child dying of COVID-19 and suffering from the horrific physical and mental effects of MIS-C is one too many. The only way to stop the pandemic, end the destructive war drive and save countless lives is through the unification of the international working

class under a socialist program in a fight to overthrow the capitalist system. Only when the working class fully recognizes its position as the revolutionary class and is armed with a Marxist program will mass suffering and endless war be put to an end.



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