

As schools begin to reopen nation-wide

New study reveals potentially “life-altering” neurologic complications in children hospitalized with COVID-19

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A new study released last week in *Pediatrics*, a peer-reviewed medical journal published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, revealed that about 8 percent of children hospitalized with COVID-19 at major pediatric hospitals in the United States experienced a neurologic complication of some kind, even if they were otherwise healthy.

The shocking information revealed in the study emerges just days before school districts across the US reopen their doors to tens of millions of students, teachers and other school staff for fully in-person learning. The reopening is a critical aspect of the Biden administration’s “forever COVID” policy and has the full backing of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

The study, “COVID-19 and Acute Neurologic Complications in Children,” was based on data from 15,000 children hospitalized with COVID-19 in 52 children’s hospitals over a two-year period. Tragically, it is one of only a small handful of studies that has been conducted on the long-term impact of COVID-19 on children.

Neurologic complications are defined in this case as having a diagnosis of encephalopathy, encephalitis, aseptic meningitis, febrile seizure, non-febrile seizure, brain abscess and bacterial meningitis and cerebral infarction.

Encephalopathy is a broad term for any brain disease that alters brain function or structure. Declining ability to reason and concentrate, memory loss, personality change, seizures and twitching are common symptoms. Encephalitis is inflammation of the active tissues of the brain. The inflammation causes the brain to swell, which can lead to headaches, stiff neck, sensitivity to light, mental confusion and seizures.

The study found that 3.84 percent of the children in the study experienced febrile seizures, 2.33 percent experienced non-febrile seizures, 2.19 percent experienced

encephalopathy, 0.17 percent experienced aseptic meningitis, 0.13 percent experienced encephalitis, and 0.13 percent experienced brain abscess and bacterial meningitis.

If one takes into account the officially reported figures of 148,555 child hospitalizations, according to the CDC, there have likely been roughly 3,120 cases of encephalopathy, 5,650 febrile seizures, 2,510 cases of brain abscess and bacterial meningitis and 2,510 cases of encephalitis.

In total, over 10,000 children may have experienced neurological complications, just in the United States alone. Extrapolated globally, this number rises to hundreds of thousands of children with potentially life-altering neurological complications. That is, the reckless “let it rip” policies enacted by governments around the world have not only led to the deaths of millions of elderly and working-age adults, as well as thousands of children, but has also caused pain and suffering for hundreds of thousands of children and their families for years to come.

The analysts found that 75 percent of children who had a neurologic complication *did not* have an underlying neurologic comorbidity, and 60 percent of the same group were otherwise healthy.

These figures are damning in their own right. They are even more alarming when one takes into account the widely held belief that the official figures are significantly lower than the reality. One can only imagine what scientists would find if they had access to all the available data, not only from child hospitalizations but from all reported cases.

In a press release on August 11, co-author James W. Antoon, MD, PhD, MPH, an assistant professor of pediatrics and hospital medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, described the potential impact on children affected, noting, “the complications are almost uniformly associated with worse outcomes and can be life-altering conditions.

“As we found in our study, COVID-related complications

can have a significant impact on the lives of children,” Antoon told Healio in an interview last week. “With the emergence of new, highly contagious variants, the potential patients that are at risk is growing.”

All serious scientific evidence points to the same basic conclusion: Forcing schools to reopen for in-person learning is needlessly placing the lives and well-being of millions of children and workers at serious risk.

In fact, at the beginning of August the CDC itself released a study on the effects of COVID-19 on children which found that those previously infected with coronavirus were at substantially greater risk for developing multiple life-threatening conditions, including acute pulmonary embolism, myocarditis and cardiomyopathy, venous thromboembolic events, acute renal failure and Type 1 diabetes, in addition to debilitating symptoms, such as smell and taste disturbances, circulatory problems, fatigue and pain.

Despite the overwhelming scientific evidence, the CDC issued new guidelines for COVID-19 last week which remove or reduce recommendations for quarantine, isolation and testing of exposed and infected individuals. They are the latest in a long series of anti-scientific policies from the agency and conveniently come just as the school year is set to begin.

The CDC’s latest changes to its guidelines mark a deepening of the Biden administration’s “forever COVID” policy that has been forced on the American population. This criminal policy, which amounts to the embrace of former President Donald Trump’s “herd immunity” strategy, has been supported by the entire political establishment.

Notably, this includes the so-called “left” representative Senator Bernie Sanders. On the same day the new CDC guidelines were released, Sanders interviewed White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha, who demanded that schools remain open, stating, “We should look forward to a school year in which every child is in school, is in person, full-time, for the whole year. I think we have all the ability to do that, and that should be the only acceptable standard.” When Sanders made the preposterous claim that “children ... are not dying” of COVID-19, Jha did not correct him. According to the CDC, 1,747 children have officially died of COVID-19 in the US, while the real figure is undoubtedly above 2,000.

While Sanders, Biden and all the rest downplay the significance of COVID-19 and lie about its impact on children, the scientific evidence against their claims continues to mount.

Moreover, there is every reason to believe that the reopening of schools this year could be even more

catastrophic than previous years. The US is currently in the midst of a months-long wave of four different Omicron subvariants, with the most dangerous BA.5 subvariant now dominant.

Over the past three months, an average of over 100,000 people have officially been infected each day, with the real figure between half a million and 1 million, while the seven-day average of daily new deaths has once again surpassed 500.

Unlike last year, when the drastic spike in child cases and hospitalizations emerged largely as a result of school reopenings, this year schools are reopening in the midst of a major wave of the virus and an increase in child cases and hospitalizations. This summer alone, over 200 children have officially died from the virus, and child hospitalizations have recently reached the same levels as during the height of the Delta wave last September.

Moreover, virtually no measures are being taken to contain the unprecedented global outbreak of monkeypox, which has already infected over 11,000 Americans, including at least eight children.

There is no constituency in the ruling class on either side of the aisle that is willing or able to fight for policies based on science and reason to protect the lives of children and workers against COVID-19. In order to put an end to the pandemic and save lives, a mass movement of the working class must be organized in opposition to the Democratic Party and outside of the control of the pro-corporate trade union apparatus.

The WSWS is working to build such a movement through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). We urge all parents, workers and youth who are interested in joining this fight to fill out the form below to get in touch with us.



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