



Qatari study finds natural immunity is 97% EFFECTIVE against severe COVID even after 14 months

Description

QATAR: A study by researchers in the Middle Eastern country of Qatar revealed that natural immunity is 97 percent effective against the Wuhan coronavirus (COVID-19), even after 14 months have passed since the primary infection.

[The pre-print paper](#) posted July 7 in *medRxiv* analyzed three studies conducted on the unvaccinated Qatari population between February 2020 and June 2022. It sought to answer questions regarding the duration of natural immunity when faced with the B.1.1.529 omicron variant and prior SARS-CoV-2 strains.

The study authors from [Qatar University](#) found that unvaccinated Qataris who survive a bout of COVID-19 had outstanding protection against severe COVID-19 disease or death caused by it.

“Effectiveness of primary infection against severe, critical or fatal COVID-19 reinfection was 97.3 percent, irrespective of the variant of primary infection or reinfection, and with no evidence of waning. Similar results were found in sub-group analyses for those [less than] 50 years of age,” they wrote.

“Despite waning protection against reinfection, strikingly, there was no evidence for the waning of protection against severe COVID-19 at reinfection. This remained [at around] 100 percent, even 14 months after the primary infection, with no appreciable effect for omicron immune evasion in reducing it.”

Prior to the emergence of omicron, natural immunity against COVID-19 dropped to only 70 percent after 16 months – which the study authors attributed to a “genuine waning in biological immunity.”

Furthermore, the Qatari researchers emphasized the superiority of natural immunity over vaccine-induced immunity in their pre-print study. “Vaccine immunity may last for only a year, but natural immunity ... may last for three years,” they stated.

“Immune evasion of omicron subvariants reduced overall protection of pre-omicron natural immunity

and accelerated its waning – mirroring the effect of omicron on vaccine immunity, but at a slower rate.”

Even the CDC has acknowledged natural immunity

The paper by the Qatari researchers discussed natural immunity in the context of omicron, which first emerged in late November 2021. While much more infectious than earlier strains, omicron caused milder symptoms in infected individuals. The BA4 and Ba5 subvariants of omicron are now the most dominant strain of SARS-CoV-2 as of writing.

The *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (CDC) also acknowledged the superiority of natural immunity early this year. In [the Jan. 28 edition](#) of the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), the public health agency said natural immunity was at least three times as effective as COVID-19 vaccines in preventing people from being infected and hospitalized. The CDC’s findings applied to the earlier B16172 delta variant known to cause breakthrough infections.

The CDC referenced an earlier study that looked at four categories of people in California and New York – unvaccinated and vaccinated people who survived a bout with COVID-19, and both groups who had never contracted SARS-CoV-2 – between May 2021 and November 2021.

Unvaccinated individuals with natural immunity had infection rates almost 15 to 30 times lower than those without any immunity whatsoever. In contrast, vaccinated people with no prior SARS-CoV-2 exposure only had around 4.5 to 6.2 percent lower infections than those without any immunity whatsoever. Similar results were found when it comes to hospitalizations, with naturally immune people two to six times less likely to be hospitalized than those with immunity stemming from the COVID-19 shots.

“Before delta became the predominant variant in June [2021], case rates were higher among persons who survived a previous infection than persons who were vaccinated alone. By early October, persons who survived a previous infection had lower case rates than [vaccinated] persons,” said the MMWR.

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by: Ramon Tomey

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