



Vaccines Not Durable, Omicron Might Turn COVID-19 Endemic: Bill Gates

Description

USA: Bill Gates, in a Twitter discussion Tuesday, said that the current COVID-19 vaccines were missing two key factors, and claimed that Omicron might bring about a wave of immunity in communities it passes through.

Microsoft co-founder and one of the world's richest men, Gates has invested in vaccine research through his foundation and given prominent talks regarding the pandemic. Recently, he [chatted](#) regarding the current situation of COVID-19, vaccines, and related issues with Devi Sridhar, a professor at the University of Edinburgh where she holds a Personal Chair in Global Public Health.

When asked about a breakthrough that could result in the biggest difference in ending the pandemic, he talked about the [efficacy](#) of vaccines.

"The vaccines we have prevent severe disease and death very well but they are missing two key things. First they still allow infections ('breakthrough') and the duration appears to be limited. We need vaccines that prevent re-infection and have many years of duration," Gates said.

The [effectiveness](#) of vaccines has been questioned, especially with regards to the Omicron variant. The high number of mutations on the variant's spike protein increases "the possibility of immune escape," according to Moderna President Stephen Hoge. Hoge added that the "dent in our vaccine's efficacy" applies to all manufacturers.

Omicron has spread rapidly across the world, with [98.3 percent](#) of infections in the United States now attributed to it. Although highly transmissible, international studies have shown that the strain poses milder symptoms in infected people.

Recently, a notable international health [charity](#) called for treating COVID-19 "like the common cold." Dr. Mike Tildesley, a University of Warwick professor, has forecast COVID-19 evolving to become less severe and [endemic](#). He said the Omicron variant is the beginning of that process. Gates has seconded this perspective.

"Once Omicron goes through a country then the rest of the year should see far fewer cases so COVID

can be treated more like seasonal flu,” he said, while recommending yearly COVID-19 shots that would be needed for some time.

Gates talked about a lot of “misinformation” regarding him spreading on social media. “People like you and I and Tony Fauci have been subject to a lot of misinformation. I didn’t expect that. Some of it like me putting chips in arms doesn’t make sense to me—why would I want to do that?”

The billionaire then discussed the availability of vaccines around the world. Although there was demand, logistical issues and inefficient health systems prevented the adequate supply of vaccines in developing nations.

Regarding the Chinese authorities’ theory that the coronavirus emerged from a bat in a wet market located in Wuhan, Gates defended this argument. This is despite mounting [evidence](#) suggesting that the novel coronavirus, otherwise known as the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus escaped from a government lab in the Chinese city.

When Sridhar asked about the origin of the pandemic, Gates replied, “The data is pretty strong that it came from another species which is true for most pandemics. People will continue to speculate on this and we should make sure labs are careful. There will be future outbreaks coming from other species so we need to invest in being ready.”

Besides investments into vaccine research, Gates has made other investments related to COVID-19. In July, a consortium backed by [George Soros](#) and Gates was involved in a buyout of Mologic, a COVID-19 testing company.

by Naveen Athrappully

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