

COVID-19 mis- and dis-information

False information, including intentional disinformation and conspiracy theories has been spread through social media, text messaging, and mass media, propagated by celebrities, politicians and other prominent public figures.

Dr. Phillip Altman ... in his own words: "Misinformation, disinformation and outright lies."
"It is hard to conceive a more deceitful, disgraceful and dangerous narrative."

Altman deems the health authorities in Australia (TGA - Therapeutic Goods Administration) as well as internationally (WHO - World Health Organization) not just to be wrong ... but to be lying.

Altman claims his research is based on findings by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): **"The latest official US Center for Disease Control statistics for US deaths and injuries now reports 34,725 deaths as well as hundreds of thousands of injuries."**

The above statement is an outright lie: To support his claim Altman produces a graph, and with the way his webpage is designed the casual observer is led to believe these are statistics from the CDC COVID-19 Reported Adverse Events webpage. One needs a very strong eye-glass to see what the actual source is: **openVAERS.com** (see the attached illustration, next page):

Wikipedia: OpenVAERS misrepresents data from the VAERS database to indicate that the COVID-19 vaccines are harmful, by publishing unverified data and statistics on the number of people who have allegedly died or suffered injuries after being vaccinated against COVID-19.

For the record - from the Australian TGA Drug Adverse Effect Notification (**DAEN**):

There have been **14 COVID-19 vaccine-related deaths** reported since the rollout began last year (as per Nov. 2022). As of March 2023 **63,342,668 vaccine doses** had been administered in Australia. There have been **136,191 (0.2%)** adverse event reports (as per Sept. 2022).

The most frequently reported side effects suspected to be associated with the vaccines include headache, muscle and joint pain, fever, chills and nausea. Skin reactions at the site of the injection are also common and can include pain, swelling, redness and an itchy rash. These are recognised side effects of vaccination and are usually transient and mild.

At one of Dr. Altman's presentations a medical professional of over 45 years commented thus:

"Dr Phillip Altman's presentation was a travesty! I was tempted on several occasions to walk out ... which I have never done in my scientific career! In the end I did as I couldn't listen to his diatribe any longer.

"I was sitting with a well credentialed doctor and she felt the same way as I did. Altman caused great anxiety amongst many attendees and gave totally incorrect information about mask wearing, established safety in all populations and the impact of Covid.

"After this disgusting presentation I searched for his credentials on the Internet to find that his voice is found on conspiracy websites only and he isn't an authority on Covid, as he presented himself to be."

(for the record: Dr. Altman is a ... Pharmacologist - Clinical Trial and Drug Regulatory Affairs senior industry pharmaceutical consultant in drug research and regulatory approval with more than 40 years experience. BPharm (Hons), MSc, PhD.)

Tellingly, this was Altman's response to the letter: *"I have never experienced an attack like that issued by Dr.B [name withheld]. She should do her homework and then apologise. Dr. B's opinions appear to be based in part on her trust in on-line conspiracy websites."* Hear, hear ! That is - of course - Dr. Altman's modus operandi: information gleaned from conspiracy websites (see page 3).

The TGA (Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration) rejects Altman report: (Canberra daily) <https://canberradaily.com.au/doctors-association-concerned-about-covid-19-vaccines-wants-debate/>

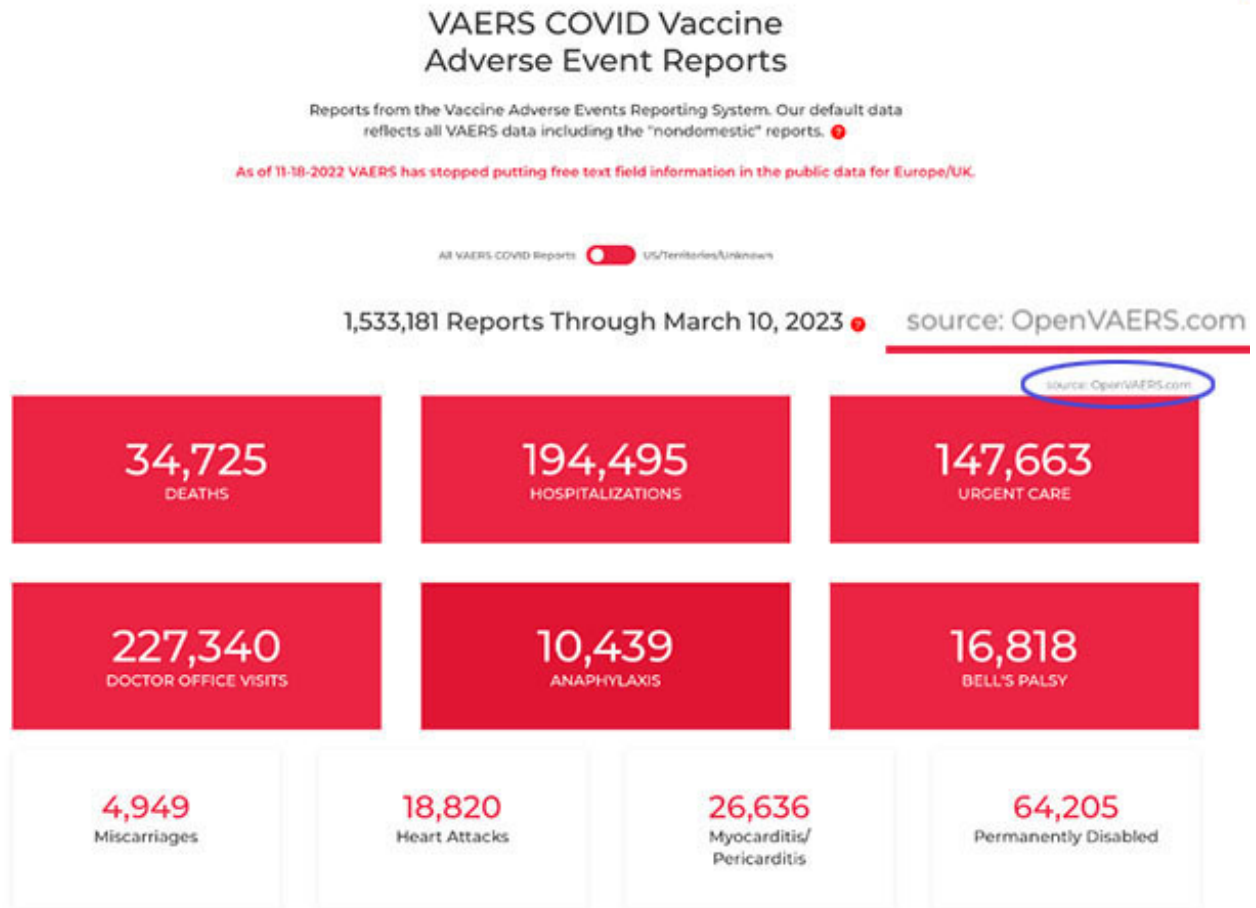
The TGA rejected Dr Altman's presentation, stating that it contained "many remarkable scientific errors of fact and significant misinterpretations" about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines.

The report was self-published without peer review, so was not credible and had not been through the scrutiny required for publication in a reputable scientific journal.

"The mRNA vaccine platform is not gene therapy," the TGA said. "It is remarkable that people who have worked in universities are not aware of this basic fact. mRNA vaccines have also been subject to research for decades."

Altman claims his research is based on findings by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): "The latest official US Center for Disease Control statistics for US deaths and injuries now reports 34,725 deaths as well as hundreds of thousands of injuries."

The above statement is an outright lie:



From **Wikipedia**, the free encyclopedia

OpenVAERS is an American anti-vaccine website created in 2021 by Liz Willner. The website misrepresents data from the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) to promote misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines.

Influence

In August 2021, the British anti-disinformation organization [Logically](#) reported that 30% of the website's referral traffic came from [The Gateway Pundit](#), a far-right fake news website, and over 10% came from English conspiracy theorist [Vernon Coleman](#). Logically also found that almost 3% of the referral traffic for the official VAERS database came from OpenVAERS. According to Logically, the website has attracted 1.23 million visitors since its launch.

COVID-19 vaccine misinformation

OpenVAERS misrepresents data from the VAERS database to indicate that the [COVID-19 vaccines](#) are harmful by publishing unverified data and statistics on the number of people who have allegedly died or suffered injuries after being vaccinated against COVID-19. The website is designed to present the information in an easily accessible format, which allows decontextualized screenshots to be shared on social media platforms such as [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [TikTok](#).

Kolina Koltai, a Postdoctoral Fellow of the Center for an Informed Public (ICP) at the [University of Washington](#), described OpenVAERS as "misinformation 101", adding: "It's decontextualization. I literally show examples like that in classes that I teach. You take a bit of information and you remove all the other context from it. That's common with almost any misinformation you can see."^[6] Logically analyst Nick Backovic said, "By design, it's there for virality because it's so easy to share these screenshots, out of context, and people won't question it. It looks official, sounds official, because it also has this very similar name to the actual government website."

Dr. Altman associates with prominent conspiracists and mis- as well as dis-informers, beyond Craig Kelly, Malcolm Roberts, George Christensen and Alan Jones ... Wikipedia:

Dr. Peter A. McCullough

During the COVID-19 pandemic, McCullough advocated for early treatment using the discredited treatments hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin, criticized the response of the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration, dissented from public health recommendations, and contributed to COVID-19 misinformation.

Dr. Vinay Prasad

In October 2021, Prasad prompted social media controversy when he published a blog post comparing the U.S. COVID-19 pandemic response to the beginnings of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich. Bioethicist Arthur L. Caplan said that Prasad's arguments were specious and ignorant, and science historian Robert N. Proctor said that Prasad was "overplaying the dangers of vaccination mandates and trivializing the genuine harms to liberty posed by 1930s fascism"

Dr. Thomas Borody

A known CoViD mis-informer, who advocates the false trope that ivermectin is an alternative to the vaccines. In 2020, Borody announced that he had discovered a "cure" for COVID-19: a combination of ivermectin, doxycycline and zinc. As of 22 December 2021 the Australian Government Department of Health says there is "insufficient evidence to recommend ivermectin, doxycycline and zinc (either separately, or in combination) for the prevention or treatment of COVID-19.

Dr. Aseem Malhotra ... for details go to page 4

Malhotra campaigned against the use of COVID mRNA vaccines contrary to the available evidence; **Full Fact** warned that "Serious concerns have been raised as to the quality of [Malhotra's] research". In September 2022, Dr. Malhotra publicly campaigned against the use of COVID mRNA vaccines. A cardiologist from the United Kingdom, he says Covid-19 vaccines should be suspended because they pose a greater threat than the virus itself. An AFP factcheck warned of his claims: **This is false ...**

British cardiologist misleads on Covid vaccine risk: <https://factcheck.afp.com/doc.afp.com.33E88FT>

... experts say Dr. Malhotra's research misleads on the risks of vaccination by cherry-picking evidence and relying on flawed studies, and public health authorities agree the benefits of the shots outweigh the risks."

Dr. Altman - <https://phillipaltman.substack.com> - subscribes to the above mis- and dis-information. He lives in parallel universe of CoViD vaccine falsehoods and promotes this conspiracy theory: "Advice from the FDA, TGA etc is now worthless. After almost 4 years of constant lies, misinformation and disinformation, drug regulators around the world (including our Therapeutic Goods Administration) have failed miserably, nothing they have said is true. The COVID so-called "vaccines" were not safe and effective, they did not prevent infection, they did not prevent transmission of infection."

"THE COVID "VACCINES" ARE DEADLY AND MUST BE WITHDRAWN IMMEDIATELY"

Altman: "The false narrative spread by the biopharmaceutical cartel involving government agencies including the WHO and health regulators (including our Therapeutic Goods Administration) is that it was COVID-19 infections causing a surge in deaths and serious adverse events - wrong ... it is the shots!"

"It is estimated now that more than 30,000 Australians have died due to the shots and hundreds of thousands have suffered serious and/or permanent injury."

Factcheck, TGA: 14 COVID-19 vaccine-related deaths have been reported.

"The WHO, largely now controlled by Bill Gates, must be dismantled."

Dr. Altman and his associates have perfected the art of mis- and dis-information, of living in a 'mirror world', of going down the rabbit holes of conspiracies, falsehoods, alternative facts and lies. Indeed, nowhere on Altman's webpage (or anywhere else) did I find any proof or source or even mention of the 'estimate' of 'more than 30,000 Australian deaths' due to vaccinations. Actually, a quick google search finds only repudiations of that falsehood ... see the following pages.

For a clearer picture, also see the Wikipedia entry regarding openVAERS.com (page 3).

I have a blog that deals with these issues: <http://www.carstenburmeister.com/facts-matter.aspx>

<https://fullfact.org/health/bbc-malhotra-vaccines-excess-deaths/>

Excess deaths would be higher without Covid-19 vaccines

WHAT WAS CLAIMED

The Covid-19 mRNA vaccines are a likely contributing factor to the number of excess deaths in the UK.

OUR VERDICT

A few dozen people have died as a result of a Covid-19 vaccination, but the vaccines have also prevented tens of thousands of deaths. This means that on balance there would have been more excess deaths without them.

A guest on the BBC News channel, a cardiologist called Dr Aseem Malhotra, claimed that the mRNA Covid-19 vaccines were “probably a likely contributing factor” to the large number of excess deaths seen recently in the UK. The video has been viewed more than a million times and shared more than 33,000 times on Twitter alone, including by somepoliticians.

The BBC later spoke to Professor Peter Openshaw of the UK Vaccine Network to clarify Dr Malhotra’s remarks.

It’s not clear whether Dr Malhotra was talking about the effect of mRNA Covid vaccines on the total number of excess deaths, or only on the 30,000 excess deaths mentioned by the British Heart Foundation.

In either case, while it is true that the small number of deaths from Covid vaccines will have formed part of the total number of excess deaths occurring, his comments were misleading because they did not make clear that the Covid-19 vaccines, including mRNA vaccines, have on balance greatly reduced the number of excess deaths.

“Excess deaths” is a measure of how many more deaths occurred than might have been expected, so it is not straightforward to explain what the cause of an excess might be.

However, the net effect of Covid vaccines, including the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna), has clearly been to reduce the number of deaths that would have occurred—meaning that the number of excess deaths would have been much higher without them.

Research about England by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) published in February 2022 says: “Estimates suggest that 127,500 deaths and 24,144,000 infections have been prevented as a result of the Covid-19 vaccination programme, up to 24 September.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/13/bbc-cardiologist-aseem-malhotra-links-covid-jabs-to-heart-disease-deaths> ... BBC criticised for letting cardiologist ‘hijack’ interview with false Covid jab claim

Aseem Malhotra’s ‘misguided’ views linking some Covid vaccines to excess heart disease deaths should not have aired, say experts

The **BBC** has come under fire from scientists for interviewing a cardiologist who claimed certain Covid vaccines could be behind excess deaths from coronary artery disease. Experts have criticised Dr Aseem Malhotra’s appearance on the corporation’s news channel on Friday, accusing him of pushing “extreme fringe” views, which are “misguided”, “dangerous” and could mislead the public.

Scientists have described the doctor as “hijacking” an interview on statins to air his views, causing BBC staff to be “alarmed and embarrassed” by their booking. Malhotra recently retweeted a video by the MP Andrew Bridgen, after comparing the use of Covid vaccines to the Holocaust.

<https://www.statesman.com/story/news/politics/politifact/2021/05/07/tucker-carlson-misleading-claim-deaths-after-covid-19-vaccine-covid/4989132001/>

Tucker Carlson said 3,362 people have died from the COVID vaccine. Is he right?

By Bill McCarthy, PolitiFact.com

Tucker Carlson: “Between late December of 2020 and last month, a total of 3,362 people apparently died after getting the COVID vaccine in the United States ... The actual number is almost certainly higher.”

PolitiFact's ruling: False ... **Here's why:** Fox News host Tucker Carlson suggested that thousands of Americans have died since December because of the COVID-19 vaccines, citing an unverified federal database that has become a breeding ground for anti-vaccine misinformation.

The comments were the latest in a series of controversial remarks by Carlson raising doubts about the vaccines, **which clinical trials and real-world studies have shown both safe and effective.**

<https://apnews.com/article/fact-checking-735913158912>

CLAIM: Data from the European Medicines Agency shows more than 30,000 “fatalities” and over 1 million adverse reactions caused by COVID-19 vaccines. The Gateway Pundit, a conservative website, makes the claim in the headline of an article about the data: “European Medicines Agency Data Shows 1,163,356 Adverse Drug Reactions and 30,551 Fatalities by COVID-19 Vaccinations.”

AP’S ASSESSMENT: False. The agency’s EudraVigilance database tracks possible side effects of medications — including vaccines — by allowing medical professionals in the European Union to report when patients experience a “medical event” after taking them. This information is not verified by the agency and the data doesn’t prove the events were caused by the medication, the EMA told The Associated Press.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/covid19vaccinationdeathsinsenlandwithin60daysofthevaccineandmiscarriagesandasaresultofcovid19vaccine>

I understand that there have been over 30,000 vaccine deaths in England and over 5,000 deaths in Scotland. This information was made public by PHS. Under the freedom of information act please can you confirm the figures for covid vaccine deaths in England within 60 days of the vaccine.

You can find the number of deaths attributed to an adverse reaction to the COVID-19 vaccination in table 12 of our [Monthly Mortality Analysis dataset](#). There are currently 4 deaths registered in England and Wales with the aligning ICD codes for this. However, should this change, they will be updated in this table. The latest data available is August 2021, with September's analysis due to be published on 22 October 2021.

Update

1 Oct 2023 ... On Altman’s substack the headline: “**WHY ARE MORE COVID VACCINATED PEOPLE DYING?**” A simple question, and there is a simple answer: more people are vaccinated against CoViD than not, so more deaths among the vaccinated than the unvaccinated. A google search using the above headline brings up this result:

Why COVID-19 deaths among vaccinated show that boosters matter: “Toward the end of 2022 data showed that most deaths from COVID-19 were among those who are vaccinated. But that doesn’t mean COVID-19 vaccines are ineffective. It’s quite the opposite.” <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/why-covid-19-deaths-among-vaccinated-show-boosters-matter>

Update

2 Oct. 2023 In the news today:

TWO SCIENTISTS WIN NOBEL PRIZE FOR VACCINE DISCOVERIES

Katalin Karikó and Drew Weissman won the Nobel Prize in medicine for discoveries that enabled the development of effective mRNA vaccines against COVID-19.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/nobel-prize-announcements-underway-unveiling-medicine-prize-103650658>

In the context of our discussion this Nobel Prize is hugely important. Dr. Altman is outspoken about the ineffectiveness of the vaccines and indeed the fraud that is committed in the pursuit of justifying their use, as well as *the fact* that the “vaccines” - as he refers to them - are under-developed, that they are “experimental”.

These contentions are insidious falsehoods.

ABC News online:

Hungarian-American Katalin Karikó and American Drew Weissman were cited for contributing “to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health,” according to the panel that awarded the prize in Stockholm.

The panel said the pair’s “groundbreaking findings ... fundamentally changed our understanding of how mRNA interacts with our immune system.”

The two have **collaborated for decades, with Karikó focusing on the RNA side and Weissman handling the immunology**: “We educated each other,” she said.

Before COVID-19, mRNA vaccines were already being tested for diseases like Zika, influenza and rabies — but the pandemic brought more attention to this approach, Karikó said. Now, scientists are trying out mRNA approaches for cancer, allergies and other gene therapies, Weissman said.

“It’s already been going on for many years, but this has just given RNA the recognition,” Weissman said.

Dr. Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at Britain’s University of East Anglia, described the mRNA vaccines made by BioNTech-Pfizer and Moderna Inc. as a “game changer” in shutting down the coronavirus pandemic, crediting the shots with saving millions of lives.

“We would likely only now be coming out of the depths of COVID without the mRNA vaccines,” Hunter said.

The duo’s pivotal mRNA research was combined with two other earlier scientific discoveries to create the COVID-19 vaccines. Researchers in Canada had developed a fatty coating to help mRNA get inside cells to do its work. And studies with prior vaccines at the U.S. National Institutes of Health showed how to stabilize the coronavirus spike protein that the new mRNA shots needed to deliver.

Dr. Bharat Pankhania, an infectious diseases expert at Exeter University, predicted the technology used in the vaccines could be used to refine vaccines for other diseases like Ebola, malaria and dengue, and might also be used to create shots that immunize people against certain types of cancer or auto-immune diseases including lupus.

The take-away from this article is that mRNA research had been undertaken for decades before CoViD came along and the research turned its focus on the CoViD vaccines ... in fact, the mRNA vaccines made by BioNTech-Pfizer and Moderna Inc. are a “game changer” in shutting down the coronavirus pandemic, crediting the shots with saving millions of lives.

It will be interesting to see how this development will be treated by Dr. Altman on his substack. Presumably - in line with Dr. Altman’s spin, mis- and dis-information on his site - a case will be made that the Nobel Prize committee - as well as the scientists credited for their work - are to be denounced as incompetent, liars and corrupt; or it probably will be ignored (as of 7 Oct.)

From WIRED, 5 October 2023, <https://www.wired.com/story/mrna-vaccine-revolution-katalin-kariko/>

Katalin Karikó’s Nobel Prize Marks the Beginning of an mRNA Vaccine Revolution

Nobel Prize winners Katalin Karikó and Drew Weissman pioneered the technology that produced a Covid-19 vaccine in record time. Next, mRNA could tackle flu, malaria, and HIV.

No one expected the first Covid-19 vaccine to be as good as it was. “We were hoping for around 70 percent, that’s a success,” says Dr Ann Falsey, a professor of medicine at the University of Rochester, New York, who ran a 150-person trial site for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in 2020.

Even Uğur Şahin, the co-founder and CEO of BioNTech, who had shepherded the drug from its earliest stages, had some doubts. All the preliminary laboratory tests looked good; having seen them, he would routinely tell people that “immunologically, this is a near-perfect vaccine.” But that doesn’t always mean it will work against “the beast, the thing out there” in the real world. It wasn’t until November 9, 2020, three months into the final clinical trial, that he finally got the good news. “More than 90 percent effective,” he says. “I knew this was a game changer. We have a vaccine.”

“We were overjoyed,” Falsey says. “It seemed too good to be true. No respiratory vaccine has ever had that kind of efficacy.”

The arrival of a vaccine before the close of 2020 was an unexpected turn of events. Early in the pandemic, the conventional wisdom was that, even with all the stops pulled, a vaccine would take at least a year and a half to develop. Talking heads often referenced that the previous fastest-ever vaccine developed, for mumps back in 1967, took four years. Modern vaccines

often stretch out past a decade of development. BioNTech—and US-based Moderna, which announced similar results later the same week—shattered that conventional timeline.

Neither company was a household name before the pandemic. In fact, neither had ever had a single drug approved before. But both had long believed that their mRNA technology, which uses simple genetic instructions as a payload, could outpace traditional vaccines, which rely on the often-painstaking assembly of living viruses or their isolated parts. mRNA turned out to be a vanishingly rare thing in the world of science and medicine: a promising and potentially transformative technology that not only survived its first big test, but delivered beyond most people's wildest expectations.

But its next step could be even bigger. The scope of mRNA vaccines always went beyond any one disease. Like moving from a vacuum tube to a microchip, the technology promises to perform the same task as traditional vaccines, but exponentially faster, and for a fraction of the cost. "You can have an idea in the morning, and a vaccine prototype by evening. The speed is amazing," says Daniel Anderson, an mRNA therapy researcher at MIT. Before the pandemic, charities including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) hoped to turn mRNA on deadly diseases that the pharmaceutical industry has largely ignored, such as dengue or Lassa fever, while industry saw a chance to speed up the quest for long-held scientific dreams: an improved flu shot, or the first effective HIV vaccine.

"For many years we had to convince people this technology was viable."

Amesh Adalja, an expert on emerging diseases at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, in Maryland, says mRNA could "make all these applications we were hoping for, pushing for, become part of everyday life."

"When they write the history of vaccines, this will probably be a turning point," he adds.

The race for the next generation of mRNA vaccines—targeted at a variety of other diseases—is already exploding. Moderna has over two dozen vaccine candidates in development or clinical trials; BioNTech a further eight. There are at least six mRNA vaccines against flu in the pipeline, and a similar number against HIV. Nipah, Zika, herpes, dengue, hepatitis, and malaria vaccines have all been announced. The field sometimes resembles the early stage of a gold rush, with pharma giants snapping up promising researchers for huge contracts—Sanofi paid \$425 million (£307m) to partner with a small American mRNA biotech called Translate Bio in 2021, while GSK paid \$294 million (£212m) to work with Germany's CureVac. Even Moderna and BioNTech, buoyed by the success of their Covid vaccines, have started to buy up companies to help with product development.

"Biotech generally doesn't have as much disruption as the computer tech industry—development times are long, it's heavily regulated. So you can usually see change coming," says Hartaj Singh, an industry analyst with Oppenheimer & Co. "Covid turned that on its head; mRNA vaccines quickly came out as the big winner. Lots of older vaccine platforms will be gone—replaced—in a few years, or at least greatly diminished."

Şahin would go further. "It will be transformative, there's no question. It will be absolutely transformative."