



To the honorable:

Prof. Hezi Levy, Director General of the Ministry of Health

Subject: CALL TO SUSPEND THE COVID-19 VACCINATION CAMPAIGN FOR THE POPULATION UNDER THE AGE OF 30 - UNTIL THE RISK IS CLARIFIED

Your honor,

In recent days, there have been growing concerns about a significant short-term side effect following vaccination with the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine, in particular regarding the younger population. There is a noticeably increasing number of significant testimonies linking the vaccine and the incidence of myocarditis and data from the committee set up by the Ministry of Health indicates that the link is real and causal. **Occurrence of 90% of cases after the second vaccination, with a median time of a few days, and an incidence up to 20 times higher in the younger age group supports the premise that there is a causal rather than an incidental link.**

While this may not be clear to the general public, it is clear to you and us, the undersigned, that the absence of a significant correlation at this stage, does not negate the existence of such a correlation or its clinical relevance. In addition, any attempt to underestimate the importance of myocardial severity as if it was a morning cold is a serious breach of ethics. **It is also clear to you that this is a clinical disorder that carries life-threatening potential** (certainly by several orders of magnitude greater than the risk of COVID-19 in children), which can cause arrhythmias, future heart damage to the point of cardiomyopathy, and even death.

In view of the current morbidity data in Israel, and in light of the knowledge we have accumulated about the behavior of the virus and the illness, it can be said with complete confidence that the young Israeli population is well within the safety margins of the risks of the disease: the chance of contracting COVID-19 for an Israeli resident during the month of May was about 0.01%, at a time when the risk of serious illness in this population is low anyway. The truth of the matter is that at this point in time, the chance of hospitalization due to a significant medical condition resulting from COVID-19 under the age of 30 is negligible.

Therefore, the Ministry of Health must act responsibly and in a balanced manner: in light of the lowest risk data from COVID-19 (even lower than winter viruses at this stage), and considering the concerning data emerging about the vaccine's side effects, notably myocarditis, **there must be an immediate suspension** of the vaccination campaign for all individuals up to the age of 30 (including of course the children aged 12 to 15 who appear to be at even greater risk) – **and this is until more data is received from Israel and around the world attesting to the safety of the vaccine.**

There are many precedents for reducing or discontinuing a vaccine policy due to side effects. The AstraZenca vaccine has been suspended in Germany for those aged 60 and under (i.e., people who are not in a population at risk) following 31 cases of thrombosis, i.e., a case rate of only 1 per 87,000, the incidence being 30 times lower than currently reported in myocarditis at the for ages 16 to 18. The vaccine for the Rotavirus (a virus known as one of the main causes of hospitalization in children), was suspended by the US authorities in the late 1990s because of a series of Intussusception cases with a frequency of 1 per 10,000. The 1976 influenza vaccine was suspended when it was found that its use had caused the onset of Guillain-Barré syndrome at a rate of "only" 1 per 100,000, and the measles vaccine was suspended in 1969 due to 3 encephalopathy events at a frequency of less than 1 per million.



In the name of the legacy of Hippocrates, Maimonides, and Asaph the Physician, we call upon you to prevent unnecessary risk - "first do no harm": Suspend the vaccination of young and healthy children who are not at risk from COVID-19, until the completion of the work of the Examination and Analysis committee. If it indeed become clear that the vaccine carries with it the possibility of significant side effects, as suggested by substantial evidence already available, we as physicians, fear a fatal blow to public confidence in the healthcare system, one which is likely to lead to a future decline in routine vaccination rates, lower responsiveness of patients to medical recommendations, and harm to the status of physicians in general.

If it is subsequently established that the vaccine does not increase the risk of myocarditis (although this does not seem reasonable now in light of the data), we can appeal to those who have not been vaccinated but do so knowing that we have maintained their safety and health. **Only this will increase public confidence in the system!**

It is essential that you involve the public: present the data collected in a committee appointed by the Ministry of Health to study side effects; publish the data on severe morbidity and mortality in the COVID-19 year, compared to normal years, provide the public with the knowledge necessary to make an informed decision and give their full informed consent to the vaccine.

Given the current morbidity data in Israel, there is nothing to lose by waiting a few weeks for the picture to become clear, but great potential for harm if we act recklessly. Suspend the vaccine.

This is the right, responsible and ethical action, that takes into account the current risk / benefit balance.

Yours sincerely,

Members of the Public Emergency Council for the Covid19 Crisis

copy:

- Prof. Nachman Ash, Head of the Magen Israel Program
- Minister of Health, Mr. Yoel (Yuli) Edelstein



The Members of the Council* (in alphabetical order)



Dr. Yifat Abdi-Kork

An expert in epidemiology and molecular biology, served as a Consultant to the national health basket public committee and Head of Pharmacoeconomics Department, Israeli Center for Technology Assessment in Health Care, the Gertner Institute.



Prof. Zvika Granot

Professor of Immunology in the Faculty of Medicine at the Hebrew University. An international expert in the field of neutrophil research, is developing new approaches to immunotherapy.



Dr. Bruria Adini

PhD in Health Systems Management, serves as head of the Department of Emergency and Disaster Management at Tel Aviv University. Former Head of the IDF Emergency Preparedness Division (Lt. Col.) and Senior Consultant to the Ministry of Health's Emergency Division.



Dr. Michal Hemo Lotem

Pediatrician, Entrepreneur and author on leadership at medical futurism. Served as Vice President of Innovation at the Sheba Medical Center, and as a member of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council. Founded Beterem - Safe Kids Israel, and OSHEYA - Women Lead Wellness. Received Prime Minister's special Award for her contribution to children.



Prof. Amos Adler

Professor of Medicine in the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Specialist in Pediatrics and Clinical Microbiology. Director of the Microbiological Laboratory at Sourasky Medical Center Tel Aviv, Treasurer of the Israeli Association for Infectious Diseases.



Prof. Asa Kasher

Professor Emeritus of Professional Ethics and Philosophy at Tel Aviv University. Laureate of the Israel Prize for Philosophy. Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. Wrote dozens of state and public codes of ethics, including the military code of ethics, as well as serving as a member of several national public committees



Prof. Elian Alkrinawi

Professor of Social Work, served as president of the Achva College, head of the Department of Social Work at Ben-Gurion University and as dean of the School of Social Work at Memorial University in Canada. Killam Award winner and beacon lighter at the 2013 Independence Day ceremony.



Prof. Amnon Lahad

Specialist in Family Medicine (ISR) and Public health (US). Head departments of Family Medicine Hebrew University & Clalit Health Services, Jerusalem, Israel. Vice Dean Academia – Family medicine, Hebrew University. Chairman of the National Council for the Health of the Community. Active Family physician in Jerusalem.



Prof. Zvi Bentwich

Professor of Medicine, specialist in Clinical Immunology and Infectious Diseases. Served as Chief of Department of Medicine, and pioneered AIDS medicine in Israel. Currently Head of Center for Tropical Diseases and AIDS at Ben-Gurion University. President of NALA Foundation for the Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases in Developing Countries and Board Member of Physicians for Human Rights in Israel.



Prof. Retsef Levi

Professor of Operations Management at the MIT Sloan School of Management. An international expert in safety, risk management and analytics-driven design and optimization of health systems and biologic drugs manufacturing systems. He is leading several large-scale research collaborations across the world with leading industry enterprises and government organizations. He has consulted multiple state governments during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Dr. Orna Blondheim

Specialist in Pediatrics and Neonatology as well as Director of Health Systems. She served as the director of the Schneider Children's Hospital and served 16 years as CEO of Emek Medical Center



Prof. Udi Qimron

Chair of the Department of Clinical Microbiology and Immunology at Tel Aviv University. Expert in T cells, mucosal vaccines, genetic engineering of bacterial viruses, and CRISPR. Published in Science, Nature and Cell and has won prestigious research grants including the ERC. Partner in the establishment of the SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories.



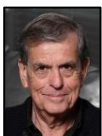
Prof. Emerita Rivka Carmi

Professor of Medicine, Specialist in Pediatrics, Neonatology and Medical Genetics. Served as Director of the Genetic Institute at Soroka Hospital, Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Ben-Gurion University, Chairman of the Dean of Medical Schools Association, President of Ben-Gurion University and Chairman of the Board of Universities.



Dr. Amir Shachar

Specialist in internal medicine, cardiology, emergency medicine and health administration. Established and managed the Department of Emergency Medicine at Sheba Hospital, was deputy director of Meir Hospital and currently heading the ER at Laniado Hospital. Founded the Emergency Medicine department at Tel Aviv University.



Prof. Aaron Ciechanover

Serves as a Distinguished Professor at the Faculty of Medicine in the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. Awarded with the chemistry Nobel Prize, as well as the Lasker Award, the Israel Prize, and the EMET Prize. He is a member of the US National Academies of Sciences (NAS) and Medicine (NAM), the Israeli National Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and the Pontifical Academy of Sciences at the Vatican.



Prof. Mordechai Shani

Professor of Medicine and Medical Management, Specialist in Internal Medicine. Winner of the Israel Prize. Served twice as Director General of the Ministry of Health and Director of Sheba Hospital, as well as Chairman of the Medicines Committee. Founded and managed the School of Public Health at Tel Aviv University, and also established and managed the National Institute for Health Policy Research.



Prof. Eran Dolev

Professor of Medicine, Military Medicine and Medical History, Specialist in Internal Medicine, Director of Health Systems and Ethics in Medicine. He served as Surgeon General of the IDF, as Director of the Internal Medicine Department, and as Chairman of the Ethics Bureau of the Medical Association and Head of the International Review Board of Tel Aviv University.



Prof. Emerita Zahava Solomon

Lt. Col (ret). Recipient of the Israel Prize, the Emet Prize and The Laufer Award. Her research in Social Work and Psychiatric Epidemiology focuses on man - made trauma. Served as head of research in mental health IDF. Head of the School of Social Work and director of the Trauma I-Core, TAU and DSM-4 (APA) committee.



Prof. Asher Elhayany

Professor of Medicine, Specialist in Family Medicine and Public Administration. He served as the CEO of Meir Hospital, the director of the Central District at Clalit Medical Centre, and as the director of the United Health Fund. He served as chairman of the National Council for Health in the Community. Family doctor in the Negev.



Dr. Yoav Yehezkeili

Specialist in Internal Medicine and Medical Management. Lecturer in the Department of Emergency and Disaster Management at Tel Aviv University. Lt. Col. Res., One of the founders of the epidemic treatment team and evaluation programs for extreme biological incidents. Served as a hospital's deputy director, district physician, director of the primary care division in the HMOs. Medical consultant to KI research institute.



Prof. Eitan Friedman

Professor of Medicine in the Department of Genetics and Biochemistry, Specialist in Internal Medicine and Medical Genetics, PhD from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. Established the Ontogenetic Unit and Clinic for High-Risk Women at Sheba Hospital, serves as chair of the Ministry of Health's Supreme Helsinki Committee.

*The opinions expressed are the individual opinions of the members, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the institutions to which the members are affiliated.