

VACCINES & SAFETY

FROM THE CLEVELAND CLINIC

Study: People Who Have Recovered From COVID-19 Unlikely to Benefit From Vaccine

BY ZACHARY STIEBER

June 9, 2021 Updated: June 9, 2021

People who have previously been infected with the virus that causes [COVID-19](#) are protected against being infected again and thus don't need to be vaccinated, according to a new study.

"Our conclusion is that if you were previously infected, you are protected because of the previous infection and you don't need the vaccine," Dr. Nabin Shrestha, of the Cleveland Clinic's Department of Infectious Disease, told The Epoch Times.

Shrestha and colleagues at the clinic [studied data on employees](#), separating them into four groups: previously infected and unvaccinated, previously infected and vaccinated, not previously infected and unvaccinated, and not previously infected and vaccinated.

They found that the vaccines were strongly effective in preventing infection from the [CCP \(Chinese Communist Party\) virus](#), which causes COVID-19, but that previous infection also bestowed a natural immunity.

"Among the people who were previously infected, whether they took the vaccine or not, there really were no COVID cases," Shrestha said.

Of the 52,238 employees studied, 2,579 were previously infected. About half of those remained unvaccinated. Of the 49,659 employees who did not have a previous infection, 41 percent did not get a vaccine.

Using a Cox proportional hazards regression model and adjusting for the phase of the pandemic, vaccination was linked to a significantly lower risk of infection among those not previously infected but not among those who had had the disease.

In conclusion, the authors wrote, "Individuals who had had SARS-CoV-2 infection are unlikely to benefit from COVID-19 vaccination, and vaccines can be safely prioritized to those who have not been infected before."

SARS-CoV-2 is another name for the CCP virus.

A man walks up to a COVID-19 testing site in Miami Beach, Fla., on Nov. 17, 2020. (Chandan Khanna/AFP via Getty Images)

The study is not peer-reviewed. It was submitted to journals, but they rejected it "because they think it's not a priority for them," Shrestha said. But it adds to the growing body of research that supports natural immunity existing for some time among those who contracted the illness.

Research [published last month](#) indicated that people who recovered from mild COVID-19 have long-lasting antibody protection. That built on research [that reached a similar](#)

[finding](#). Previous research also indicated that people who had COVID-19 showed virus-specific T cell responses. The World Health Organization on May 10, in an updated scientific brief ([pdf](#)), said that most people who are infected with the CCP virus and recover develop “strong protective immune responses” that remain “robust and protective against reinfection for at least 6–8 months.”

Based on what the Cleveland Clinic researchers found, natural protection from infection lasts at least a year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently recommends that [virtually everybody](#) should get a COVID-19 vaccine. In [a brief](#) last updated in March, the agency acknowledges that studies indicate people who recover from the disease are protected against reinfection. The evidence “suggests that the risk of SARS-CoV-2 reinfection is low in the months after initial infection but may increase with time due to waning immunity,” the agency stated.

The CDC declined to respond to the new study.

“We do not comment on non-CDC authored papers. We continually evaluate the science that leads to our guidance, and if it needs to be changed, we will be base that on our own research and studies,” a spokesman told The Epoch Times in an email.

Shrestha, the study’s lead author, believes recommending vaccination for previously infected people is misguided.

“I personally feel that the vaccines are amazingly effective. We need to use them wisely. We should really not be thinking of this as a U.S. problem; it is a global problem,” he said. “It would make more sense to use the vaccine anywhere in the world where it would be effective in getting the pandemic under control.”

Meiling Lee contributed to this report.

Follow Zachary on Twitter: [@zackstieber](#)

Follow Zachary on Parler: [@zackstieber](#)