

Variant

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would work against the variants. However, he said, the data over the last couple of months has been “quite reassuring” surrounding the effectiveness of immunizations against the variants.

He said variants now account for a significant portion of infections and vaccinations remain the “best tool” to control the pandemic.

“Generally, the vaccine will still be effective against B.1.526 since the immune system produces many different antibodies as well as T cells that recognize the virus,” West said.

Dr. Jeremy Kamil, an associate professor of Microbiology and Immunology at Louisiana State University Health Shreveport, said it is crucial to be mindful of “over-interpreting” the emergence of a variant.

Virus variants are a significant public health concern, but viruses continually change. As a result, new variants have developed and disseminated internationally throughout the pandemic.

Researchers have been studying the genetic material of the virus to see how it might be changing. For example, they analyze genetic sequences of viruses taken from a small proportion of infected people to chart the appearance of new versions.

Kamil said most variants are meaningless, but others can make things much worse by spreading and making people sicker.

“When you add natural selection to the mix, what nature does is something that is by accident an advantage,” he said. “Then Darwin tells us that selection can operate on those advantages.”

Kamil said the advantage could be an “epidemiological event” where someone is infected by a virus with a series of mutations that make it more transmissible and spreads the mutated virus to people, who spread it to others.

“So there’s a variant that just increases abundance by chance,” he said.

GRANT COUNTY COVID-19 UPDATE

Grant County Health Department reported a total of 22 new COVID-19 infections in the past week.

The county’s total number of vaccinations 4,010, according to a Sunday press release from the health department. Kimberly Lindsay, the county’s public health administrator, said Monday was the county’s last “mass” vaccine clinic.

The county’s hospitalizations in region seven, which it shares with Deschutes, Harney, Klamath, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake and Wheeler counties, has nine ICU and 50 non-ICU beds available.

Oregon Health and Science will offer a testing event from 2-7 p.m. Friday at the county fairgrounds parking lot. The test is by appointment, and appointments can be made online at www.ohsu.edu/COVIDVans.

The OHSU website notes that people must wait seven days or longer to get another test if they do not have symptoms and test negative. Those who have tested positive in the past and did not have symptoms must wait 90 days or longer before getting another test.

Those without internet access can schedule an appointment by calling 503-494-4911 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

“They got lucky.”

Kamil said there is a virtual “zero chance” the vaccine will fail. He said the immune system is multi-layered.

He said the immune system gets a “head start” when the vaccine is in play.

“It’s much better if the police have a blurry mugshot of the criminal than if they have no picture at all,” he said. “Sure, it might take the cops a little longer to catch a criminal that’s wearing a wig, fake mustache and sunglasses. But they’re going to catch him in a couple of blocks.”



Grant County resident Rex Blackstone questions County Judge Scott Myers as to why he could not have his sign in the courtroom.

Frustration

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sick, but suggested it is on par with the common cold or flu. However, in the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control reports the flu only claims between 12,000 to a maximum of 61,000 lives each year.

Dr. Anthony West, a senior research specialist at the California Institute of Technology, said in an email Sunday that a clear indicator that COVID-19 is not like the common cold or flu is the repeated episodes of hospitalizations becoming overwhelmed by people with COVID-19 that have severe symptoms.

Andrew Pekosz, Ph.D., a leading virologist who works on both the flu and COVID-19 at Johns Hopkins University, told the Eagle that COVID-19 is much worse than the flu “in almost every parameter of comparison.” The coronavirus, he pointed

out, has killed more Americans in about a year than the flu has in over five years.

He said a lack of pre-existing immunity to the virus, compared to the flu, also makes COVID-19 a more significant burden on the population. Additionally, the long-term effects outpace the flu as well. Those effects include shortness of breath, trouble focusing and kidney and heart problems, he said.

Newman also suggested the flu was being misdiagnosed as COVID-19 and asked what happened to the flu this year.

In 2021, health officials estimate the U.S. has only seen upwards of 900 cases this year as of January.

However, Eili Klein, Ph.D., associate professor of emergency medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, said the significant decrease in flu cases this year is proof the safety measures to curb COVID-19 work. In a press

release, he said that physical distancing, masks and hand-washing have slowed the transmission of the flu.

Politics, polarization and sorting out the facts

Newman said he is an Independent when it comes to political affiliations and that the country has become more and more divided surrounding COVID-19. He said, while he will not get the COVID-19 vaccine, he is not an “anti-vaxxer” against all vaccinations.

He said politics did not drive his reasons for appearing before the court. Instead, he told the Eagle the lockdowns have contributed to the “erosion of people’s constitutional rights.”

“It’s not Democrat or Republican thing in any way, shape, form or fashion,” he said.

He told the Eagle that simple, straightforward information is what earns his trust in the sources he reads when it

comes to research, news and information in general.

Newman said 90% of people have made up their minds about what they believe when it comes to COVID-19.

“You’re not going to change anyone’s mind,” he said. “The other 10% have their head in the sand.”

Kamil said people of particular “political leanings” feel that scientists are trying to shut down society.

“It’s quite the opposite,” he said. “The scientists largely do not want to shut things down.”

Kamil said people should seek out their own sources for information, but think critically about the source and ensure it is one that is reliable.

“Be conscious about where your risk is at,” he said. “Don’t make it political, because the virus doesn’t care what political party you are, what you think about politics. It’ll kill you just the same, especially if you’re not vaccinated.”

REPORTER

The Blue Mountain Eagle, a family-owned weekly newspaper in a stunningly beautiful Oregon community, seeks an energetic, dedicated reporter.

The Eagle is located in John Day, where seeing deer in front yards is normal and traffic is unheard of, just three hours from Bend and Pendleton. Surrounded by scenic forests and dissected by mountain streams, the location offers year-round recreational opportunities, including fishing, hunting, backpacking, camping, snowmobiling and horseback riding.

Despite the picturesque environment, the community is at the center of an evolving natural resource restoration economy, which gains statewide and even national attention.

Despite the small-town charm, the residents are engaged and politically active in local and national debates, and hard-hitting stories are never hard to find. Ongoing topics include state and federal policies, forest health, logging, public lands grazing, water supply, wildlife habitat improvements and wildfire resilience, in addition to coverage of small-town life and local government. The position offers a wealth of breaking news and enterprise opportunities.

Serving the community for more than 150 years, the Eagle is the oldest weekly newspaper in Oregon and is part of EO Media Group, an award-winning and innovative news organization with an active family of owners. This position offers excellent advancement opportunities in a company that prefers to hire from within. EO Media Group owns 13 newspapers and journals that provide accurate, fair and timely reporting about the people and issues impacting the communities we serve in the Pacific Northwest, reflecting the responsibility and spirit of a free press.

We seek a journalist who is passionate about local news and excited about the opportunity to publish in print, online and through social media. Candidates must be able to develop story ideas, take photographs, develop sources, prepare website and social media updates and work in a cooperative team environment. Journalistic integrity is a must.

Journalism education or experience is required for this full-time (37.5 hours per week) position. Benefits include health insurances, paid time off, and a 401(k)/401(k)Roth retirement plan. To apply, go to <https://eomediagroup.applicantpro.com/jobs/>, and upload resume, letter of interest and three or more clips.



Blue Mountain
EAGLE
Grant County's newspaper since 1868

195 N. Canyon Blvd.
John Day, Oregon

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Lake Creek Camp

Would Like to Thank the Many Donors and Volunteers Who Made this Fundraiser Possible Special Thanks To

Shawna Clark and Canyon Creek Clinic for Announcing
Carson McKay for volunteering to be our auctioneer
Grant Union FFA for setting up, serving, and cleanup
Lenny and Sherri Dowdy for cooking the meat

Live Auction Items

Rude Logging	John Day Polaris	The Retreat, Links, and spa and Silvies Valley Ranch for multiple donations and continued support
Sharon Mitchell	Anthony Lakes	Sporting Collectibles by Wasser's Live Auction Inc, Dallas OR for multiple doations including a rifle
JD True Value	Prairie City FFA	
Crown Cattle Co	Land Title of Grant County	
Russel's Custom meats		
JD Rents		

Guns and Ammo

Old West FCU donated his and hers pistols	Iron Triangle donated the rifle for the card game	Ace donated ammo, and always discounts merchandise
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Cash Donations

Lindsey Madden	Wasser Agency	Jerome Natural Resource Consultants
Mark and Carrie Smith	Wildhorse	Flora Cheadle
Greg and Melody Jackson	Mobile Glass	Nick Redding
Bank of Eastern Oregon	Ed Staub and sons	Shanna Redding
Blue Mountain Hospital	The Rimers Family for helping with the event	Dan and Kathy Bishop
1st Choice Auto Body	Jan O'Rorke	L & L Excavating
Gardner Enterprises	Billy & Lori Hickerson	Deforest and Wanda Ballard
Elliot Sky	Stanbro Ranch	Rimers Family

Baskets and Gift Certificates

State Farm Insurance	Velvet Touch	Clinton and Tessa Coalwell
Pioneer Feed	Better Blooms	Snaffel Bit
HECS	Cloud 9	RMEF-Bend
Grant County Fairgrounds	Bar WB	RMEF-Grant County
OMSI	Mobile Station	Huffmans
1188 Brewing	Sinclair	Holliday Land and Livestock
Benchmark Land Surveying	John Day Golf Club	Shawn and Tia Skidgel
Hair it is	Naked Winery	Les Schwab
Callie Moss	H & R Block	Larry Neugart
Robbie and Tammy Rude	Tobe and Janet Zweygardt	Dave and Krista Gehley
Kicks Sports	Shannon Voigt Construction	John and Lindy Bastian
Prairie City Ranger District	Stan and Karen Kunzman	Andy's Plumbing
Glenn and Rosanne Palmer	Bob and Deloris Bagette	Claire Kehrberg
Body Fitness & Dance	Mark and Lucie Immoos	Cyndie Diggins

Desserts

Outpost	Carol Waggoner	Sharon Mitchell
Jolene Floyd	Dayville Café	Krista Gehley
Callie Moss	Carol Voigt	Shannon Springer

Board

Aimee Rude, Krista Gehley, Mike and Shannon Springer
Glenn and Rosanne Palmer, and Carol Waggoner

Staff

Chef Jeff, Marcia Kaufman,	Michael Sheppard	and Spitfire Cocktails
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