

21 January 2022

**Letter from the UK Medical Freedom Alliance to:**

- João Monteiro - Chief Editor of “Nature Medicine”

**Re: Publication in Nature Medicine “SARS-CoV-2 Infection and COVID-19 vaccination rates in pregnant women in Scotland”**

The UK Medical Freedom Alliance is an alliance of medical professionals, scientists and lawyers who are campaigning for Informed Consent, Medical Freedom and Bodily Autonomy to be protected and preserved.

We are writing to you as the Chief Editor of “Nature Medicine” regarding the recent publication entitled “SARS-CoV-2 Infection and COVID-19 vaccination rates in pregnant women in Scotland”<sup>i</sup>, as we do not agree that the data presented allows the stated conclusions and are most concerned about the message of reassurance regarding COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness and safety in pregnancy.

We attach a letter, dated 17 January 2022, which we sent to the first and corresponding author of the paper Dr Sarah Stock. With the letter, **we requested that this paper be immediately retracted on the basis of several significant flaws in its methodology which we listed in detail**. Due to significant insufficiencies in data interpretation, we argue that the published conclusions, which are now amplified in various other reports<sup>ii iii</sup> and in the media, are not valid.

Regrettably, Dr Stock’s reply did not address any of the concerns we raised, as she merely responded claiming that their “*research was carried out to the highest standards of integrity*” including “*development of the protocol by a team including patient and public representatives, experts from Public Health Scotland, and multi-disciplinary academics from the Universities of Edinburgh, St Andrews, Glasgow, Strathclyde and Victoria University Wellington.*” She further maintained that: “*The protocol was peer reviewed and published, and all the research underwent ethical and governance review. Our findings were subject to extensive peer review, and we presented the findings with clear description of the study methods and discussion of the limitations. As such we see no reason to retract our paper.*”

**The purpose of this letter is therefore to request an urgent editorial review considering all the issues we have raised. We maintain that this paper should be retracted immediately**, especially as its invalid conclusions are being used to further the promotion of an experimental pharmaceutical product to a large and vulnerable group in society (pregnant women).

It is most unfortunate that none of the authors or peer reviewers appear to have noted the issues with data interpretation. However, we do not consider the mere calling on the number or academic standing of contributors a satisfactory response to the factual insufficiencies of this study.

We have gone to great length to elaborate and fully reference the details of our criticism, which largely relates to the definitions of cases, the definition of “unvaccinated”, the interpretation of data in relation to the timeframes and to obvious confounding factors and the unsubstantiated assumptions of causality. We argue that the correctness of data and methodology cannot be substantiated by the number or expertise of people who have looked at it, as per Dr Stock’s response, but they should be assessed on their own merit and hold up to scrutiny by anyone. We further argue that **all the issues we have raised are valid points of criticism, which cannot be dismissed and will need to be considered and addressed**. The fact that the methods were clearly described does not imply that they were scientifically robust, and the fact that limitations were discussed does not imply they were not significant enough to compromise and completely preclude the stated conclusions.

We are concerned about the integrity of the study as the purpose is clearly to emphasize a foregone conclusion, influenced by industrial bias, which is demonstrably not supported by the data presented. **Allowing these promotional conclusions to remain in the public domain is not only unscientific but profoundly unethical.**

In the interest of the principles of good clinical practice and scientific transparency, and in this case in the interest of the safety of pregnant women worldwide, we therefore renew our request and **now appeal to you as the editor to re-examine the methodology considering our concerns**. As we note in the letter attached, we hope that upon scrutiny of the data and methodology you arrive at the only possible conclusion - that this paper must be immediately retracted.

We will at this stage not publicise this letter further, to give you time to respond and decide how you wish to proceed. However, we reserve the right to publish this letter more widely in due course, should we find that this study remains in the public domain and continues to be used to promote COVID-19 vaccination in pregnant women.

We request you respond by 28 January 2022 to either confirm that (i) you are retracting the paper or (ii) you otherwise acknowledge receipt of this letter and respond to the points made therein as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely

UK Medical Freedom Alliance

[www.ukmedfreedom.org](http://www.ukmedfreedom.org)

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-021-01666-2>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.medscape.co.uk/viewarticle/covid-related-perinatal-and-maternal-outcomes-worse-2022a10004rs?uac=395479SX&implID=3956765&sso=true&faf=1&src=mkm\\_ret\\_220119\\_mscpmrk\\_dailyuk\\_int](https://www.medscape.co.uk/viewarticle/covid-related-perinatal-and-maternal-outcomes-worse-2022a10004rs?uac=395479SX&implID=3956765&sso=true&faf=1&src=mkm_ret_220119_mscpmrk_dailyuk_int)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.bmj.com/content/376/bmj.o117>