

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

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From the Editor: As 2022 winds down, the Covid-19 pandemic still remains a primary focus due to China's failed "zero-Covid" policy. Three years ago this month, cases of pneumonia of an unknown cause were detected in Wuhan and SARS-CoV-2 began its global spread. Now, several doctors from its [Tongji](#) hospital have tested positive for Covid-19, but are being required to remain at work. US life expectancy has dropped to 1996 levels even though 3 million deaths were averted by the mRNA vaccines. New guidelines for diabetes care address racial equity and pandemic preparedness gains a permanent home in the White House. To read each full article, just click on its headline.



[Shanghai hospital warns of 'tragic battle' as Covid spreads](#), by Zoey Zhang and Bernard Orr, Reuters, 12/22/22

TMR Topline – Shanghai's Deji

Hospital expects half of the city's 25 million people will get infected by the end of next week as Covid-19 sweeps through China virtually unchecked: *"This year's Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, and the Lunar New Year are destined to be unsafe."* Footage from a Beijing hospital on CCTV state television showed rows of elderly patients in the intensive care unit breathing through oxygen masks. Experts say China could face more than a [million Covid deaths](#) next year, given relatively low full vaccination rates among its vulnerable elderly population. China's policy U-turn caught a fragile health system unprepared, with hospitals scrambling for beds and blood, pharmacies for drugs and authorities racing to build clinics. Authorities have narrowed the criteria for Covid deaths, [prompting criticism](#) from many disease experts. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom

Ghebreyesus [expressed concern](#) about the spike in infections, urging the government to focus on vaccinating those at the highest risk.

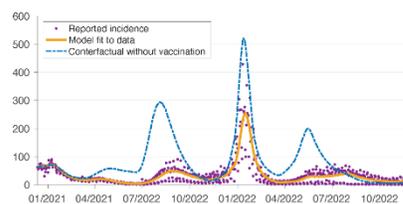


[China Needs Better Covid-19 Vaccines](#), by Niranjana Rajalakshmi, Slate, 12/7/22

TMR Topline – Nearly 19% of China's 1.4 billion population is

over 60 years old, and about [86%](#) have gotten at least two doses of the primary series. However, the eight vaccines that have been approved are less effective than the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines that were over 90% effective against the original Wuhan strain of the virus. The two most commonly used are CoronaVac and Sinopharm, both [inactivated vaccines](#), meaning they use viral particles that have been killed. CoronaVac was 51% effective and Sinopharm 79% effective. [A Singapore study](#) suggests that the Pfizer mRNA vaccine elicits a better T-cell response than the Sinopharm vaccine does. The study concludes that those who receive Moderna's mRNA vaccine are less likely to become infected than are those who get the inactivated CoronaVac and Sinopharm shots. Moreover, Hong Kong university researchers [found](#) that two doses of CoronaVac were not effective against omicron, while two doses of Pfizer's mRNA vaccine helped the body mount a defense against the variant.

TMR's Take: It's ironic watching the perpetrator of the worst pandemic in more than a century become its victim with nearly [250 million](#) Chinese recently infected.



[Covid vaccines averted 3 million deaths in U.S., according to new study](#), by Brittany

Trang, STAT, 12/13/22

TMR Topline – A Commonwealth Fund [study](#) shows that the Covid vaccines have averted over 3 million deaths in the US. The team of researchers from the University of Maryland, York University, and the Yale School of Public

Health used a computational model that allowed them to incorporate factors like waning immunity or different age groups' eligibility for vaccines and boosters into their calculations. "I was struck by just how many lives were saved," said Yale's Alison Galvani, lead author of the study. "If you look at the time frame since the last two years, when the vaccination period was initiated, the vaccine has saved many more lives than have been lost from Covid." The study affirms that the vaccines are most effective against severe illness and death. Without vaccines, the US would have had four times as many deaths and 3.8 times more hospitalizations since December of 2020. The vaccines also saved the US \$1 trillion in additional medical costs.



[Americans' life expectancy continues to fall, erasing health gains of the last quarter century](#), by Karen Weintraub, USA Today, 12/22/22

TMR Topline – The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics [reported](#) that US life expectancy fell to 76.4 years in 2021, the same level as in 1996. While [other wealthy countries saw a rebound](#) after the pandemic's first year, eight of the top ten US causes of death had statistically significant increases in 2021. Heart disease, cancer and Covid-19 led the list. Drug overdoses and deaths from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis also increased in 2021. Experts are concerned by the drop in life expectancy for middle-aged people, noting that improving US health will require what other wealthy nations provide, including affordable housing, access to healthy food and reduced income inequality.



[Diabetes care gets major update: More aggressive approach to weight loss, cholesterol, disparities recommended](#), by Karen

Weintraub, USA Today, 12/13/22

TMR Topline – The American Diabetes Association's annual update has nearly 100 new or revised guidelines affecting all types of diabetes. Dr. Nuha El Sayed, chair of the ADA's Professional Practice Committee, said "The emphasis of our guidelines is really to reduce the burden of the disease on people with diabetes." The revisions include revised guidelines for weight control, blood pressure and cholesterol management, as well as addressing racial disparities in care. The new targets include blood pressure less than 130/80; LDL cholesterol

of 70 or less for people without heart disease and 55 or less for those with heart disease. The guidelines also call for more aggressive treatment to prevent the progression of chronic kidney disease. Doctors should be counseling their patients with diabetes about proper sleep habits and identifying people who have sleep issues.

The rate of amputations is getting worse and Black Americans are 3-4 times more likely to have a limb amputated than a similar white patient. The new guidelines call for more careful screening for foot ulcers and peripheral arterial disease. Diabetics should be screened for problems that are likely to get in the way of good diabetes management, such as food insecurity and living in a food desert with few options. All patients should be offered the latest technologies such as automated insulin delivery devices and glucose pumps. People of color often have less access to advanced technologies, so the ADA has created a technology access program to boost racial equity. Leon Rock, co-founder of the African American Diabetes Association said the ADA has been guilty of "woeful neglect" of Black people with diabetes and the updated guidelines are too little too late to adequately address diabetes among Black Americans.



[Pandemic response gets a permanent new home at the White House](#), by Rachel Coors, STAT, 12/22/22

TMR Topline – For decades, Presidents have [brought fresh faces](#) to the White House to coordinate federal responses to threats such as Covid-19, mpox, Ebola, AIDS, and the bird flu. The government funding package includes a permanent home at the White House for an Office of Pandemic Preparedness and Response Policy that would have a director appointed by the president and up to 25 staff members. The director would be a member of the Domestic Policy Council and the National Security Council and be responsible for advising the president on preparing for pandemics and other biological threats, coordinating response activities across the federal government and evaluating government readiness. The provision that would create the new office was part of a [larger pandemic preparedness package](#) assembled by Senate health committee leaders Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Richard Burr (R-N.C.).

TMR's Take: TMR hopes that the Covid-19 pandemic becomes [endemic](#) early in 2023 and that the US will continue to implement "[Lessons from the Pandemic.](#)"