

From: Allison Berry <ABerry@co.jefferson.wa.us>
To: Stephen Schumacher <sol@solmaker.com>
CC: Apple Martine <AMartine@co.jefferson.wa.us>, "editor@PortTownsendFreePress.com" <editor@PortTownsendFreePress.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about county COVID-19 deaths since May 2022
Date: Wed, 20 Nov 2024 22:10:27 +0000

Hi Mr. Schumacher,

Thank you for your question. Here is the breakdown of deaths in Jefferson County by vaccination status in recent years. Thankfully, in Jefferson County, our vaccination rates are quite high which has resulted in very low death rates in our county compared to other counties with similar age breakdowns. Our high vaccination rates affect these numbers in other ways that I can dig into for you further down in the email.

Since the time when vaccinations were widely available, 48 people have died of COVID-19 in Jefferson County.

From May of 2021-the end of that year, we lost 17 people to COVID-19. Of those, 12% were up-to-date on their vaccination, 59% were not up-to-date, and 29% were unvaccinated.

In 2022, we lost 14 people to COVID-19. Of those, 14% were up-to-date on their vaccination, 50% were not up-to-date, and 36% were unvaccinated.

In 2023, we lost 9 people to COVID-19. Of those, none were up-to-date, 56% were not up-to-date and 44% were unvaccinated.

In 2024, so far we have lost 8 people to COVID-19. Of those, 25% were up-to-date, 50% were not up-to-date, and 25% were unvaccinated.

There is also a pretty consistent difference in those who die of COVID-19 by vaccination status. Those who die and are up-to-date and pretty universally very elderly and very ill, while those who die and are under or unvaccinated, tend to be younger and healthier before their untimely deaths.

We have spoken about these numbers and the mathematical concepts that underly them before in Board of Health meetings as well as on KPTZ, but your email suggests that it might be worth taking a little time to review. The conclusions you are attempting to draw in this email suffer from a concept called the base rate fallacy, where one focuses exclusively on the numerator (in this case the number of people who died of COVID-19 who were vaccinated/unvaccinated) without taking into account the denominator (the percent of the population who were vaccinated to begin with), thereby leading to inaccurate conclusions, either by error or intention. In Jefferson County, 80% of the population has completed the primary COVID-19 vaccine series. Among those 65 and over, those most likely to die of COVID-19, that number rises to 96%. There are simply not a lot of people left who are unvaccinated and high risk who could potentially die of COVID-19. If the vaccine were ineffective, you would expect 96% of those who die to be vaccinated, and that's simply not the case.

When you then factor in that the original COVID-19 vaccine series was released 4 years ago, it's not surprising given viral mutation, that one would need to get additional boosters to stay adequately protected. Then there has also been increasing population level immunity in the last 4 years, through a combination of vaccination and prior infection, which has overall reduced the severity of infection for most people with functioning immune systems, excluding of course the

immunosuppressed and very young children.

These three concepts are how you get to the data above. There's no major surprises here and no one's keeping anything from you. I do hope you'll share this full context in your upcoming article if you do decide to move forward with it. Happy to continue to talk through data and logical fallacies as needed as we move forward. I won't always be able to respond same-day as I am a part-time employee at the Jefferson County Public Health Department and we have a lot of work to do, but I will do my best.

All the best,

Allison Berry, MD MPH (she/they)

Health Officer for Clallam and Jefferson Counties

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-----Original Message-----

From: Stephen Schumacher <sol@solmaker.com>

Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2024 9:10 AM

To: Allison Berry <ABerry@co.jefferson.wa.us>

Cc: Apple Martine <AMartine@co.jefferson.wa.us>; editor@PortTownsendFreePress.com

Subject: Questions about county COVID-19 deaths since May 2022

To: Public Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry

It appears from Public Health's data breach that all 8 county COVID-19 deaths from May 2022 until data was last updated April 19, 2023 were vaccinated.

1. Can you confirm this information?
2. When did Public Health realize that only the vaccinated were dying of COVID-19 in this county since May 2022 until April 2023, and was this fact ever reported to the Board of Health, County Commissioners, and the public?
3. How many unvaccinated and how many vaccinated have died of COVID-19 in this county since April 19, 2023?

The Port Townsend Free Press is publishing an article touching on these questions soon after end-of-business today.

If you wish to send Port Townsend Free Press answers to these questions, they will be included in the article if received before 5pm press time, November 20, 2024.

Yours truly,

Stephen Schumacher

Co-Editor, Port Townsend Free Press

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