

## Failure of citizens to return for second dose of COVID-19 Vaccine: Gateway to another wave

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*Respected Editor,* The corona virus hit the world in 2019 creating a pandemic through the SARS nCov2 variant. Afflicting more than a hundred million and proving to be fatal for over three million people globally, Pakistan was also affected by the disease, the stats from National Command and Coordination cell as of 15 June, 2020 were that 944,065 people are tested positive and about 22,000 have died from pneumonia induced by this notorious virus. A silver lining came in the late 2020 by the revolutionary breakthrough in the development of COVID-19 vaccines. Pakistan also started the vaccination drive in February 2021 on a priority bases from Registered Health Care Workers to Senior Citizens to General Public in a descending order of age. Recently the vaccination drive came to jabbing people of age 19+ with the vaccine.

Since most of the COVID-19 vaccines dispensed comprise of two doses and there is at least a gap of 21 days between them, there is seen a paucity of people returning to the vaccination centers for their second shot and to our astonishment this list also includes the health care workers.<sup>1</sup> The policy makers cited the following causes for this issue:<sup>1,2</sup>

1. Some of them might have died before the second dose.
2. Many of them could have been in the spell of myths and rumours related to the vaccine like magnet sticking, etc.
3. The people might have contracted the virus which led to hesitancy while getting the second jab done.

Madam Editor we want to bring to your attention that the lack of people returning for the second dose including health care workers might prove fatal for our health sector. We have suffered four waves of the pandemic and now the only source to prevent another one is the vaccine. If the

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second dose is not administered (which is usually a booster one), then antibodies against the virus will wane after about 6 months<sup>2</sup> and the people will again become susceptible to fatal outcomes of the disease.<sup>2,3</sup> Moreover, the conferred immunity with the first dose, which is not robust without the booster, can also give the virus a chance to evolve to a more redundant and malignant variant, which can prove to be more calamitous and fatal.<sup>4</sup> The policy makers should make prompt plans for this potential calamity as they are planning to communicate with those who have their vaccine due, other measures can also be taken like tracing them to their homes, counselling them, and if needed implement some restrictions on them so that this chunk of our population gets vaccinated for COVID-19 as soon as possible.<sup>1,2,5</sup> As this is only the way to get a clout to the normal living routine which we all had two years prior.

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