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Psychosis, Panic Attacks, Hallucinations: Bizarre Psychiatric Cases Among the COVID Vaccinated

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17–22 minutes

Dr. Patrick William Slater is a 60-year-old neurologist. A few years ago, he had a full-time medical practice in Austin and enjoyed hunting and fishing in the mountains during his downtime.

Then, in October 2021, Dr. Slater came down with cerebellar ataxia, a disease affecting movement. He couldn't eat or go to the bathroom without help.

While his ataxia could be managed using drugs, it wasn't always effective against his biggest complaint: unprecedented panic attacks.

Almost every night, Dr. Slater would experience panic attacks that left him in "abject terror." He thought about killing himself many times, he told The Epoch Times.

No one could provide a satisfactory answer about why he had developed these symptoms. Nothing abnormal showed up on his laboratory reports, and his neurologists and psychiatrists dismissed his symptoms as anxiety.

But Dr. Slater is convinced that the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are the culprit.

Dr. Slater was suspicious when the symptoms first appeared within about two weeks of getting the second dose of the COVID shot. The second—and worse—wave of career-ending symptoms had coincided with his third shot.

After taking the booster, “there was no question in my mind,” Dr. Slater said.



Before 2022, Dr. Patrick William Slater had a full-time medical practice in Austin and enjoyed hunting. (Courtesy of Dr. Patrick William Slater)

Increase in Unusual Psychiatric Illness

Beginning in late 2020 with the COVID vaccine rollout, some doctors have seen an increase in unusual psychiatric illnesses.

Psychiatrist Dr. Amanda McDonald noticed a wave of psychiatric destabilization among her stable patients. They experienced flare-ups, often manifesting with worsened or new psychiatric symptoms.

"I couldn't figure out why," Dr. McDonald told The Epoch Times. "My patients typically stay stable." But many stable patients were suddenly arriving at her office with insomnia, depression, and anxiety "without any sort of rhyme or reason."

She increased some patients' medication doses or added new drugs to their regimen, but it had little effect.



I couldn't figure out why.

Dr. Amanda McDonald, psychiatrist

(Courtesy of Dr. Amanda McDonald)

A recurring pattern Dr. McDonald sees is atypical panic attacks, which can feel like having a heart attack. Brought on with no apparent trigger, symptoms typically escalate as the evening progresses and climax at night. A typical panic attack can occur anytime throughout the day but often has triggers, and it is easy to treat if patients can avoid these triggers.

After spending over a year following her patients, Dr. McDonald realized that COVID-19 vaccines may be linked to their psychiatric illnesses.

"I already had an existing patient population when the pandemic hit that I knew very well. What I saw was manifestations in that patient population," Dr. McDonald added.

Dr. Diane Counce, neurologist and neuroradiologist, observed an increase in severe anxiety and worsened mood.

"People also talk about how their personality has changed," she told The Epoch Times. In cases where a family member has brought in a patient, "[The family] will say, 'they're just different.'"

Nurse practitioner Scott Marsland, who has treated hundreds of long-COVID and vaccine-injured patients at the Leading Edge Clinic, added that debilitating anxiety, depression, and insomnia are among the most common symptoms he has seen. However, some patients have also developed hallucinations and suicidality.

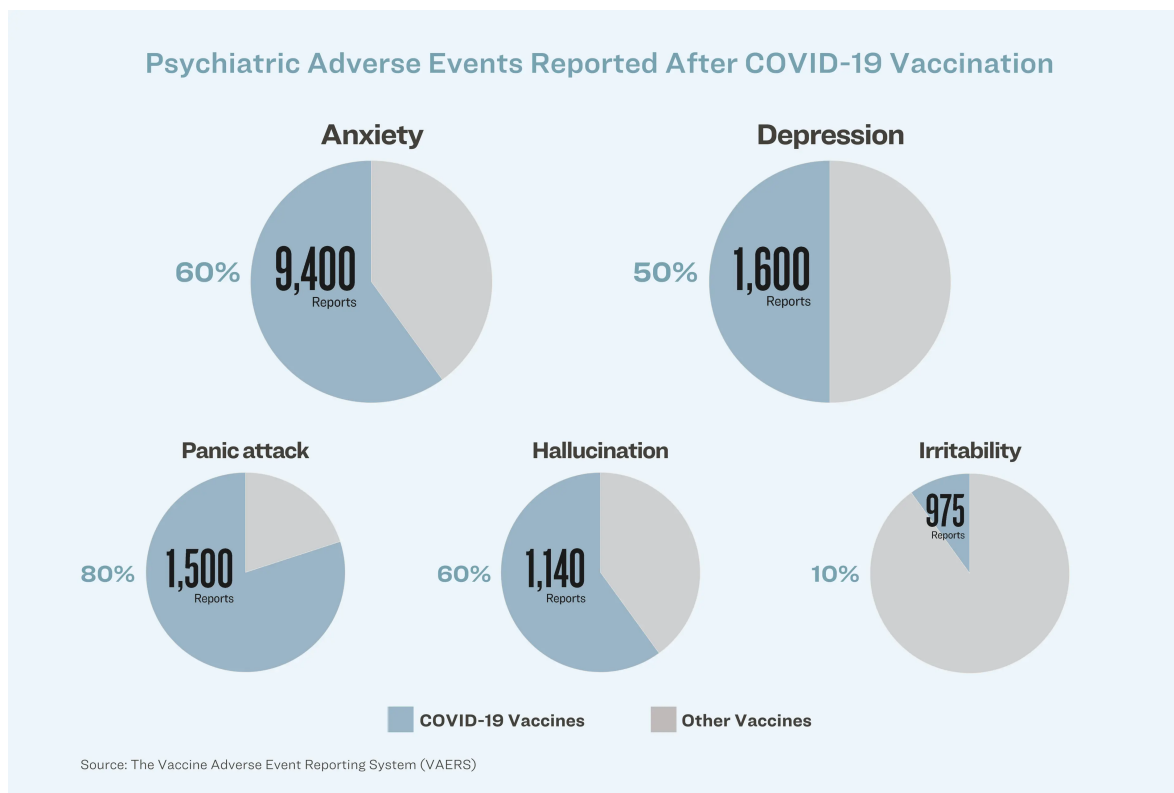
The Evidence

Unlike myocarditis, no conclusive proof exists that COVID-19 vaccinations cause psychiatric illness. A multitude of studies, however, have linked COVID-19 vaccines with psychiatric symptoms, including depression, anxiety, panic attacks, psychosis, and suicidality.

The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) is a self-reporting database co-managed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), used to surveil for early warning signs of potential adverse reactions. VAERS has documented over 9,400 and 1,600 cases of anxiety and depression, respectively, in relation to the COVID-19 vaccines. The vaccines comprise, respectively, over 60 percent and up to 50 percent of all anxiety

and depression reports on VAERS.

Other less common adverse reactions include 1,500 reports of panic attacks (over 80 percent of VAERS reports), over 1,100 cases of hallucinations (over 65 percent), and 975 cases of irritability (10 percent).



Psychiatric adverse reactions reported to VAERS after COVID-19 vaccination. (The Epoch Times)

Some researchers argue that the rare and fatal cases reported on VAERS may be a sign the system is being abused. In contrast, others believe they suggest a potential link to the vaccine and are worth investigating.

Psychosis

Psychosis includes both hallucinations and paranoia. Acute episodes after taking the shots have been reported in case studies.

In Brazil, a previously healthy woman in her late 30s developed refractory psychosis [within 24 hours](#) of getting the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. She was aggressive, had disorganized thoughts, and believed she was being persecuted in the hospital.

Doctors treated her with antipsychotics and mood stabilizers, but four months of hospitalization later, only her behavior had improved. Her psychosis remained.

In Taiwan, a 15-year-old boy [was sent to the hospital](#) with agitation and uncontrollable limb stretching and screaming two days after his second Pfizer shot.

He exhibited bizarre behaviors in the hospital, including sitting up and lying down frequently with mannerisms like praying in the bed. He was prescribed antipsychotics, but the behavior persisted for over a month after discharge.

Doctors then put him on a steroid regimen. Steroids are anti-inflammatory and can help calm an overactive immune system. The boy's symptoms improved.

In India, a 17-year-old girl who received an inactive COVID-19 vaccine [developed psychosis](#) within 48 hours. She became restless and suspicious, talked to herself, and had insomnia for a month.

She had no neurological abnormalities, and all her lab tests came back normal, including a COVID-19 test. Two weeks after being given psychoactive drugs, her symptoms resolved.

Symptoms onset shortly after vaccination, exclusion of other likely causes, and absence of genetic predisposition "indicate the psychiatric adverse event may be related to the vaccine,"



of dental staff in a study reported having suicidal thoughts for a few days after vaccination.

A study on 250 dental staff in Pakistan found that nearly [12 percent](#) reported suicidal thoughts for a few days after vaccination. Around 1 percent had thoughts of suicide every day.

Individual case studies identified a Turkish man in his late 50s with no prior mental illness who arrived at the emergency department due to an [attempted suicide](#) within three days after taking a second shot. He was irritable, insomniac, and talking to himself.



Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are being prepared for local residents in a tray at a mass vaccination center in Tokyo. (Eugene Hoshiko/POOL/AFP via Getty Images)

A Japanese man's case was vividly detailed by doctors from

Wakayama Medical University ([pdf](#)).

He experienced fatigue after the first booster shot and, upon his fourth shot, developed a mild headache and a floating sensation.

Four days after vaccination, however, he became highly talkative with grandiose delusions, "saying that he had won 2 billion yen in horse racing. He also presented with emotional instability, such as crying when saying 'Everyone would be happy.'"

The neurologist he saw found no neurological disorders, such as possible encephalitis, nor signs of infection. Over a week after vaccination, he jumped from the second floor of his house and was returned to the hospital by ambulance.



He presented with talkativeness, and grandiose delusions, saying that he had won 2 billion yen in horse racing.

Akira Kita et al., Wakayama Medical University

Suicide cases have been rising in the United States since the pandemic. In 2020, the CDC reported up to 46,000 suicides ([pdf](#)). This number [increased to over](#) 48,000 in 2021, and in 2022, nearly 50,000 people died by suicide. While pandemic restrictions [like lockdowns](#) and long COVID have been linked with suicides, no studies currently link increasing suicide rates with the COVID-19 vaccine.

Overlap With Cognitive Impairments

Psychiatric symptoms can also overlap with cognitive impairments

like reduced memory. Dementia, for example, can manifest symptoms like depression.

Dr. McDonald treated a vaccinated patient who developed dementia-like depression. The patient, despite being in her 90s, was highly independent and lived by herself. After getting the booster, she was diagnosed with dementia and placed in a nursing home.

Taking ivermectin reversed her symptoms.

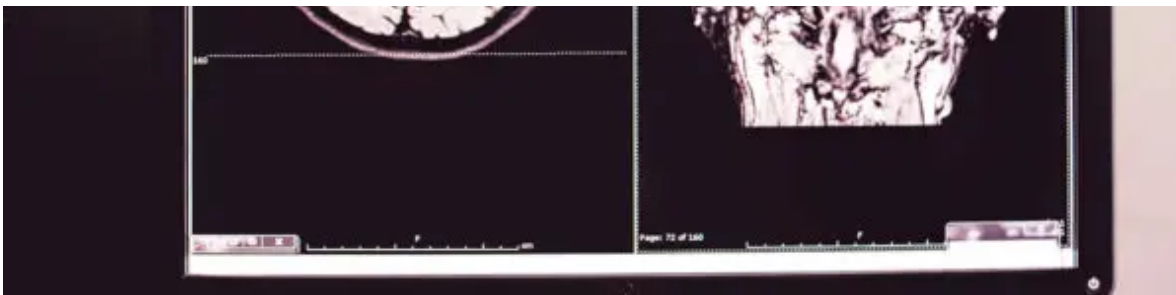
Neurologists like Dr. Suzanne Gazda, however, are concerned about untreated cases. "There are so many people that don't even realize that they're injured."

Dr. Gazda has an integrative practice that treats thousands of patients with neurodegenerative diseases, and many report symptoms of cognitive decline with psychiatric symptoms.

Dr. Counce also has several vaccinated patients who developed brain atrophy. One patient had hippocampal atrophy with symptoms of memory loss and personality changes.

Dr. Counce reasoned that if the hippocampus, which serves as the brain's memory center, atrophies, the adjacent limbic system, which processes emotions, may be similarly affected.





A brain scan of an atrophied brain. (Atthapon Raksthaput/Shutterstock)

Possible Causes

But how exactly can vaccines lead to a person's change of mental status and personality?

According to doctors who treat both postvaccine and post-COVID conditions, the two syndromes are quite similar in their symptoms.

Both the COVID-19 virus and the vaccines expose patients to the viral spike protein, which could cause inflammation. Depression is the [disease best known](#) for correlating with inflammation, though bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and anxiety are also linked.

mRNA technology has long been studied, and [pre-2020 research](#) clearly shows that mRNA vaccines are highly inflammatory, holistic psychiatrist Dr. Aruna Tummala told The Epoch Times.

Dr. McDonald has found that anti-inflammatory drugs and therapeutics, such as ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, and hyperbaric oxygen therapy, often help patients stabilize their moods.

She prescribed ivermectin for her psychiatric patients who were destabilized after taking the vaccines and saw significant improvement.

As a doctor who treated hundreds of vaccine-injured and long-COVID patients, one day, she herself developed long COVID after infection. She woke up with unexplainable negative thoughts. "I put myself in a hyperbaric machine," she recalled, and 10 minutes after, "my mood symptoms had disappeared."



A woman in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber.
(Nakleyka/Shutterstock)

Blood clotting, a common harm caused by spike protein, reduces the oxygenation of tissues and renders them unable to function at optimum levels, forcing them to age.

Blood clotting in the brain can cause cognitive impairments and symptoms of anxiety, depression, and psychosis as neurons become stressed and damaged.

Dr. Counce had one patient who reported anxiety, erectile dysfunction, and visual impairment. Upon taking medication for his erectile dysfunction (vasodilator drugs that increase blood

volume), his visual problems improved. Realizing that the patient had microclotting, Dr. Counce put him on aspirin and nattokinase and saw positive effects.

Spike protein can also directly harm the brain, possibly leading to a disturbance in brain activity and psychiatric problems.

It can also infiltrate immune cells, causing them to release histamine. Histamine can enter the brain and inflame and irritate the nerves.

[Neuroinflammation](#) has been linked to suicidality, and a type of anti-histamine medication has also been linked to [reduced suicide](#).

Mr. Marsland has a postvaccine patient who only had physical symptoms. One day, the patient suddenly became suicidal.

After a painstaking conversation, Mr. Marsland figured out that the only change the patient made was switching from black tea to pu-erh tea.

"Pu-erh has incredibly high histamine content," Mr. Marsland explained. "So he stopped drinking it, and guess what, within two days, he was back to baseline."

Infections with certain viruses have also been linked with mental impairment. The COVID-19 virus and its spike protein [have been shown](#) to reactivate ancient viral genes in our bodies.

These genes are called human endogenous retroviruses, also known as HERVs, said Dr. Adonis Sfera, a psychiatrist at Patton State Hospital. HERVs are a family of viruses within the human genome.

Spike protein can also reactivate the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). EBV infections [are similarly linked](#) with psychosis.

COVID-19 vaccines have also been shown to damage the gut microbiome, possibly leading to psychiatric symptoms since many of our neurotransmitters are produced in the gut.

Histamine release (L), blood clotting (C), and HERV reactivation are three possible causes of psychiatric disorders after COVID-19 vaccination. (Shutterstock)

The Bigger Problem

While patients with vaccine-related psychiatric illnesses can often be treated, what's concerning is that some vaccine-injured patients are diagnosed as mentally ill even though they aren't.

Many patients develop physiological symptoms after vaccination. When they went to doctors for help, some were not taken seriously and dismissed as being anxious or stressed, said Mr. Marsland.

Nicole Sclafani, a former charge nurse at an emergency department, developed visual problems and chronic muscle pains three months after taking her primary vaccine doses. Her symptoms were exacerbated after she contracted COVID-19, and she said that neurologists, rheumatologists, and even her gastroenterologist prescribed her antidepressants.

"I've even had a neurologist say, 'I would be doing you a disservice if I didn't tell you that all of your symptoms are from stress,'" Ms. Sclafani told The Epoch Times.

When she first saw doctors, she told them she considered vaccine reaction to be a possible cause. She has since given up telling them this.

"Almost every doctor, if I said it was the vaccine, you could see

their face ... I was a nurse, I know that look," Ms. Sclafani said.



(Left) Nicole Sclafani sits on the lawn with her daughter in a photo taken in the summer of 2020. (Right) Nicole Sclafani holds up a medication prescribed to treat her postvaccine symptoms.

(Courtesy of Nicole Sclafani)

Vaccine injuries manifest as a [constellation of uncommon symptoms](#), and some doctors are reluctant to recognize these as related to the vaccine. So rather than looking at the underlying pathology, doctors often write off their patients' symptoms as psychosomatic. Some are given a functional neurological disorder diagnosis and prescribed psychiatric medications instead.

Functional neurological disorder is poorly defined, according to psychiatrist Dr. Cristian Ciora, who is trained in psychoanalysis. It refers to a condition in which the mind finds a solution to psychological difficulties by creating physical symptoms.

"It shouldn't be a wastebasket diagnosis. You have to have some kind of proof that the mind produces those things, and that's not easy," he said.

Moreover, the vaccine-injured are more likely to experience side effects and paradoxical reactions from psychoactive medications, Dr. Ciora has noticed from talking to patients.

Studies show the lipid nanoparticles carried in the mRNA vaccines [interact with](#) psychotropic drugs. Some drugs may persist longer in the patient, and a normal dose may become toxic.

Some psychiatric medications like lithium and fluvoxamine have anti-inflammatory properties and may be neuroprotective.

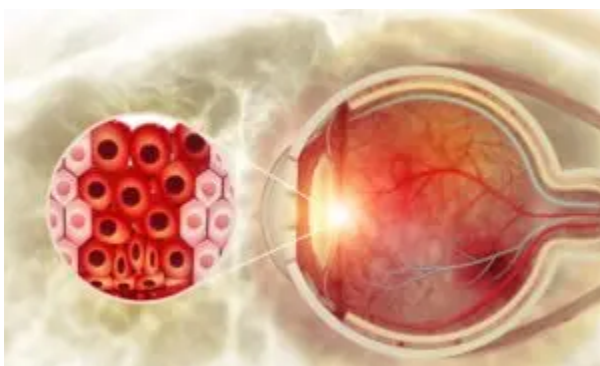
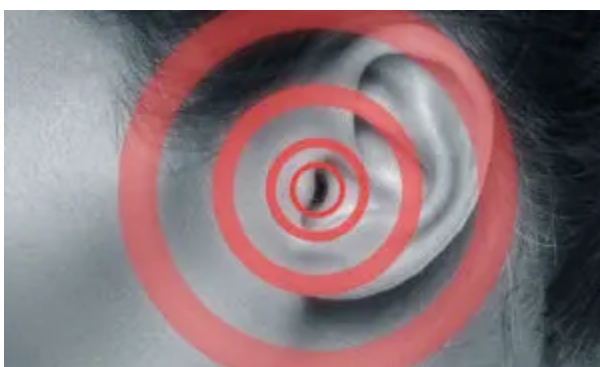
However, many are potentially harmful. This includes the most widely prescribed antidepressant, escitalopram, with [one study](#) showing that it can change the architecture of a previously functional brain.

Paranoia in a Paranoia-Inducing World

Some vaccine-injured patients become anxious before seeing doctors, and some find it difficult to trust them.

After more and more doctors prescribed her antidepressants, Ms. Sclafani became paranoid about their medical decisions.

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Despite her low sodium levels, doctors prescribed her selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)—which could be dangerous as they lower sodium levels. She told the doctors about her medical condition, but they did not seem to listen.

"I am afraid that the doctor didn't care enough, listen enough, pay attention enough," Ms. Sclafani said. "The example about the sodium, if you were paying attention, you never would have prescribed [those drugs]. So that's where I leave the office. I go fill the prescription, and then I never take the medication. From a psychiatric point of view, that might constitute paranoia, but I think

it's validated."

Vaccine-injured people, especially those who took the vaccine out of goodwill, may experience both a breakdown of their worldview and of themselves, said Dr. Ciora.

He uses the iconic scene from the movie "The Matrix" as an analogy.

Neo, the main character, takes a red pill and discovers that he has been living in a machine-generated reality for his entire life. He cannot accept this reality, and vomits in disbelief.



You don't know what to trust.

Dr. Cristian Ciora, psychiatrist

(Courtesy of Dr. Cristian Ciora)

For the vaccine-injured, the people they once trusted—health officials and government leaders—now dismiss their lived realities.

"If everyone says you're wrong while telling you things you know to be false, you don't know what to trust," Dr. Ciora said.

And, you don't know what's reality and what's not, he added.