Just the Facts, Ma'am

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Since the beginning of Covid, we have lost over 1,000,000 Americans. The flu, during the same period has caused about 50,000 deaths. That means that for every death from the flu, 20 have died from Covid. I mention this up front because Gretchen Kemman in her letter to the Journal of Sunday, July 24th ("The great betrayal") wants us to believe that covid and the flu are equivalent in severity.

This is only one of the many serious and dangerously misleading things she includes in her letter, which I believe is a disservice to the readers of the Journal. For example, she writes that most children "have a zero risk of dying" from Covid. It appears her source for this is an article in the July 21, 2021 issue of The Federalist, a right-wing online newsletter. Her statement wasn't based on a peer-reviewed study nor "a Johns Hopkins" study as she contends. She could have looked up the number, but she didn't. In fact, over 1300 US children (under 18 years of age) have died from Covid, a much smaller number than the adult death total, for sure, but not "zero risk," particularly if it's your child.

In fact, peer-reviewed studies have confirmed that the Covid vaccine is safe and effective in children. One study, from the Journal of Medical Virology, article is available at https://doi.org/10.1002/jmv.27940 and a second study was published in the November 9th, 2021 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine, pages 1761-1773. You can find them both, and others, by going to PubMed. The Covid vaccines have not, as Gretchen Kemman states without evidence "killed thousands and disabled millions."

She calls officials involved in the fight against Covid "criminals" and "despots" with "destructive agendas" and provides only pseudoscientific opinion from organizations such as the HartGroup, a British collection of antivaxxers which espouses the use of the horse deworming agent ivermectin. Covid has brought with it difficult issues and uncertainty. It is a wily virus and unlike

anything humanity has dealt with before. There is room here for informed and courteous debate. Debatable and important public issues, however, require that we refrain from name-calling and wild hyperbole. Also required are hard facts, something sorely lacking in Gretchen Kemman's letter.

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