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Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Food and Chemical Toxicology

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/foodchemtox

Editorial

Call for Papers on potential toxic effects of COVID-19 vaccines



The appearance of SARS-CoV-2 has meant that since the Second World War, no global event has affected such a large number of people throughout the world. This affliction involves multiple fields, ranging from a tremendous number of sick and deaths, to serious economic difficulties, as well as psychological problems derived from the anxiety generated by facing something new, totally unknown.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, most developed countries have acted extraordinarily fast in investigating a number of aspects related to SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19. Regarding this, when COVID-19 is the search term used, PubMed (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>) includes (January 1, 2022) the impressive number of 213,354 results. Simply, for comparative purpose, a similar search with the word influenza shows 145,339 results. However, these papers have been published in tens of years, in contrast to those regarding COVID-19, which have been published in only two years. Despite the huge amount of information, there are still an important number of gaps that need to be clarified. Among these, to establish the origin of SARS-CoV-2 is a key issue that needs to be investigated in order to be appropriately able of preventing further potential pandemics, similar to the current one.

Especially significant has been the research on vaccines to prevent and/or alleviate the very serious health effects of COVID-19 on the population. Unfortunately, the time of efficacy of the current vaccines and their side long-term effects, including a potential toxicity, are issues that still generate doubts, not only in the general population, but also in a part of the scientific community. With respect specifically to the potential toxic effects derived of the administration of the vaccines already approved by international organisms, the published information in scientific journals is certainly rather limited. Thus, using “adverse effects of

COVID-19 vaccines” as search term, only 1830 results are found in PubMed, while this number is still much lower if “adverse” is replaced by “toxic”, with only 126 results.

Although due to the severity of COVID-19 pandemic, regulatory bodies have authorized very important reductions in terms and stages to approve the use of new vaccines, in normal conditions, drug approval-process required by the US FDA (for example) means that “*the pharmaceutical company must conduct laboratory tests and try the drug on animals and then people to make sure it works and is safe*”. This also includes vaccines and biologics, which must follow the same general pathway as for drugs. In spite of the urgent necessity to have vaccines to prevent the COVID-19, which has meant to shorten the required terms and stages, it should not be an excuse or shortcut for not investigating the potential toxicity of the already approved vaccines. Very probably, knowing the potential toxic effects -or hopefully their absence-might be key to significantly reducing skepticism to vaccination within the public.

In this sense, *Food and Chemical Toxicology* encourages the researchers to submit the results of their investigations on this topic in order to clarify which are the toxicological risks - if any - of the current vaccines. Research on long-term toxic effects is undoubtedly an issue of special interest. Our journal is open to our authors and readers to receive submissions on these important topics.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fct.2022.112809>

Available online 3 January 2022

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