



## Letter to the Editor

# A, B, C, or D? Reader Says ‘None of the Above’ on Question of Breakthrough COVID Cases

**D**r. Shafer’s editorial on vaccination in the November issue of the *ASA Monitor*<sup>1</sup> makes the following statements in favor of vaccination:

- My parents, spouse, siblings, and children won’t get COVID-19 from me.
- My friends won’t get COVID-19 from me.
- My coworkers won’t get COVID-19 from me.
- My patients won’t get COVID-19 from me.

To the best of my knowledge, no data suggest that vaccinated individuals who have breakthrough COVID-19 infections can’t transmit COVID-19 to others, as the above text implies.

Sterling Wood, DO  
Oceanport, New Jersey

### Reference:

- Shafer SL. How to Explain Vaccination to Your Unvaccinated Patients. *ASA Monitor* 2021 (November)

### Editor’s Reply:

Dr. Wood is correct. Vaccinated patients with breakthrough infections can readily transmit COVID-19 to others. I did not anticipate that my text would be interpreted as he did, and I apologize for not being more precise. Point 2 of the editorial says, “I have reduced the risk of my passing COVID-19 to others.” In bullet points a, b, c, and d, I wanted to point out the many individuals who would not get COVID-19 if I didn’t get COVID-19. I did not mean to imply that vaccinated individuals with breakthrough infections are unable to transmit COVID-19. While the secondary attack rate from vaccinated individuals with breakthrough infections (25%) is less than for unvaccinated individuals with COVID-19 (38%), it is still significant.<sup>1</sup> I appreciate Dr. Wood bringing this to my attention and providing an opportunity to clarify this potential misunderstanding of my editorial. ■

### Reference:

- Singanayagam A, Hakki S, Dunning J. et al. Community transmission and viral load kinetics of the SARS-CoV-2 delta (B.1.617.2) variant in vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in the UK: a prospective, longitudinal, cohort study. *Lancet Infectious Disease*, 2021 (published ahead of print, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(21\)00648-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(21)00648-4))

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