

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2023 10:20
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Twitter – email to Prof Fenton

[REDACTED]

Would [REDACTED] mind [REDACTED] checking if there's an email from a Professor Norman Fenton, please?

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2023 09:55
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Twitter – email to Prof Fenton

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 9, 2023 11:14 AM GMT
To: [REDACTED]
CC: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Twitter – email to Prof Fenton

[REDACTED] not worried about them using [REDACTED] letter. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2023 10:52
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Twitter – email to Prof Fenton

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] nothing in [REDACTED] inbox!

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2023 10:20
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Twitter – email to Prof Fenton

[REDACTED]
Would you mind [REDACTED] checking if there's an email from a Professor Norman Fenton, please?

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 09 January 2023 09:55

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Twitter – email to Prof Fenton

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] writing to let [REDACTED] know that [REDACTED] email response to Prof Norman Fenton has been shared on Twitter. Please find [his tweet here](#). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Lancet

Study on effectiveness of Pfizer vaccine overestimates its effectiveness

--Manuscript Draft--

Manuscript Number:	THELANCET-D-21-03671
Article Type:	Correspondence
Keywords:	vaccine, SARS-CoV-2
Corresponding Author:	Norman E Fenton, PhD Queen Mary University of London UNITED KINGDOM
First Author:	Norman E Fenton, PhD
Order of Authors:	Norman E Fenton, PhD Martin Neil
Manuscript Region of Origin:	UNITED KINGDOM
Additional Information:	
Question	Response
If you are writing in response to published content in The Lancet, please type the full reference to that content here (for example: Cuzick J et al. Use of anastrozole for breast cancer prevention (IBIS-II): long-term results of a randomised controlled trial. Lancet 2020; 394: 117-22).	[1]Haas et al: "Impact and effectiveness of mRNA BNT162b2 vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 infections and COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations, and deaths following a nationwide vaccination campaign in Israel: an observational study using national surveillance data" https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00947-8
Author Comments:	We attach a letter in response to the article published on 5 May (Haas et al: "Impact and effectiveness of mRNA BNT162b2 vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 infections and COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations, and deaths following a nationwide vaccination campaign in Israel: an observational study using national surveillance data" https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00947-8). We have no competing interests to declare. Yours sincerely Professor Norman Fenton and Professor Martin Neil Queen Mary University of London

The article [1] provides impressive support for the effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine, but important limitations in the overall analysis mean the results over-estimate vaccine effectiveness. One is that the study does not adjust for declining infection rate [2]. But there is also failure to properly adjust for the different testing protocols for vaccinated and unvaccinated people (page 8 of the paper). Whereas unvaccinated people continued to be regularly and routinely subject to PCR tests, vaccinated people no longer had to be. Although 836,000 (19%) of the 4.4 million PCR tests were on vaccinated people, 3,564,000 were on unvaccinated.

So, using the Table 2 data (109,876 cases among unvaccinated, and 6,266 among vaccinated) the number of 'cases' per 1000 tests were:

30.8 for unvaccinated
7.5 for vaccinated

Using 'cases per 1000 tests' results in an approximate 'vaccine effectiveness' measure of 75.7%, compared to the 95% headline figure.

Failure to account for different testing protocols is also evident in the phase 3 trial of the Pfizer vaccine [3]. It similarly reports a 95% effectiveness measure based on 162 confirmed cases among placebo participants compared to just 8 among vaccinated participants. However, the study also reports a much larger number of 'suspected but unconfirmed' cases more evenly spread between placebo participants (1,816) and vaccinated participants (1,594). This suggests a disproportionately small proportion of vaccinated participants with symptoms received PCR tests compared to placebo participants with symptoms.

- [1] Haas et al: "Impact and effectiveness of mRNA BNT162b2 vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 infections and COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations, and deaths following a nationwide vaccination campaign in Israel: an observational study using national surveillance data" [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00947-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00947-8)
- [2] Jones: "Study Claims Pfizer Vaccine is 95% Effective in Over 65s. But Should That Be 74%?" <https://lockdownsceptics.org/2021/05/07/study-claims-pfizer-vaccine-is-95-effective-in-over-65s-but-should-that-be-74/>
- [3] FDA Briefing Document Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, <https://www.fda.gov/media/144245/download>

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 10 January 2023 16:06

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] draft a response to Prof Fenton (see below). [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ready to contact Prof Fenton.

[REDACTED]

Dear Professor Fenton,

I am writing to offer my sincerest apologies for the substandard experience you've had with *The Lancet*.

We have very specific processes for submitted letters that respond to our published content, and these are designed to ensure an outcome is reached in a timely manner. I regret that I was unable to uphold those processes for your letter.

Having discussed this unfortunate situation with [REDACTED] would like to offer publication of your original letter. Alternatively, we could publish a revised letter that reflects more a current experience with the Pfizer vaccine. We defer to your best judgement of what would best serve the medical community.

We very much hope you'll accept this offer. Rest assured that your submission will be handled by a colleague with upmost priority.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 10 January 2023 10:39

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Prof Fenton's strongly worded tweet.
Please can [REDACTED] write to Prof Fenton today to invite a further submission. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 09 January 2023 18:06

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED]

Yes - the letter was a response to this 2021 paper: [Impact and effectiveness of mRNA BNT162b2 vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 infections and COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations, and deaths following a nationwide vaccination campaign in Israel: an observational study using national surveillance data](#)

It was submitted before cutoff [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] came across Fenton's letter again [REDACTED] Nearly 2 years after the original Lancet paper came [REDACTED] no longer felt [REDACTED] could consider Fenton's letter.

[REDACTED] sent a personal reject explaining that [REDACTED] had been keen to support post-publication debate, but that [REDACTED] unable to reach [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] apologised [REDACTED] sn't able to communicate a decision in a much more timely fashion.

[REDACTED] haven't heard from Prof Fenton directly, [REDACTED] wonder [REDACTED] should follow up and make a new offer. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2023 16:19
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED] what happened with the letter attracting criticism on Twitter?

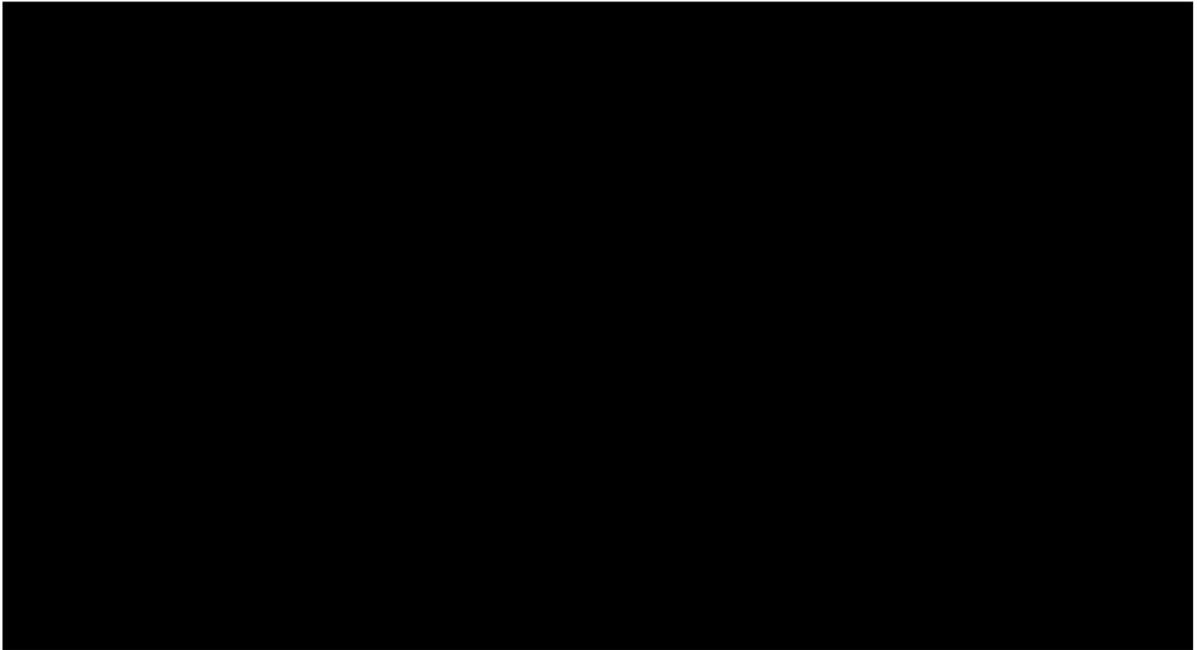
[REDACTED]

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED]
Date: 9 January 2023 at 16:03:45 GMT
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED]

- **Delayed email response to a letter reject** – A disgruntled Prof Norman Fenton shared [REDACTED] response on Twitter. [His tweet](#) has attracted significant engagement, [REDACTED]



Misleading Claims in study of Pfizer vaccine effectiveness

Norman Fenton and Martin Neil, 12 Jan 2023

An article about Israel's experience with the Pfizer covid-19 vaccine was published in The Lancet in May 2021, [1]. We wrote a response letter, [2], explaining why its claim of 95% effectiveness was exaggerated, pointing out that the study failed to adjust for a declining infection rate, and for the very different testing protocols applied to vaccinated versus unvaccinated people. The study also ignored all covid cases reported for people who had received either just a single or a second dose less than seven days previously; such people were not considered 'fully vaccinated', inevitably leading to an exaggeration of vaccine effectiveness [3].

These concerns expressed 20 months ago, have been borne out by data confirming how exaggerated the effectiveness claim was.

The Lancet sent our letter to the lead author of the study, Sharon Alroy-Preis (SA-P), for comment but she did not respond to the criticisms, so the Lancet did not publish it.

We have further concerns about the integrity of the article. SA-P was not among the 8 of 15 authors who declared holding share and stock options in Pfizer; she also declared no conflict of interest. Yet, she is Head of Public Health Services at the Israeli Ministry of Health (IMOH) during the period when Israel became the 'laboratory for Pfizer' [4]. The relationship between Pfizer and the IMOH (starting 6 Jan 2021, four months before the Lancet article was published) is laid out in their collaboration agreement [5] which makes clear results cannot be made public without both parties' approval, and names SA-P as the IMOH appointee responsible for managing this relationship with Pfizer.

The Lancet article provided no information about the vaccine's adverse reactions which we now know are substantial. In her presentation to the FDA expert committee about the booster, SA-P claimed Israel monitors safety closely, whereas we now know they did not have a functioning system until the end of 2021 [4].

Hence, we feel that the paper's findings – which led many to believe the Pfizer vaccine was extremely safe and effective - are severely compromised and that the article should be retracted.

References

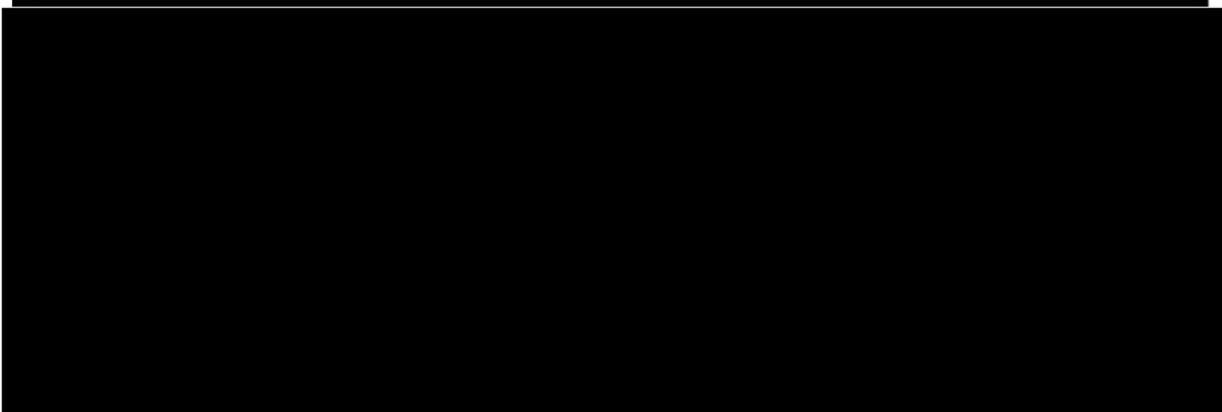
[1] Haas et al: "Impact and effectiveness of mRNA BNT162b2 vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 infections and COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations, and deaths following a nationwide vaccination campaign in Israel: an observational study using national surveillance data" [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00947-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00947-8)

[2] Fenton NE and Neil M "Is the Pfizer vaccine as effective as claimed?", 17 May 2021, <https://wherearethenumbers.substack.com/p/important-caveats-to-pfizer-vaccine?>

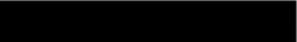
[3] Neil M, Fenton N, Smalley J., Craig C., Guetzkow J., McLachlan S., Rose, J. Latest statistics on England mortality data suggest systematic mis-categorisation of vaccine status and uncertain effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccination, December 2021. <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.14176.20483>

[4] Fenton NE and Neil M, "The curious case of Dr Sharon Alroy-Preis and the claims of safety and effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine", <https://wherearethenumbers.substack.com/p/alroy-preis>

[5] Real-world epidemiological evidence collaboration agreement between the Israeli Ministry of Health, acting on behalf of the State of Israel and Pfizer Inc, 6 Jan 2021. <https://govextra.gov.il/media/30806/11221-moh-pfizer-collaboration-agreement-redacted.pdf>



On 14 Jan 2023, at 15:24, [redacted] wrote:



Prof Fenton has just [tweeted a response](#). His [Substack article](#) provides a summary of the correspondence.





From: [redacted]

Sent: 13 January 2023 15:01

To: [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]



Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

New version below, [redacted]

Dear Professor Fenton,

Thank you for submitting your letter for consideration.

We have discussed the points you raise among *The Lancet's* Editorial team and have decided against publication for the following reasons:

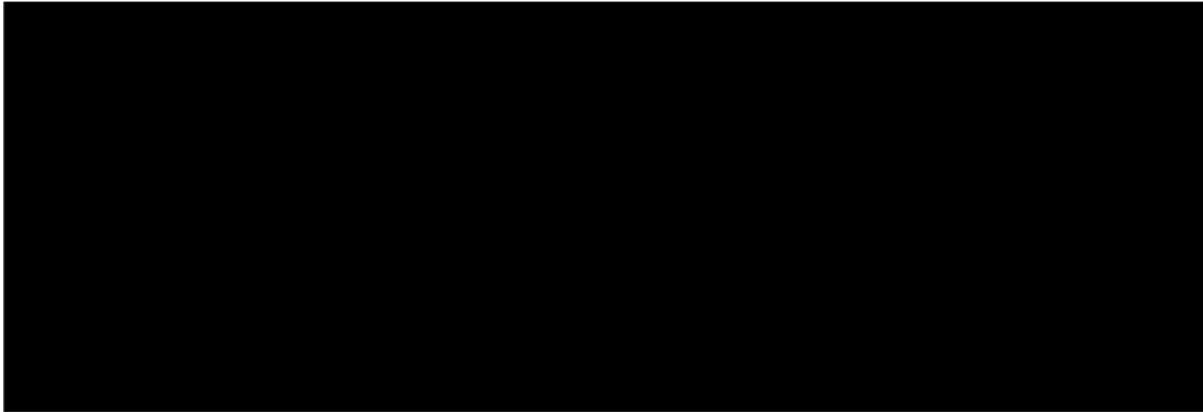
1. Given existing evidence about the effectiveness and safety of the Pfizer vaccine, it is factually incorrect – indeed, it is misinformation - to say that reported adverse reactions are "substantial".
2. Author [redacted] clearly gives [redacted] affiliation with the Israel Ministry of Health (IMoH) in the paper – "Correspondence to: [redacted] [redacted] and we do not consider [redacted] position an undeclared conflict of interest or a challenge to the integrity of the data.

We regret the delayed correspondence regarding the status of your letter and fully accept your criticism of our Editorial processes in this regard.

Sincerely,

[redacted]





On 13 Jan 2023, at 13:55, [REDACTED] wrote:

[REDACTED] propose the following response to Prof Fenton.
[REDACTED] whether we should keep the channels of communication open with Fenton, or leave as is?

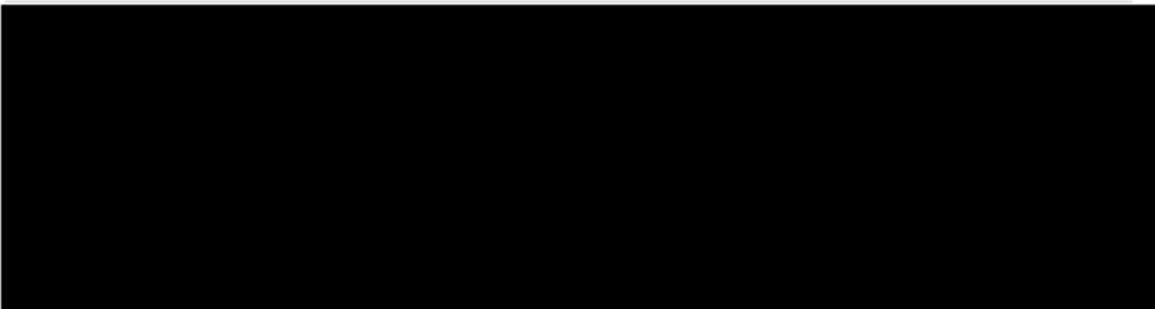
Thank you,
[REDACTED]

Dear Professor Fenton,
Thank you for submitting your letter for consideration.
We have discussed the points raised among *The Lancet's* Editorial team and have decided against publication for the following reasons:

1. Given the existing evidence on the safety of the Pfizer vaccine, it is factually incorrect to say that associated adverse reactions are "substantial".
2. Author [REDACTED] clearly gives [REDACTED] affiliation with the Israel Ministry of Health (IMoH) in the paper – "Correspondence to: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and we do not consider [REDACTED] position an undeclared conflict of interest or a challenge to the integrity of the data.

We regret the delayed correspondence regarding the status of your letter and fully accept your criticism of our Editorial processes in this regard.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 13 January 2023 10:55

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] there's a chance he'll post it on twitter again...

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 13 January 2023 10:33

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED] pass on this message

[REDACTED] a source of vaccine misinformation is an academic prof based right around the corner from our Lancet offices.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 13 January 2023 10:10

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED] we will not be publishing this letter for three reasons:

1. It is factually incorrect to say that the vaccine has substantial adverse reactions.
2. The implication that the vaccine is not safe and effective constitutes vaccine misinformation.
3. The attack on the corresponding author – [REDACTED] – is entirely inappropriate – [REDACTED] clearly declares [REDACTED] affiliation within the IMOH.

[REDACTED] happy [REDACTED] to share these reasons with the author.

Thanks.

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 12 January 2023 20:29

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED]

Prof Fenton has emailed [REDACTED] with a revised letter ~350 words. Please see attached.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These concerns were not raised in the original letter, but Fenton [REDACTED] have been discussing this in great detail on their [blog](#) ([REDACTED] suspect a lot of the twitter noise these past few days has been concerned with this aspect, rather than the safety concerns with the vaccine that Fenton initially raised).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

On 11 Jan 2023, at 13:41, Gibson, Josefine (ELS-LOW) <j.gibson@lancet.com> wrote:

[REDACTED]

Fenton has replied, asking what the word limit would be for the new letter option. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 January 2023 11:34
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] emailed Prof Fenton an hour ago with the offer to resubmit. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 January 2023 09:19
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED] have investigated him a little and he does seem to have a legitimate academic appointment. Let's see how he responds to your email.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2023 20:23

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED]

There has been further development on the Fenton Twitter case. This includes an additional tweet by Fenton this evening, and helpful background on Fenton [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 10 January 2023 19:26

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED] Fenton's additional tweet this afternoon: [\(16\) Prof Norman Fenton on Twitter: "After .@TheLancet delayed response to our complaint about the paper claiming Pfizer vaxx 95% effective in Israel, we did some digging on the lead author \(who failed to reply to our complaint\). Makes .@TheLancet response even more scandalous: https://t.co/S61vArJsXZ" / Twitter](#)

Both Fenton [REDACTED] have retweeted anti-vaxx posts on Twitter, and their Substack articles are worth a scan ([Archive - Where are the numbers? \(substack.com\)](#)). [REDACTED] experts to determine if Fenton's original letter and his criticisms of the Article are valid and meet our publication standards. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] recommend holding off on further email response to Fenton until you've confirmed the above, especially given that anything you say directly to Fenton has the potential to be shared on social media. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 10, 2023 1:39 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED] sent the holding email [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Professor Fenton,

I am writing to offer my sincerest apologies for the substandard experience you've had with *The Lancet*. We have very specific processes for submitted letters that respond to our published content, and these are designed to ensure an outcome is reached in a timely manner. I regret that I was unable to uphold those processes for your letter.

Having discussed this unfortunate situation with [REDACTED] I would like to offer publication of your original letter. Alternatively, we could publish a revised letter that reflects more a current experience with the Pfizer vaccine. We defer to your best judgement of what would best serve the medical community. We very much hope you'll accept this offer. Rest assured that your submission will be handled by a colleague with utmost priority.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 10 January 2023 14:03

To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

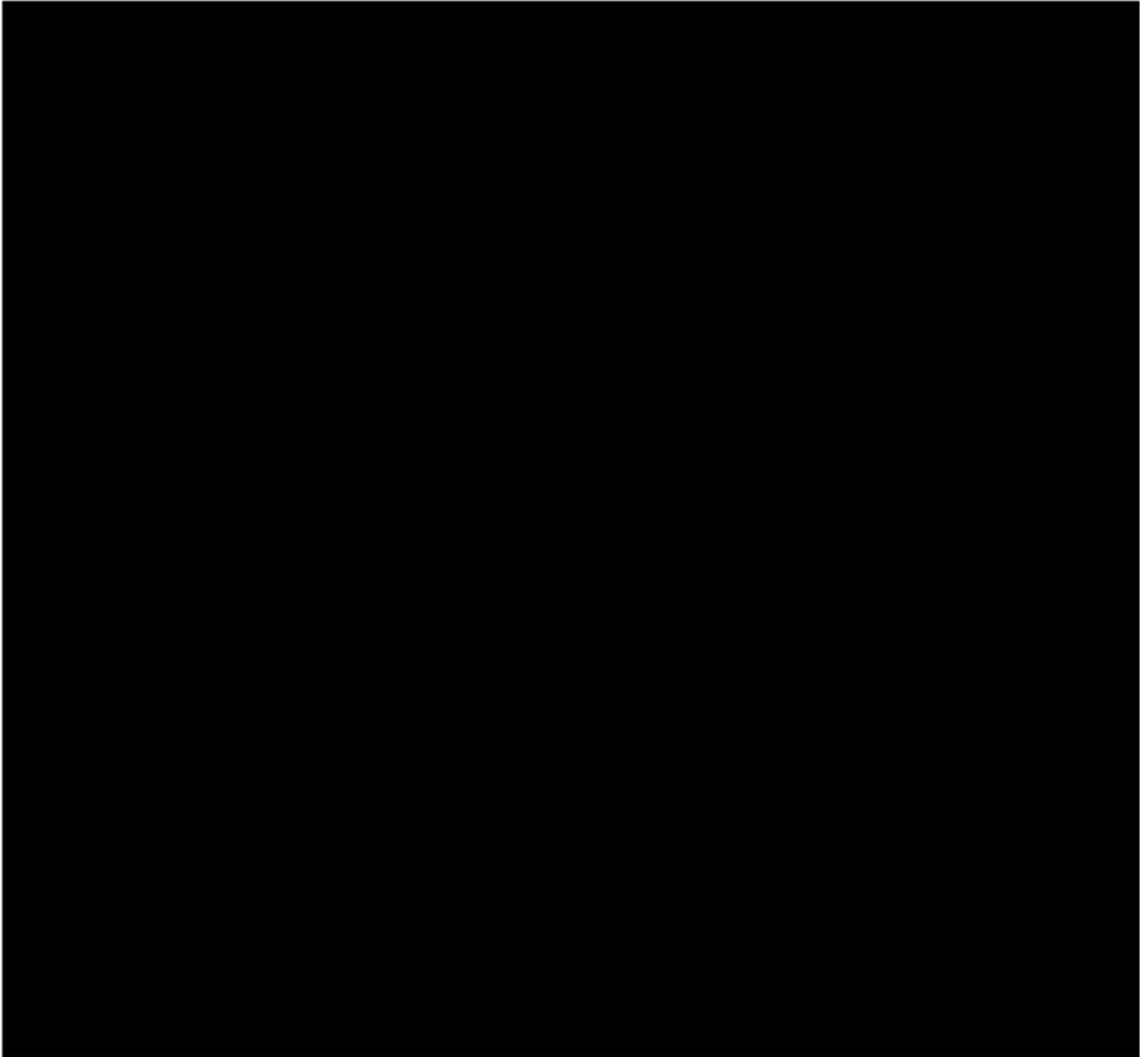
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] "holding email" [REDACTED] suggest something very short such as:

Prof. Fenton,

Thank you for bringing your letter from May 2021 back to our attention. We are looking into next steps and will get back to you as soon as we can.

[REDACTED]



From: [redacted]

Sent: 10 January 2023 11:38

To: [redacted]

Subject: FW: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[redacted]

[redacted]

draft email to Prof Fenton

[redacted]

[REDACTED]

Dear Professor Fenton,

I am writing to offer my sincerest apologies for the substandard experience you've had with *The Lancet*.

We have very specific processes for submitted letters that respond to our published content, and these are designed to ensure an outcome is reached in a timely manner. I regret that I was unable to uphold those processes for your letter.

Having discussed this unfortunate situation with [REDACTED] would like to offer publication of your original letter. Alternatively, we could publish a revised letter that reflects more a current experience with the Pfizer vaccine. We defer to your best judgement of what would best serve the medical community.

We very much hope you'll accept this offer. Rest assured that your submission will be handled by a colleague with upmost priority.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 10 January 2023 10:39

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FYI – Ongoing issues monitoring

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Prof Fenton's strongly worded tweet. Please [REDACTED] write to Prof Fenton today to invite a further submission. [REDACTED]

