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Letter to the Editor

# Vaccination certificate: An initiative to mitigate COVID-19 waves in India?

To the Editor,

Within a year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the dedicated efforts of the global scientific community created an array of highly efficacious vaccines. Although a universal vaccine with the concept of “one size fits all” is not yet available across different risk groups such as pregnant women and children,<sup>1</sup> the vaccine options available in-hand need to be meticulously used for controlling this novel coronavirus by implementing a successful vaccination program and achieve as high coverage as possible<sup>2</sup>. The vaccination trend and coverage in India has been given in Fig. 1.

Apart from vaccination, the Government of India needs to take some strict initiative towards the traveling movements to restrict SARS-CoV-2 transmission and mitigate the subsequent waves of COVID-19 in India. For this, the vaccination certificate issued after the second dose with a grace period of two weeks (for protective immunity to develop after the second jab) may serve as an important strategic necessity for traveling between inter-cities, inter-districts, and inter-states of the nation, thus restricting the unnecessary movement of the people and hence, the spread of COVID-19. The vaccination certificates are not new as these have already been required for proof of vaccination against yellow fever, meningococcus, etc.<sup>3</sup>

However, it is vital to balance the pros and cons of a vaccination certificate. Apart from mitigating the risk of COVID-19 infection, these certificates would also help to revive the national economy as there will be fewer national/state-wise curfew and lockdown. However, the biggest concern is that some counterfeit agencies may issue fake vaccination certificates. To overcome this con, the digitalized vaccination certificate should be issued by the government agencies (Appendix-A).

Post the nationwide implantation of a vaccination certificate as a travel permit; unvaccinated people could

remain deprived of certain freedoms until herd immunity is achieved, which will not happen for several months, perhaps even a year, two, or three. Hence we believe that, for the people who cannot be vaccinated or for whom vaccination is medically counter-indicated, an exemption should be allowed during domestic traveling with proper precautionary measures as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

In conclusion, the vaccination certificate should be made compulsory and applicable to all modes of travel across the nation, including train, bus, private vehicles, airplane and waterways. This strategy would help in mitigating the future waves of the COVID-19 besides reducing the cases in the ongoing wave. Current circumstances demand such immediate policies that offer reasonable leeway for balancing the protection of public health with a return to prepandemic life.<sup>4</sup>

## CRedit authorship contribution statement

**Om Prakash Choudhary:** Conceptualization, Data Curation, Visualization, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - review & editing. **Priyanka:** Conceptualization, Supervision, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - review & editing. **Indraj Singh:** Supervision, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - review & editing.

## Ethical approval

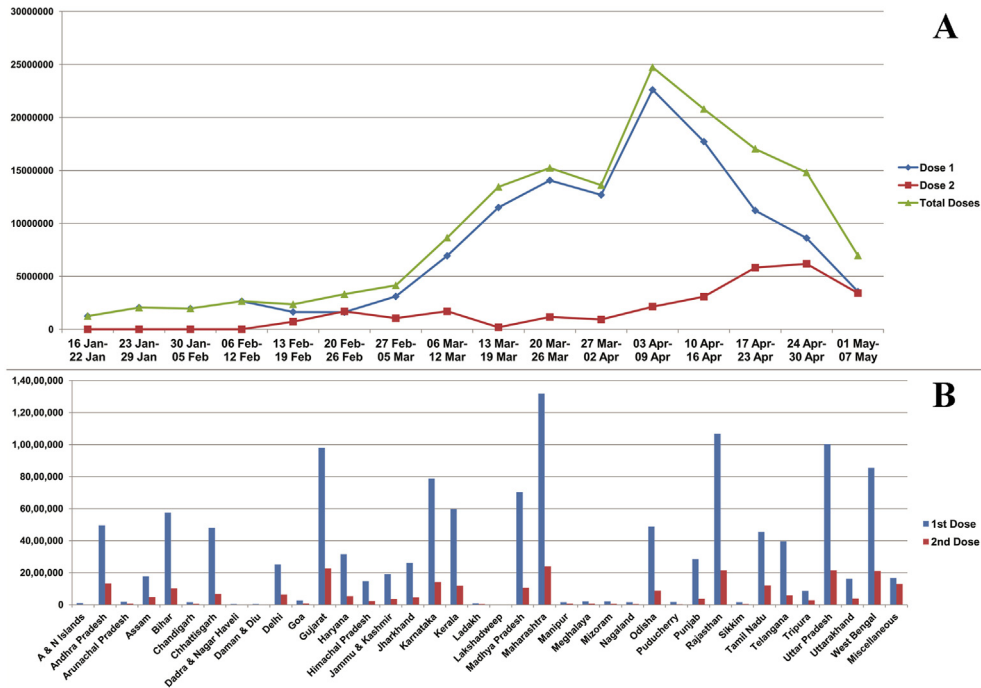
This article does not require any human/animal subjects to acquire such approval.

## Funding

This study received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfma.2021.05.011>

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**Figure 1** A. COVID-19 vaccine trend since 16th January 2021 in India; B. COVID-19 vaccine doses (I and II) administered to the beneficiaries in the different states of India till 07th May 2021.

**Declaration of competing interest**

The authors have no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

**Appendix A. Supplementary data**

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfma.2021.05.011>.

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24 April 2021