



Dealing with Sars-CoV-2

Because of an open letter, published in the newssheet *Ein Nachrichtenblatt* on 29 September, the leaders of the Goetheanum's Medical Section would like to make the following statement.

Dr. med. Matthias Girke und Georg Soldner

The question of vaccination polarizes because views differ, for instance on the severity of getting ill with Covid to the downright denial of its existence, on the pandemic in general, on official measures, the damage caused by lockdowns, the exclusion of the unvaccinated from social participation and lastly on the rapidly developed vaccines themselves. This situation is made worse because there are, to this day, no independent comparative long-term trials, for instance in the form of a vaccination registry. When the vaccines were introduced, this was requested and brought to the attention of the relevant institutions in Germany by the Medical Section leadership in a publication [1] composed in collaboration with David Martin, Professor of Medical Theory, Integrative and Anthroposophical Medicine at the University of Witten/Herdecke (DE).

Harald Matthes from the Havelhöhe Community Hospital in Berlin and professor of integrative and Anthroposophic medicine at the Charité, also in Berlin (DE), then initiated of his own accord a comparison of vaccinated and unvaccinated persons in a study that is still ongoing. In the meantime, and as in the time before the pandemic, we have vehemently advocated freedom of choice in relation to vaccination and against making vaccination compulsory, whether direct-

ly or indirectly. This applies in particular to parents who need to decide on behalf of their children and to adolescents. Regarding the question of compulsory vaccination, we legally supported a lawsuit that has been submitted to the German Federal Constitutional Court.

Considering different perspectives

Different perspectives need to be considered before informed judgments can be made. There must be no discrimination against either vaccinated or unvaccinated persons. Here, too, the freedom of each individual, even if they think differently, must be guaranteed. Individual and societal aspects need to be considered, not only from a medical but also from a spiritual-scientific point of view.

From what we know so far and depending on the vaccine used, we have evidence that vaccination and a person's individual disposition (age, underlying medical conditions, life circumstances) can reduce the likelihood of getting seriously ill with Covid or of dying from it. What is not yet clear is when and to what degree this effect abates, particularly in those who are vulnerable. Safety reports published by the Paul Ehrlich Institute in Germany, on the other hand, also show

that the new mRNA and vector vaccines against Covid-19 can in individual cases have serious side effects and even lead to death.

The EMA (European Medicines Agency) has registered a great number of suspected cases of severe side effects of Covid-19 vaccinations. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have personally been informed both of the deaths from Covid of individuals we knew well and of severe vaccination side effects. One vaccinated colleague wrote to us of the Covid-related death of his unvaccinated brother, while another colleague informed us of the death of a healthy relative from myocardial complications triggered by his Covid vaccination a few days earlier.

Information and support

We ourselves – in accordance with our medical duty and with Rudolf Steiner’s Philosophy of Freedom – inform our patients thoroughly whilst fully accepting their individual decision. We have carefully supported hundreds of patients of all ages, including patients with trisomy 21 (a strong risk factor in adults for severe Covid-19 disease) during their Covid-19 vaccination, always including anthroposophic medicines in the treatment. None of these patients showed any symptoms two weeks after vaccination.

We consider it very important to first establish as physicians whether a patient should have the vaccination and whether they are being given the freedom to decide, to carefully inform them on what to do after the vaccination and to provide individual support. This is in our view essential for avoiding complications, especially in the case of the Covid-19 vaccines because of their considerable potential for side effects.

Human dignity

This is why, in this case as with all other vaccinations, it is essential that people can make their own decisions. Unlike safety belts in cars, vacci-

nations concern the dignity of the individual because the vaccines are injected into the body. Making them compulsory in the interest of the community is therefore going a step too far, particularly in a society where alcohol can be consumed freely even though this constitutes a risk not only for the health of the individual in question. What is ‘good’ for one person must therefore not be made compulsory for all. One needs to look carefully at each individual case and allow each person to decide for themselves. We therefore vehemently oppose the politicization and exclusion of the preventative and therapeutic medical relationship with patients.

Different conditions

The effects of the pandemic vary widely in societies across the world: the situation in Germany, for instance, is very different from that in Afghanistan. With regard to the vary different mortality rates, one also needs to distinguish between the different countries. In Germany and Switzerland, for instance, protective measures are now available to all risk groups and it is therefore time to ease or lift restrictions that interfere with basic human rights.

At this point in time we do not see sufficient justification to offer vaccination to all children and adolescents (with the exception of certain risk groups). Their participation in education and social relationships must under no circumstances be made dependent on whether or not they are vaccinated.

More than a viral challenge

The Coronavirus pandemic is not only a viral but also a social and socio-economic problem. Not only underlying medical conditions but also social and economic circumstances affect the risk of getting ill and the course of a potential disease. Poverty and malnutrition are important risk factors around the world. Disease prevention

should therefore include public efforts to improve nutrition and interhuman relations.

There needs to be a healthy balance between protecting risk groups, above all the elderly, from infection and promoting resilience, especially in children and adolescents. After natural infection with Sars-CoV-2, children look likely to be most lastingly protected against getting severely ill with Covid. And yet, they were mostly affected by the restrictions put into place to protect other groups of society. This must not continue and everything must be done now to actively strengthen the health of children and young people.

The currently prevailing, purely pathogen-fixated, virological and technocratic view leads to the medicalization (and further economization) of society [2] and to a previously unknown degree of interference with the basic rights of individuals. This, too, is not only relevant from an ethical but also from a health-related point of view: the effects of lockdown such as fear, isolation and the loss of the cultural and artistic life are well-known to be immune suppressors and may therefore negatively impact on the way the pandemic develops. We have discussed the medical, psychological and spiritual aspects of this in other publications [3].

Conditions for freedom

To summarize: Covid-19 and vaccination are, in our view, a complex topic which affects each person directly. If the freedom of thought and of choice is to be guaranteed, we need a quality of dialogue, both publicly and within the anthroposophical movement, that makes this kind of freedom possible. This requires a legal framework and the corresponding practice in civil society, both of which we are still far away from in most countries. It is therefore important to us to state in our own words where the Medical Section stands with regard to the Covid-19 vaccination, as we have done in many publications and public events. We welcome the international dialogue

with the representatives of Anthroposophic Medicine that enables us to discuss and consider the different aspects of this complex issue.

- [1] Georg Soldner, David Martin: “Covid-19 Vaccination. A synthesis review of current status and proposal of a registry study to overcome social polarization tendencies and answer open research questions”, <https://www.anthromedics.org/PRA-0971-EN>.
- [2] Peter Selg: “A medicalized society?”, in: Ueli Hurter, Justus Wittich (eds.), Christine Howard (translator): *Perspectives and initiatives in the times of Coronavirus*, Forest Row 2020.
- [3] Georg Soldner: “Ecology and the Pandemic. What can we learn from Covid-19?” and Matthias Girke: “What effects do inner work and meditation have on the healing powers of the human being?”, in: Ueli Hurter, Justus Wittich (eds.), Christine Howard (translator): *The Spiritual Signature of our Time. In the era of Coronavirus*, Forest Row 2021.
Cf. also Matthias Girke, Georg Soldner, “Three Signs and their message” [“Drei Zeichen und ihre Botschaft”], in: *Das Goetheanum* 13/2021.
For further contributions on Covid-19 by various authors cf. Corona-Bibliographie: <https://medsektion-goetheanum.org/en/news/covid-19>.