COVID-19: MOLNUPIRAVIR EFFECTS

Buyer beware: molnupiravir may damage DNA

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Although the Ingelfinger rule seems to have dissolved into dust with the coming of covid-19, I was a little disappointed that your journal seems to have mirrored Merck’s press release about molnupiravir without substantial critical comment. Molnupiravir clearly induces intense mutagenesis in SARS-CoV-2, and this accounts for its efficacy. But β-d-N4-hydroxycytidine, the active metabolite of molnupiravir, is not only cytotoxic but also mutagenic in mammalian cells. The drug may damage DNA.

There is a certain irony that vaccine shy people who have believed the untruth that vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 alter DNA seem poised to reach for a perceived “alternative” that may actually alter their DNA adversely. This worry is supported by the rise in Merck’s share price and Moderna’s corresponding drop, as reported by Reuters.

Buyer beware.

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2 Mahase E. Covid-19: Molnupiravir reduces risk of hospital admission or death by 50% in patients at risk, MSD reports. BMJ 2021;375:n2422. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n2422 pmid: 34607801