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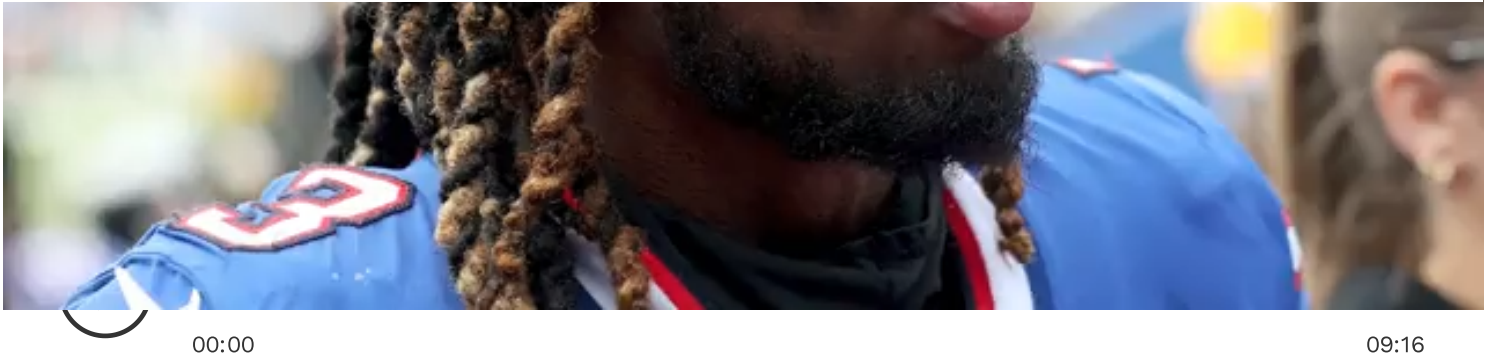
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FACT CHECK

Was Damar Hamlin's Cardiac Arrest Related To Covid-19 Vaccine? What We Know

BY **TOM NORTON** ON 1/4/23 AT 12:24 PM EST





The news about the Buffalo Bills' Damar Hamlin collapsing during a game against the Cincinnati Bengals shocked NFL fans around the globe.

The game between the Bills and the Bengals on Monday was called off after the 24-year-old received CPR on the field and was rushed to the hospital. Information about the extent of his health issues is still forthcoming though the Bills said Tuesday that Hamlin had suffered a cardiac arrest. He remained sedated on a ventilator as of Wednesday morning. On Tuesday night, he was still in critical condition, reported CNN citing the player's uncle.

However, even with so little publicly available information, multiple claims posted on social media have suggested that Hamlin's collapse was linked to a COVID-19 vaccination.



Damar Hamlin walks to the tunnel during halftime against the Pittsburgh Steelers at Highmark Stadium on October 9, 2022, in Orchard Park, New York. Speculative claims on social media suggested that Damar Hamlin's cardiac arrest was somehow linked to the COVID-19 vaccine.

BRYAN BENNETT/GETTY

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Many (but not all) of the tweets about Damar Hamlin's cardiac arrest have used cautious language and innuendo rather than making an outright connection between his injury and a COVID-19 vaccine.

Nonetheless, the messaging of those sharing this claim has leaned on well-worn, speculative and previously debunked tropes about COVID-19 vaccines. Turning Point USA's Charlie Kirk's reference on Twitter to "Athletes dropping suddenly" was almost certainly a nod to a theory popularized during the height of the pandemic that vaccines had been linked to heart attacks and other injuries suffered by athletes.

suggested that Hamlin's injury could be connected to myocarditis, an inflammatory heart condition that has been reported as a rare side effect of COVID-19 vaccines.

"The NFL pushed the covid vaccines on its players," [Fitton tweeted](#). "When will the league investigate whether the 'rare' myocarditis vaccine side-effect is impacting players—such as making them more susceptible to game-related severe heart injuries?"

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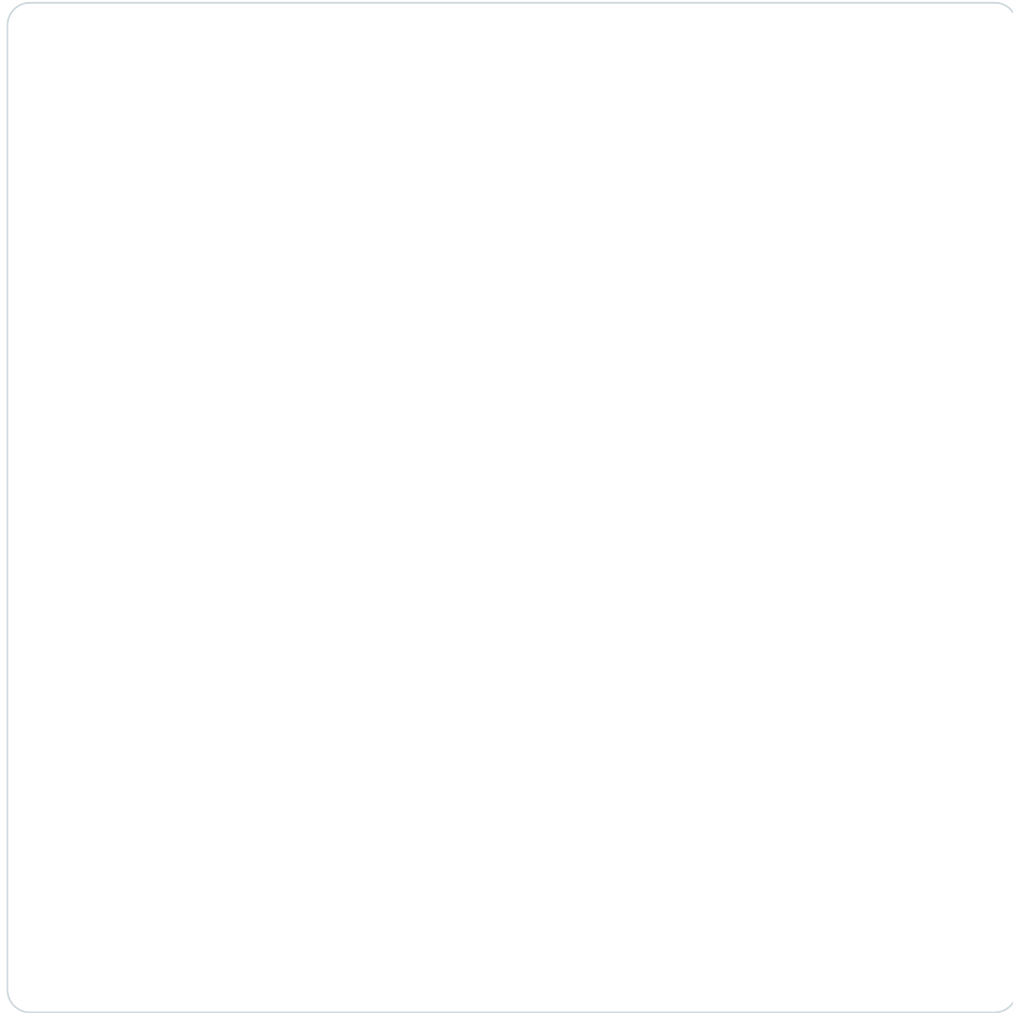
We still don't know the extent of the damage caused to Hamlin or a full diagnosis from his team or medical specialists. However, the claim that his injury may have been caused by COVID-19 vaccines can, even now, be treated with informed skepticism.

At this stage, no known evidence has emerged that would support the idea that Hamlin's injury was related to a vaccine. For a start, it's not clear whether Hamlin has even been vaccinated as he has never stated so publicly.

But the narrative [persisted](#) (example archived [here](#)), fueled by misinformation. A tweet by "Dr. Benjamin Eidelman," allegedly posted on January 2, 2022, in which he claimed to have "administered Damar Hamlin's Covid booster on 12/26," [gained some traction online](#) but was quickly debunked.

@catturdz · FOLLOW

Is this real or fake - hard to tell sometimes?



4:44 AM · Jan 3, 2023



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A fact check by [Snopes](#) noted the tweet's lack of sources, that no official medical information about Hamlin's condition had mentioned COVID-19 vaccines, and that the Eidelman account was only two weeks old by the time of Hamlin's cardiac arrest. The account has since been deleted or removed.

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providers can share about patients. It would therefore have made little sense (and would possibly be disqualifying) for a doctor or any other medical professional (if they existed) to have posted such information.

Furthermore, it is widely thought that his cardiac arrest was instead more likely to be linked to a chest injury the NFL star sustained moments before his collapse.

Hamlin needed CPR on the field after he tackled Bengals wide receiver Tee Higgins, whose helmet hit Hamlin's chest.

After seemingly being shaken by the hit, Hamlin then fell back to the ground, and emergency treatment was given by paramedics, who rushed onto the field.

The player received medical attention on the field for more than 30 minutes before being taken to the hospital.



Buffalo Bills players react after teammate Damar Hamlin #3 was injured against the Cincinnati Bengals during the first quarter at Paycor Stadium on January 2, 2023

GETTY IMAGES

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell released a statement following the postponement of the game, stating: "Hamlin received immediate medical attention on the field by team and independent medical staff and local paramedics. He was then transported to a local hospital where he is in critical condition."

Many qualified experts have begun trying to piece together what the likely cause may have been.

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One theory, shared by Bernard Ashby, a vascular cardiologist based in Miami, was that Hamlin's reaction "resembled commotio cordis—a phenomenon that occurs when a sudden blunt impact to the chest causes cardiac arrest."

"Timely defibrillation is life saving & prevents anoxic brain injury. I pray an AED was near," Ashby tweeted on Tuesday.

This diagnosis has been supported by multiple other medical specialists on social media, even leading to "Commotio Cordis" trending on Twitter.

Doctor and sports medicine expert Brian Sutterer, who released a video on YouTube shortly after the game, said the injury was "not related to any sort of vaccines" and was "almost certainly" commotio cordis, which can happen "if you have a blunt trauma to the chest that occurs at exactly the right time in the cardiac electrical cycle."

Damar Hamlin Collapses and Suffers Cardiac Arrest After a Hard Hit



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but it has to happen within milliseconds or a time window because if that impact comes at any other time in this electrical cycle you're fine, you don't go into this," Dr. Sutterer said.

As mentioned before, the theory that vaccines have been linked to collapses among young athletes is not new and was among the most persistent narratives spread among conspiracy-minded online communities during the pandemic.

This notion was in part propagated by a link between COVID-19 vaccines and two heart conditions: myocarditis (mentioned above by Fitton) and pericarditis.

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recognized a link between COVID-19 vaccines and these conditions, such cases have rarely been reported, according to the health body, and "have especially been in adolescents and young adult males within several days after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna)."

Moreover, multiple research studies have also found that the risk of myocarditis is higher after an infection from COVID-19 than after a vaccination for it.

We don't know whether Hamlin did receive a vaccine several days before the game but the likelihood that his injury was the result of myocarditis and pericarditis caused by a COVID-19 vaccine, based on the available evidence, is therefore still very small.

As mentioned earlier, there were also numerous video compilations and social media posts shared during the pandemic showing athletes collapsing during play, accompanied by the suggestion that their injuries were caused by a COVID-19 vaccine. Hamlin's cardiac arrest appears to have fit into this narrative.

example, a video compilation shared in November 2021 of athletes collapsing was found by fact-checking website Snopes to be of people who had been "previously diagnosed with COVID-19" and in most cases "attributed to other causes (such as dehydration), and some cases involved athletes who had not been vaccinated."

Other fact checks of similar clips and compilations by FactCheck.org, The Washington Post and The Associated Press, among others, consistently found that these injuries were unrelated to COVID-19 vaccines and/or there was no evidence as to the vaccine status of the athletes who had suffered them.

Furthermore, while not a common occurrence, research has shown that athletes, particularly young athletes, are at particular risk of sudden cardiac death, regardless of vaccination status.

A 2015 study published in *Circulation* found it was the most common cause of 514 deaths recorded among National Collegiate Athletic Association Athletes. A 2014 study published in the journal Heart Rhythm, which assessed data from 2,149 U.S. schools found the risk of sudden cardiac arrest in student athletes was more than 3.5 times higher than that of non-athletes.

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linking the injury or death of public figures to COVID-19 vaccines, again, without evidence.

Comedian Bob Saget, actress Betty White and rapper DMX were all subject to speculative posthumous claims that they had been vaccinated shortly before their deaths. Again, these claims were made without evidence.

It is important to recognize that few details about Hamlin's hospitalization are available so soon after the event. So, in theory, the information we do not know about his vaccine status in relation to his cardiac arrest may transpire.

However, at the very least, the testimony of multiple experts, the circumstances of Hamlin's injury, the similarity to other unfounded claims about athletes, and the dubious nature of unfounded conspiracy claims about vaccine injuries among celebrities mean that, at this stage, any claims that propose a link to COVID-19 vaccines are justifiably doubtful.

Newsweek has contacted the Buffalo Bills for comment.

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A Anonymous

1 day ago

It's hilarious to me how people latch on to these conspiracy theories without a shred of evidence and afterwards are absolutely unwilling to hear any actual evidence to the contrary. I think it plays into that need that some people have to feel "special" because they believe that they know something that most people don't. Commotio Cordis has been around for quite a while... literally first documented in 1763. It's a rare condition but Hamlin received the exact type of trauma typically associated with it. If the covid vaccine was really causing something like this would we not be seeing a massive surge in cardiac arrest deaths? These conspiracy people are so desperate to be right they will run with any story that even remotely fits the narrative they want to push.

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Sythe Price

1 day ago

Getting covid increases the chance of myocarditis 41 times than the vaccine.

Reply ·  23  5 · Share

↳ 2 replies

Sythe Price

1 day ago

Antivaxx is big business and it's cheap. Doesn't require any research. Just make things up.

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O Observer

7 hours ago

It is entirely possible.

<https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.122.061025>

Pfizer's own documents state it.

<https://icandecide.org/>

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TH **Tucker Q. Hannity**

2 days ago

Looking forward to Charlie Kirk dropping suddenly out of sight.

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↪ 1 reply

fly's-oointment

2 days ago

Football player get speared in the chest by somebody who is 6'4" and 220lbs, and suffers a cardiac arrest.

MAGA: see, we told you the vax was dangerous



Reply · 59 · 17 · Share

↪ 1 reply

KP **Kevin Peifer**

2 days ago

What constitutes a fact checker, waiting for peer reviewed not speculative conclusions. The kind of science that was not incorporated into the rolling out of vaccines for this recent disease. In 1976 the Swine flu vaccine after proper testing caused 1 in 100,000 serious adverse effects and was discontinued. In 1999 Rotashield vaccine which was developed to treat a current roto virus

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and Moderna which reassessed the information and concluded 1 in 800 serious adverse effects was reported. Both vaccines are officially being pushed regardless of past examples which led to aforementioned. The next pandemic will be an enteroviruses which polio is an example of. The vaccines used in the third world are made from cultured live virus because they are less susceptible to degradation without refrigeration. The wild variety of polio is eradicated but outbreaks of vaccine borne ones are now causing concern. These concerns have been known and yet Pharmaceutical companies still push them in the third world. I believe India has told the purveyors of these dubious products to leave their country.

Reply · 👍 40 🗨️ 67 · Share

↩ 1 reply

os Occupy Big Science

...

2 days ago

In the "gold standard" randomized double-blind clinical trials of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, **excess cardiovascular deaths with vaccination canceled out the COVID death reduction**, even at peak effectiveness during the deadly Alpha wave in winter 2020-2021. Randomized clinical trials are the gold standard because they are the only studies which completely level the playing field

See more *(Edited)*

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fly's-oointment

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2 days ago

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↩ 1 reply

JimO

...

11 hours ago

I suppose I should have cardiac arrest. too. I had the vaccines and the boosters. Some are just slow enough to believe this nonsense.

My guess is the non-vaxers come up with this kind of thinking. They are actually hurting the rest of us.

Reply · 👍 8 🗨️ 3 · Share

JD Just some dude

...

9 hours ago

>

resulting from this vaccine being forced onto people. Big pharma, all the major sports leagues, and many other companies and corporations, large and small should be held accountable for forcing this scourge onto their employees. I also believe we'll be seeing subpoenas, and hopefully prosecutions for the people who pushed this and lied to the American people. We need justice to prevail here.

*(Edited)*Reply ·  5  12 · Share**William Bell** ...

2 days ago

A pertinent question not addressed in this article: could myocarditis or pericarditis make someone more vulnerable to commotio cordis?

Reply ·  26  28 · Share**Dyson Freeman** ...

2 days ago

Yes myocarditis will make you more vulnerable to this injury. Alex Berenson has an article on previous cases.

Reply ·  15  17 · Share**FB Floyd Batten** ...

2 days ago

Excellent example of why people don't and can't trust the "news" industry. This article, like so many others, appears to have been pre-written by big Pharma and little Fauci with the goal of conveying "nothing to see here and you're a conspiracy crackpot if you think there is". Reeks of cover-up to the thinking few.

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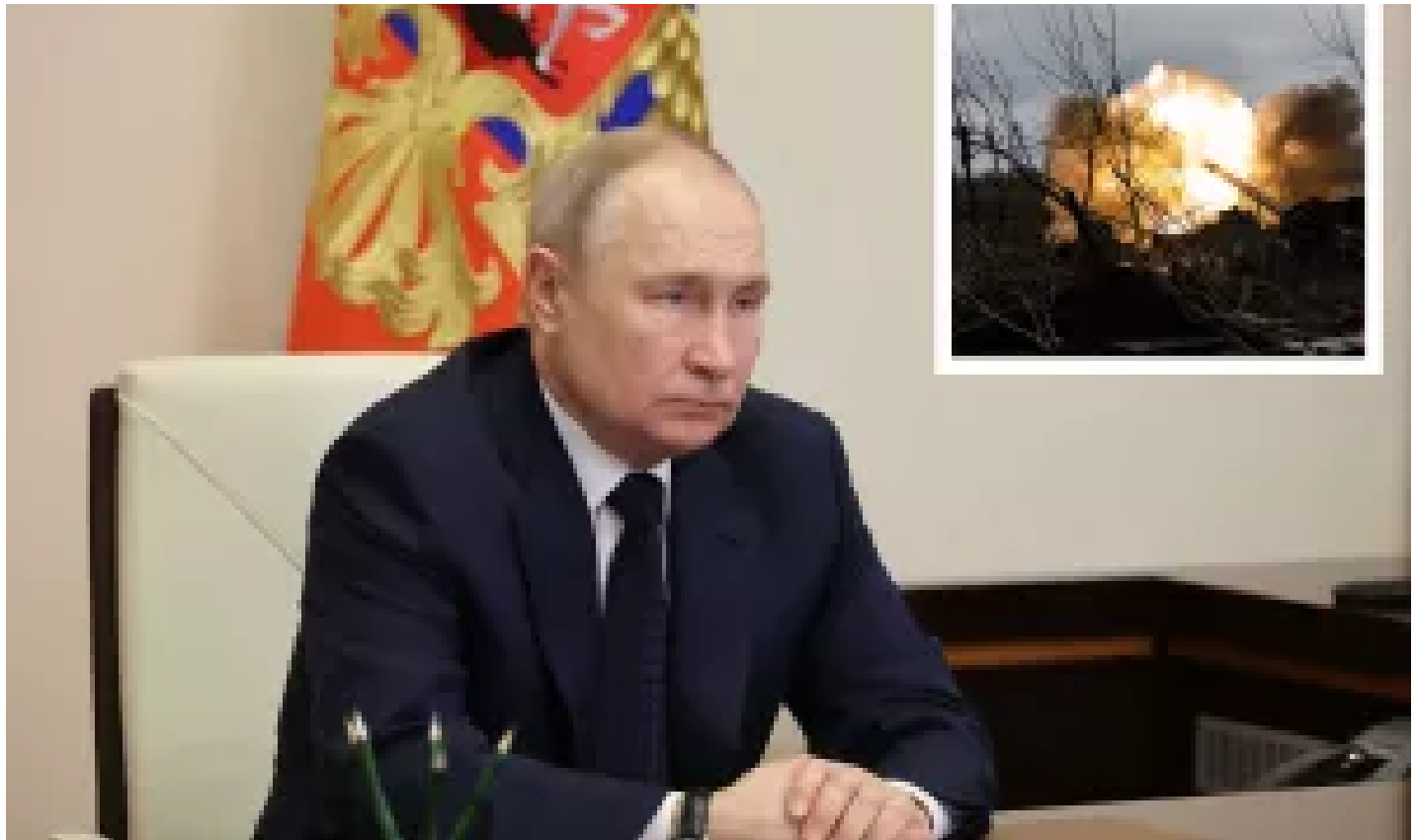
A probable cause affidavit in the arrest of Kohberger was released Thursday, providing new evidence into how police determined he was their suspect.



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