

How a well-meaning U.S. government database fuels dangerous vaccine misinformation | Newsweek

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On April 30, 2021, the website Natural News — which NewsGuard has rated Red, meaning generally unreliable — published a story reporting the death of a 2-year-old who in late February had received the second dose of a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine during the companies' clinical trials for children. The only problem? Children under 5 did not begin receiving shots until April, according to a press release on the Pfizer website.

Natural News picked up the false claim from a familiar source of pandemic misinformation: Red-rated website Great Game India, which in January 2020 also spread a different falsehood that the COVID-19 virus was stolen from a Canadian lab.

The single source of evidence cited by both websites was the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, or VAERS, a database jointly run for 31 years by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Its purpose: to be “a national early warning system to detect possible safety problems in U.S.-licensed vaccines,” according to its website.

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Source: [How a well-meaning U.S. government database fuels dangerous vaccine misinformation](#)