

VACCINE MIS/DISINFORMATION

WEEKLY REPORT

This week's Mis/Disinformation report looks into social media conversation driven by: controversies around vaccine mandates and rhetoric that attempts to deter people from getting vaccinated.

27 January Summary:

TOP STORY

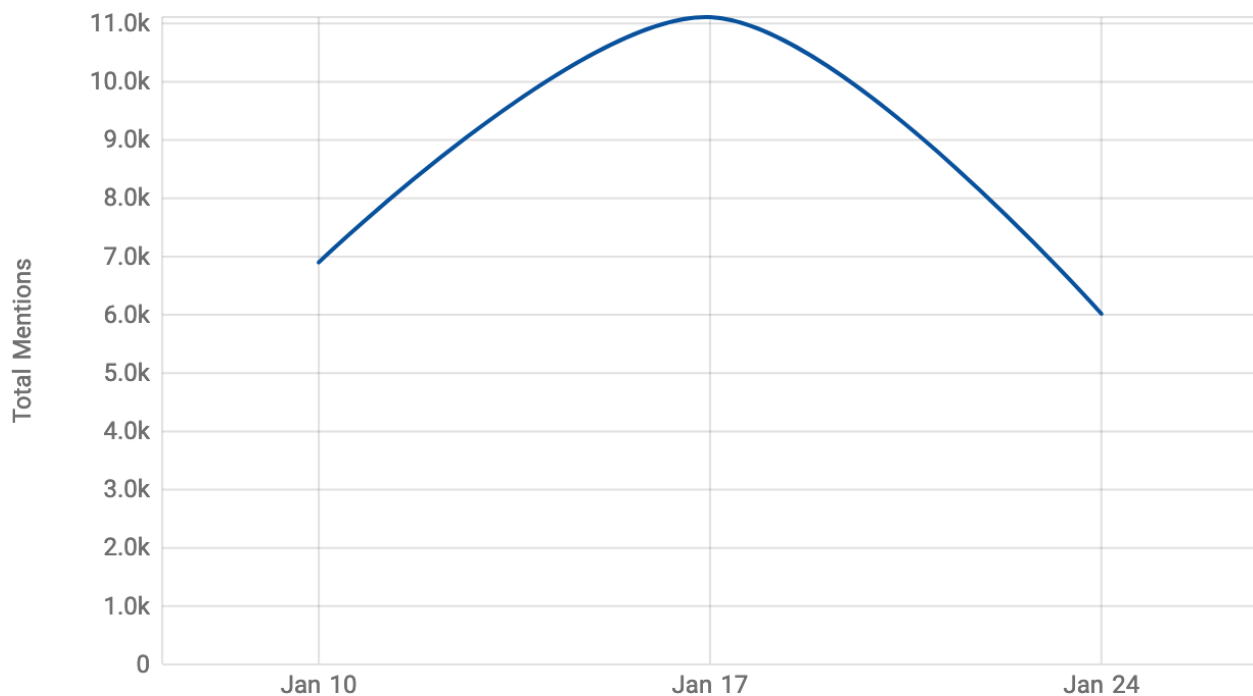
- **CCMA dismisses unvaccinated employee dismissal**

OTHER TRENDING TOPICS

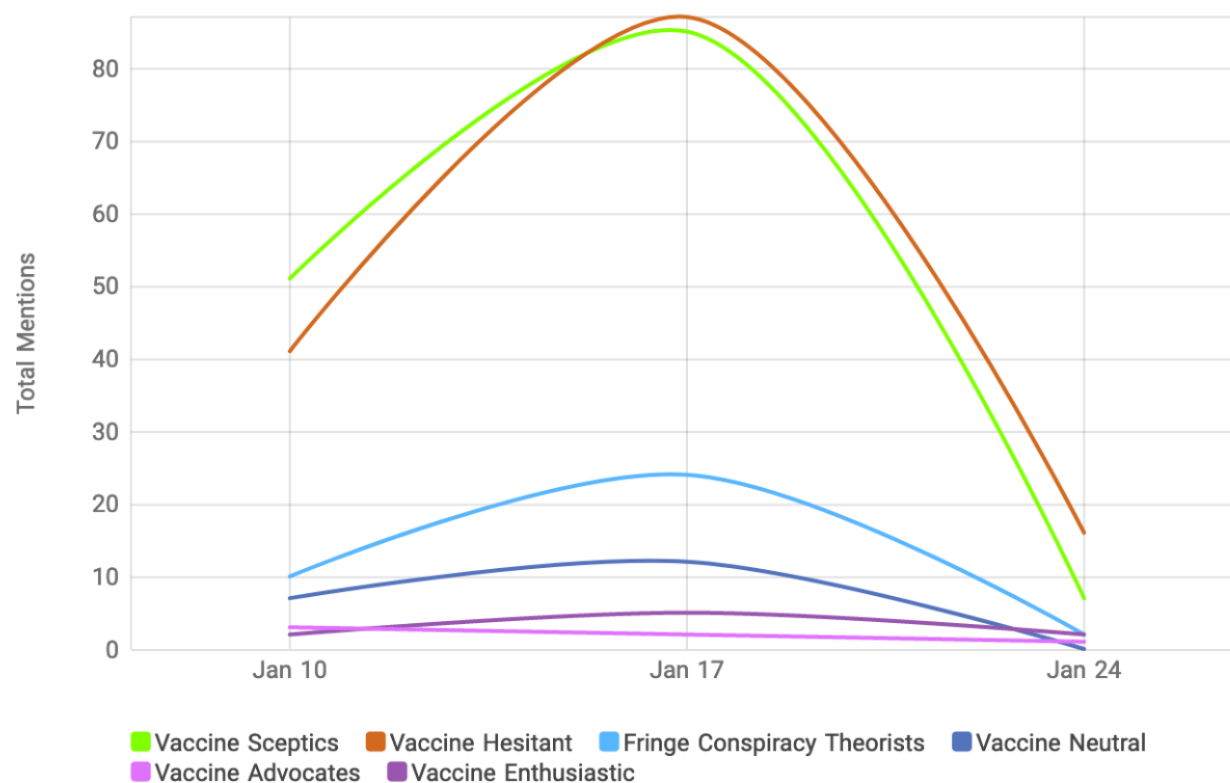
- **Controversies surrounding vaccine mandates**
- **Anti-vaxxers are at it**
- **Conspiracy theories**
- **Vaccine injuries and deaths**

Part 1

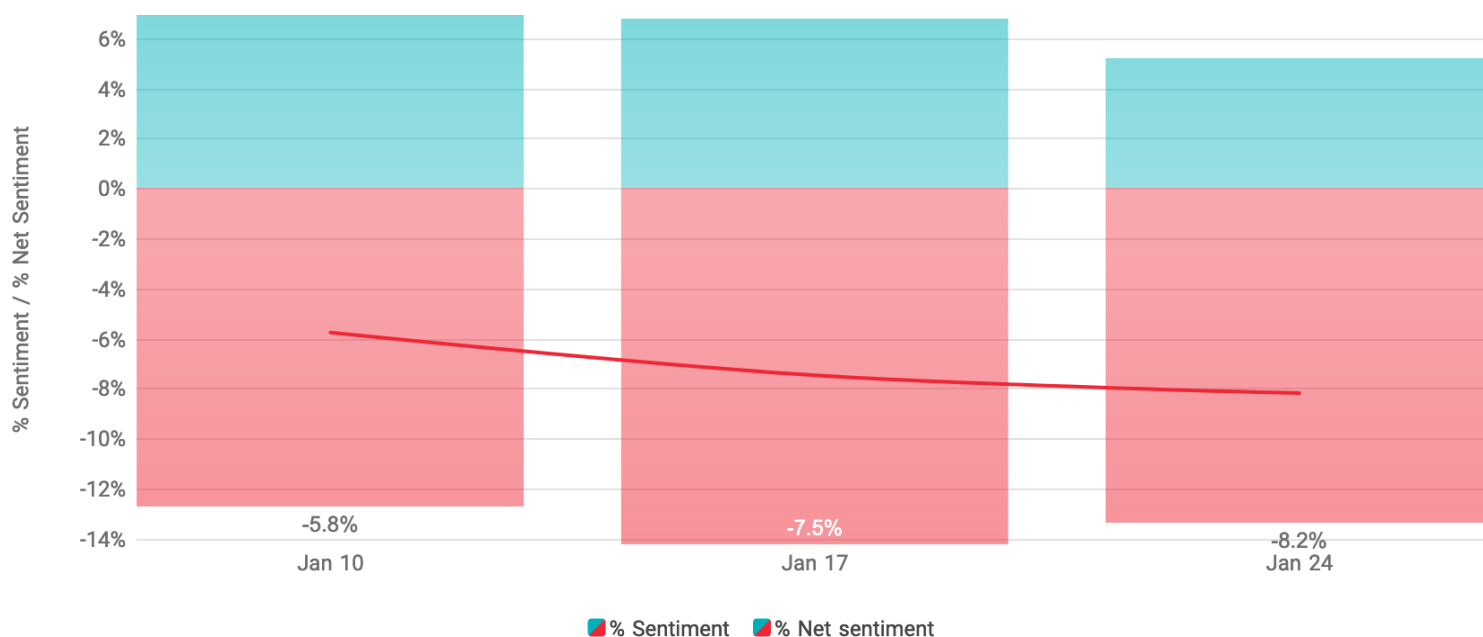
Over the last week, Twitter conversations regarding the COVID-19 vaccine garnered considerable traction in terms of volume. See the graph below:



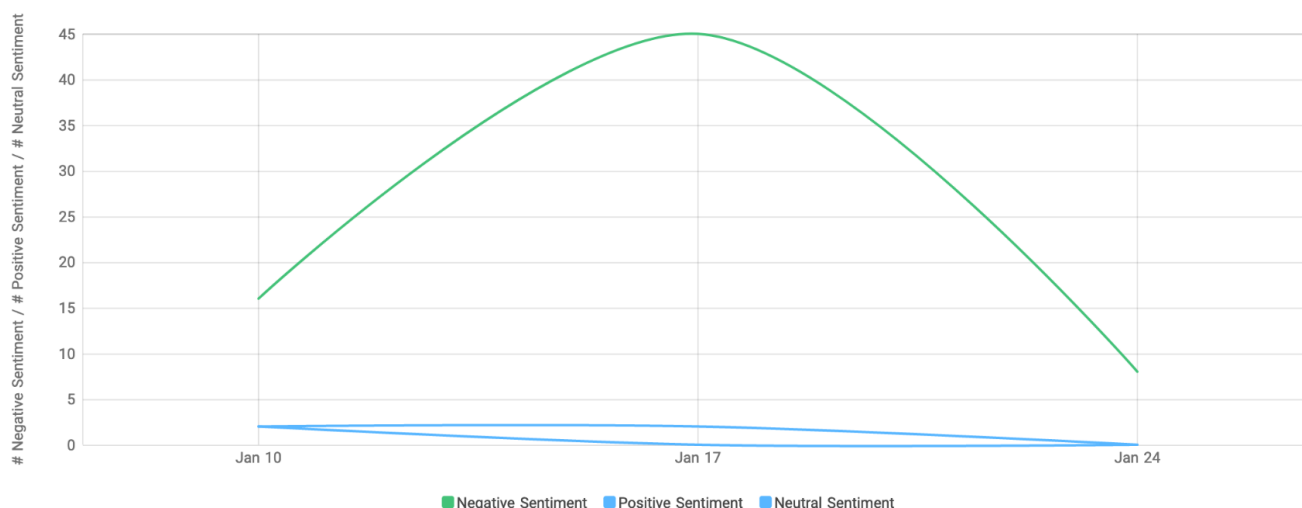
The graph below illustrates the different tones of the Twitter online conversation according to our vaccine trust spectrum. It noting that that vaccine hesitancy and vaccine skepticism have been the most prominent:



The graph below shows the overall net sentiment of mentions over the last week. The blue indicates positive sentiments and the red indicates negative sentiments. Most of the sentiments over this period have been in the negative zone:



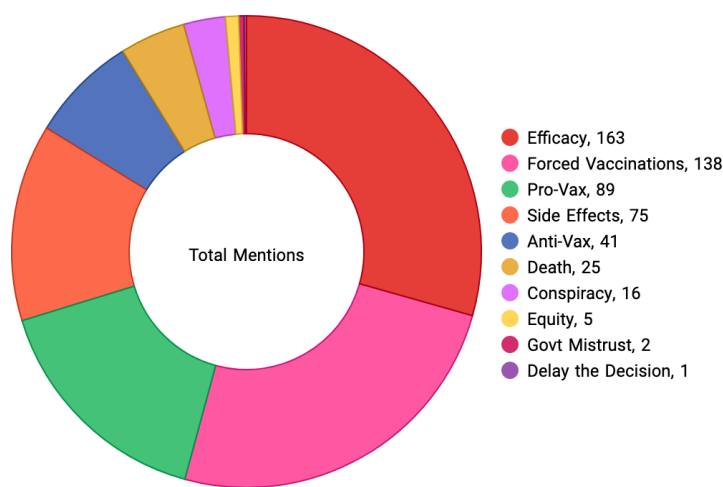
The graph below is another example of this. The green line represents negative sentiment:



This table below goes even further by unpacking a variety of factors such as engagement, opportunities to see, sentiment etc. Draw your attention to volume column; here you clearly see that the top three drivers in volume are vaccine hesitancy, vaccine skepticism and fringe conspiracy theories:

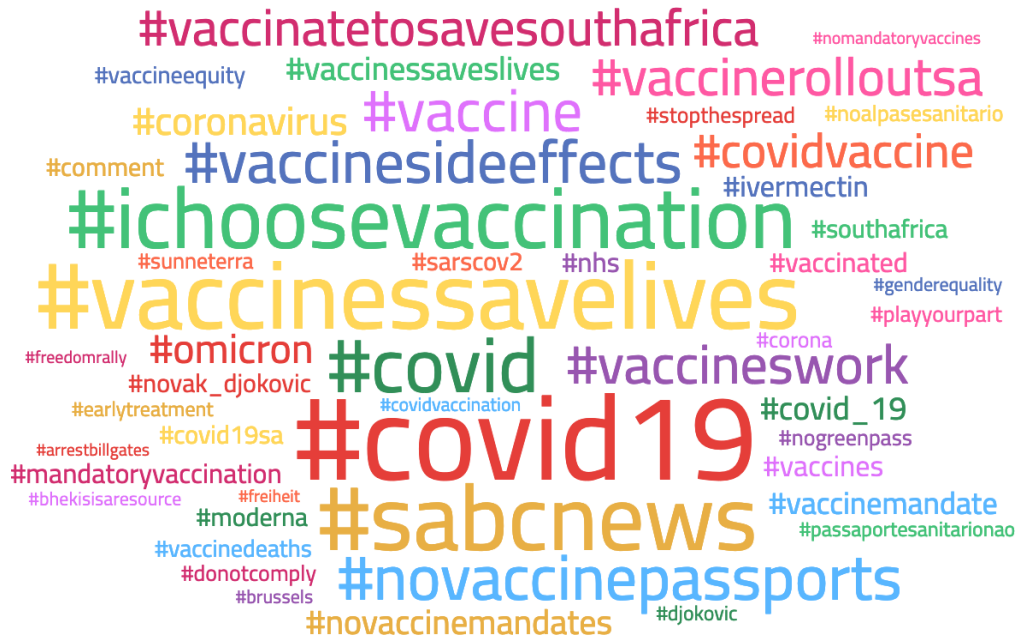
	Volume	Engagement	OTS	Sentiment	Authors	Followers	Conversations	Engagement Rate
Vaccine Hesitant	40.3%	4	470 357	-52.8%	120	153 368	141	0.0
Vaccine Sceptics	40.1%	17	5 027 746	-100.0%	122	4 410 821	139	0.1
Fringe Conspiracy Theorists	10.1%	11	401 637	-100.0%	30	153 368	32	0.3
Vaccine Neutral	5.3%	2	771 584	-31.6%	18	510 601	17	0.1
Vaccine Enthusiastic	2.5%	0	5 937	100.0%	9	3 716	9	0.0
Vaccine Advocates	1.7%	0	11 589	100.0%	6	9 994	6	0.0

And lastly, the figure below gives some insights into the kind of rhetoric being used online:



Part 2

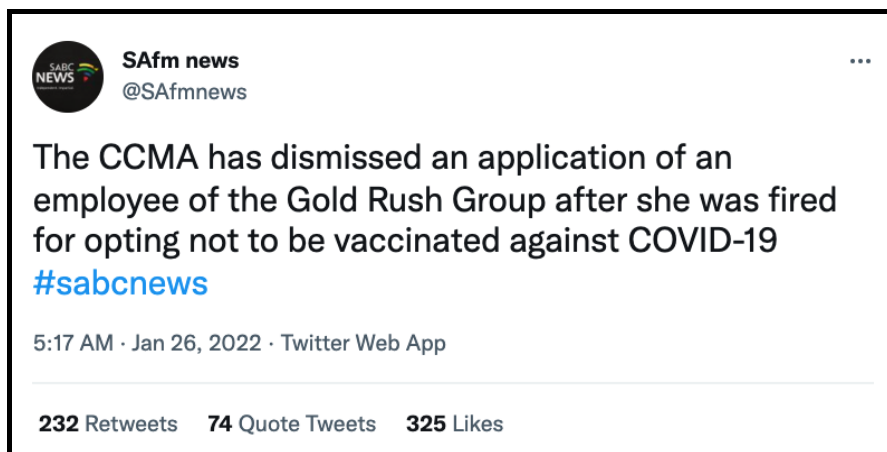
Recent online conversations around the vaccine have demonstrated a range of attitudes towards the vaccine - both against and pro-vaccine. See the word cloud below:



As discussed in Part 1, recent online conversations have been largely driven by vaccine hesitancy and vaccine skepticism. This section will unpack some of the top trending issues that were picked up by our analysts. These topics will also be accompanied by dialogue facilitation suggestions highlighted in *italics*:

CCMA dismisses unvaccinated employee dismissal

As seen in the [post](#) below, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) made a ruling to dismiss the application of an employee who was fired because of her refusal to get vaccinated.



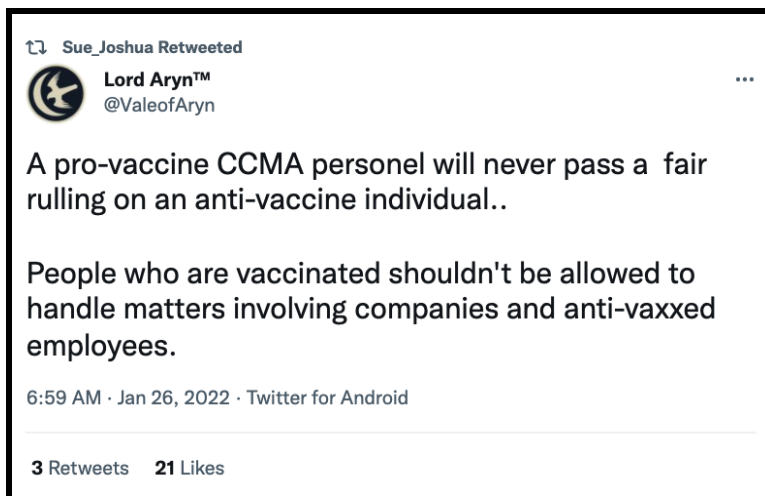
Naturally, this ruling has caused a lot of controversy. Many have since spoken out against the CCMA citing that the ruling infringes on individual liberties and freedom - particularly in a democratic country. This is illustrated by the [tweet](#) below:



Dialogue Responses:

- *Not all jobs require vaccine certificates...*
- *If you don't want to get vaccinated, don't apply to that specific job. Is it not that simple?*
- *Remember that only YOU can decide if you want to take the vaccine or not.*

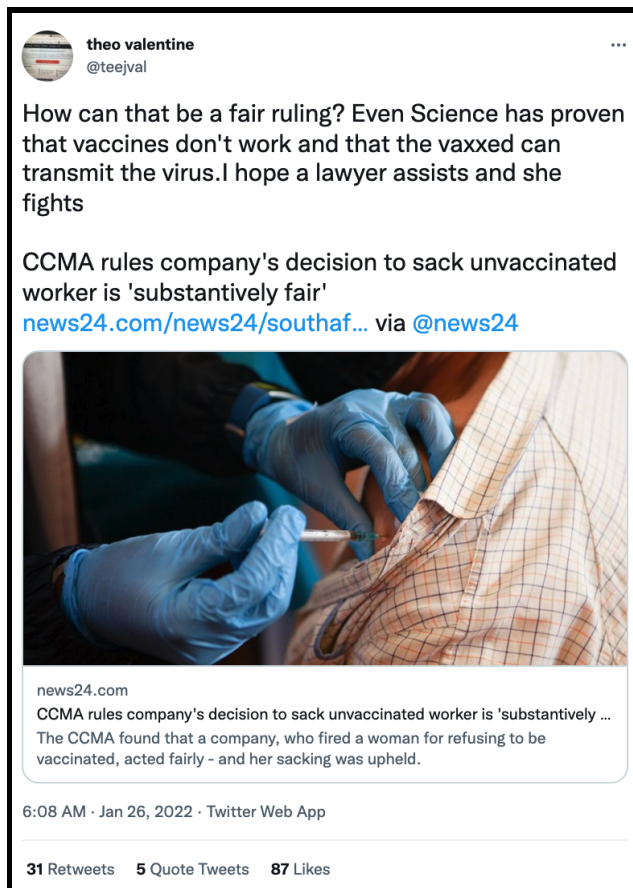
Some have even accused the CCMA of being unable to assess the case with objectivity as this [post](#) alludes:



Dialogue Responses:

- *Being vaccinated doesn't make you partial - it is a personal choice.*
- *This is a rather silly suggestion. These are trained commissioners who have spent years dealing with employers and employees. To suggest that their vaccination status makes them partial is rather peculiar, don't you agree?*
- *For the collective good, it is necessary to take measures to ensure the safety for the good of the company, vaccination is a free choice.*

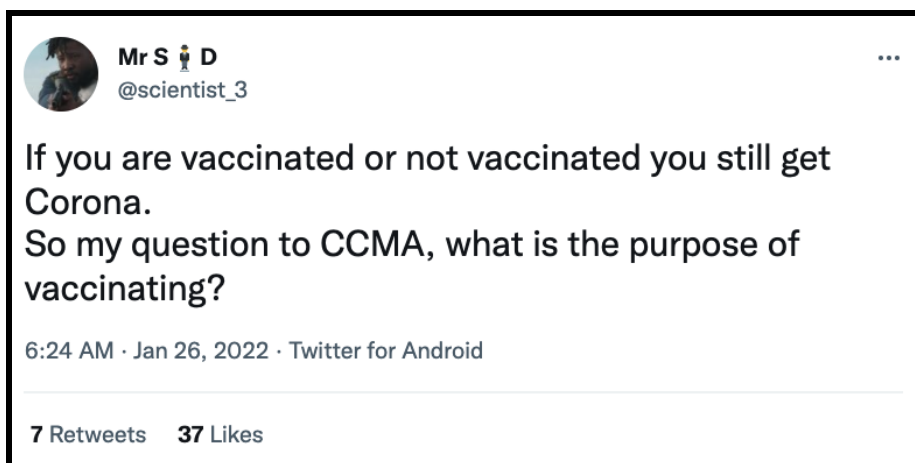
Others have attempted to use the argument that transmissions occur despite being vaccinated as seen in this [post](#):



Dialogue Responses:

- *What are your views around the vaccine mandates?*
- *But they transmit it at a lower rate, what do you think?*
- *How do you think the case should have been handled?*

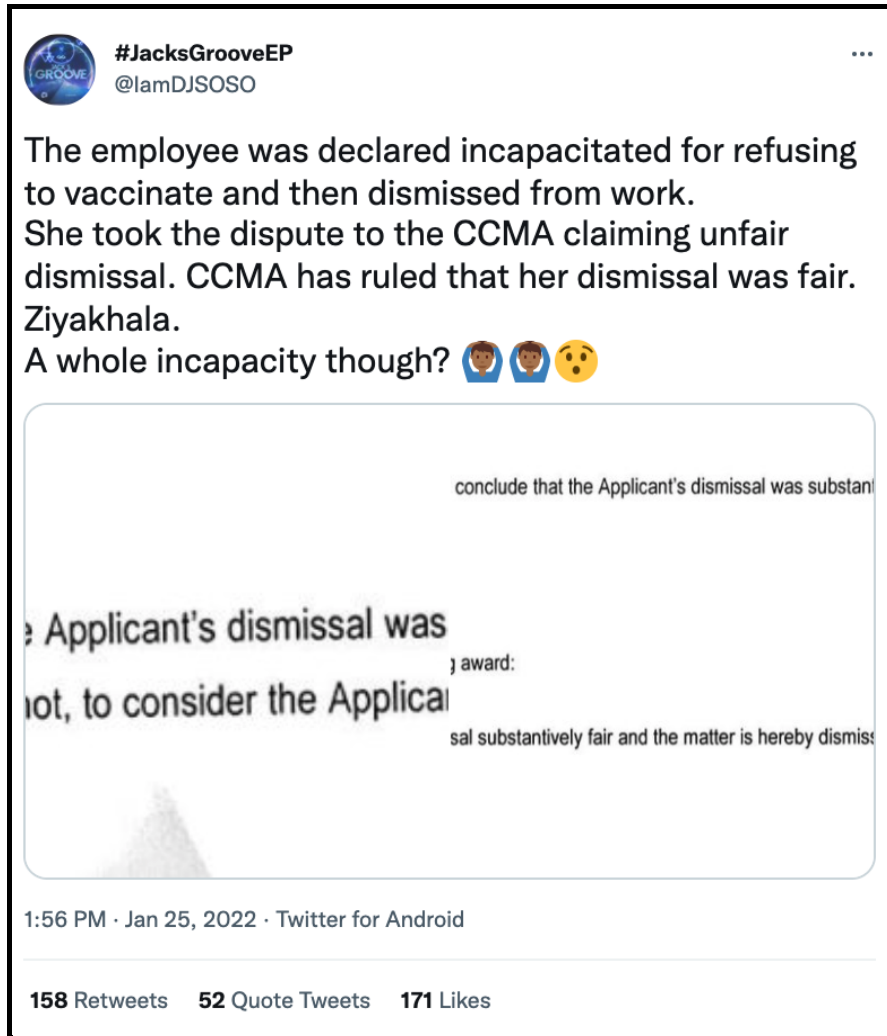
This [tweet](#) shares similar sentiments:



Dialogue Responses:

- *If you are vaccinated you are much less likely to get really sick or end up in hospital.*
- *Vaccination reduces the chances of spreading the virus. Even if that reduction is minimal, some protection is better than none. She would have been placing her colleagues and people she interacted with on the job at risk. Right?*
- *By being vaccinated you have less chance to be really sick, and end up in hospital. It would be bad for a company to have employees in hospital instead of working.*

Overall, many seem very concerned about the fairness of this ruling. See [post](#):

**Dialogue Responses:**

- *She would have been unable to do her job, which consisted of interacting with people all the time, effectively due to her vaccination status. Certainly sounds like she was 'incapacitated' to me.*
- *At the end of the day she's an employee. Companies are entitled to implement their policies.*

This [post](#) shares a link to a very insightful and useful analytical breakdown of the ruling:



Dialogue Responses:

- *Pierre De Vos is an absolute intellectual juggernaut. Loved his analysis of the case and his emphasis that claimants should not rely on widely circulating misinformation in their arguments.*

Controversies surrounding vaccine mandates

Vaccine mandates have continued to cause a lot of controversy in online debates.

One of the more recent ones is the University of Free State (UFS) enacting a mandatory vaccine policy for staff and students. As seen in this [post](#), the trade union Solidarity is taking UFS to court:



Dialogue Responses:

- *Institutions should set their own admissions policies. We are in the middle of a pandemic. If UFS wants to institute a mandatory vaccine policy, it must first engage with all stakeholders. And if they agree, which I'm sure they have, they can institute it.*

Since this [announcement](#), the conversation on this matter has gained major traction online:



Similarly, the Democratic Alliance (DA) political party recently made their position against mandatory vaccinations very clear. See [post](#):



Dialogue Responses:

- Glad the DA has not hopped onto the anti-vaccine train at least!
- The debate on mandatory vaccination should continue.
- We all must share our views on this. It is a human rights and political issue.

Diverging opinions on the matter were widely [shared](#) online as seen below:

**Dialogue Responses:**

- Who are these NWO agents? And, what is their game plan?
- Receiving end of the apartheid? Can you elaborate on that please.

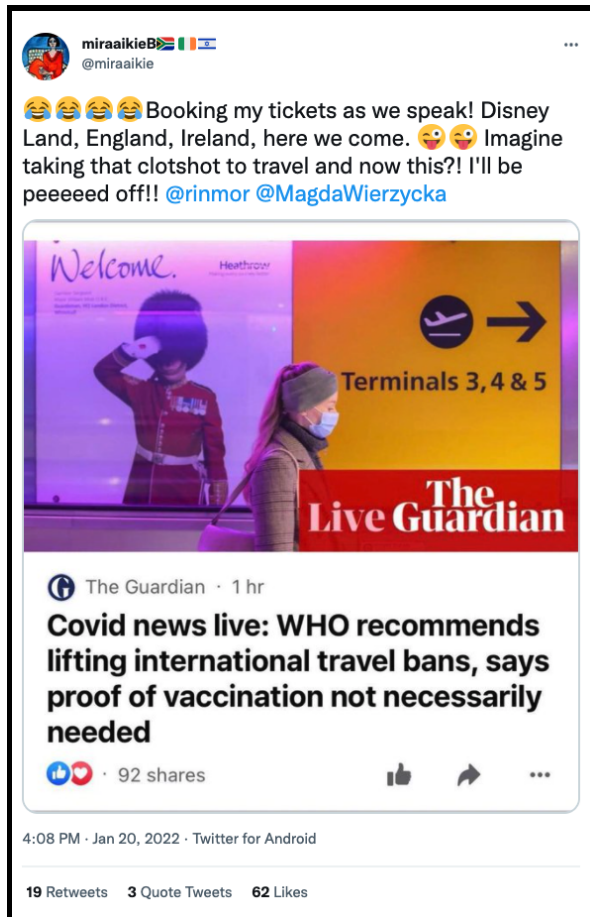
Britain's recent move to amend their vaccine mandates has been picked up by South African audiences - particularly those who are [against these measures](#):



Dialogue Responses:

- *Why are you against vaccine mandates?*
- *They dropped it because they're a highly vaxxed nation where the covid mortality rate is negligible due to the vaccine. What do you think?*
- *It is a good thing and it shows us that if our country can believe in the vaccine, the country could go back to normal.*

Others are celebrating the World Health Organisation's recommendation to relax travel bans by mocking the vaccine. See [post](#) below:

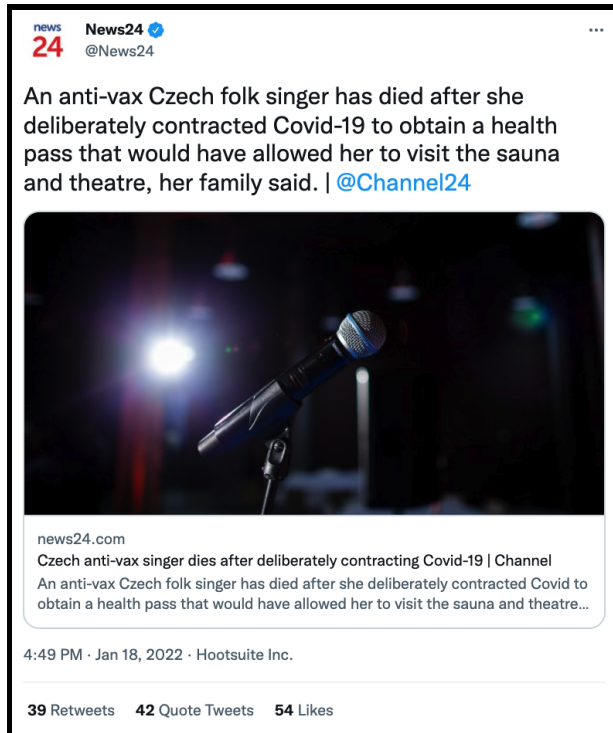
**Dialogue Responses:**

- *As we learn more about the virus the restrictions and rules will change.*
- *Why do you call it a clotshot? Why clotshot instead of using the word vaccine?*

Anti-vaxxers are at it

The anti-vaxxer movement is showing no signs of slowing down.

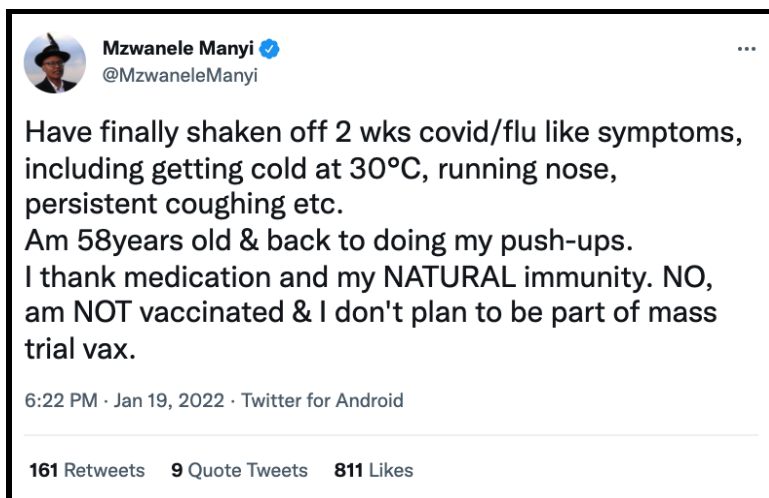
A [story](#) from the Czech Republic has made international headlines and has also been picked up by South African audiences. A woman died after allegedly contracting COVID-19 deliberately.



Dialogue Responses:

- *Isn't there like a thing that was created so that you don't die from the Covid-19? What was it called? Vacancies? Variant? Vacation? Mmmhh...*
- *But you don't have a proof or any evidence*
- *It has been said over and it will be said that vaccines help prevent severe cases and sometimes death. I wish she knew this information before exposing herself*
- *It is so disturbing to hear such sad news whilst people are being told everyday that vaccine is free and can prevent such things from happening*

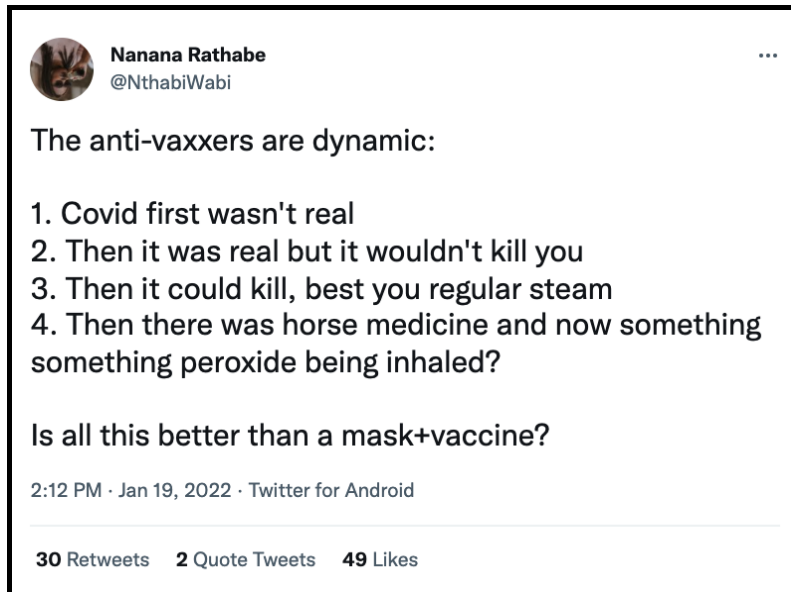
As seen in this [tweet](#), others are bragging about surviving COVID-19 without the vaccine:



Dialogue Responses:

- *The vaccine is not a trial. What makes you say the vaccine is a trial?*
- *The vaccine was proven to be safe and passed all the trials*
- *You're spreading misinformation.*

The anti-vaxxer narrative has proven to be dynamic as highlighted by this [tweet](#):

**Dialogue Responses:**

- *Co-ask.*
- *Nothing is better than mask and vaccine when it comes to the covid virus*

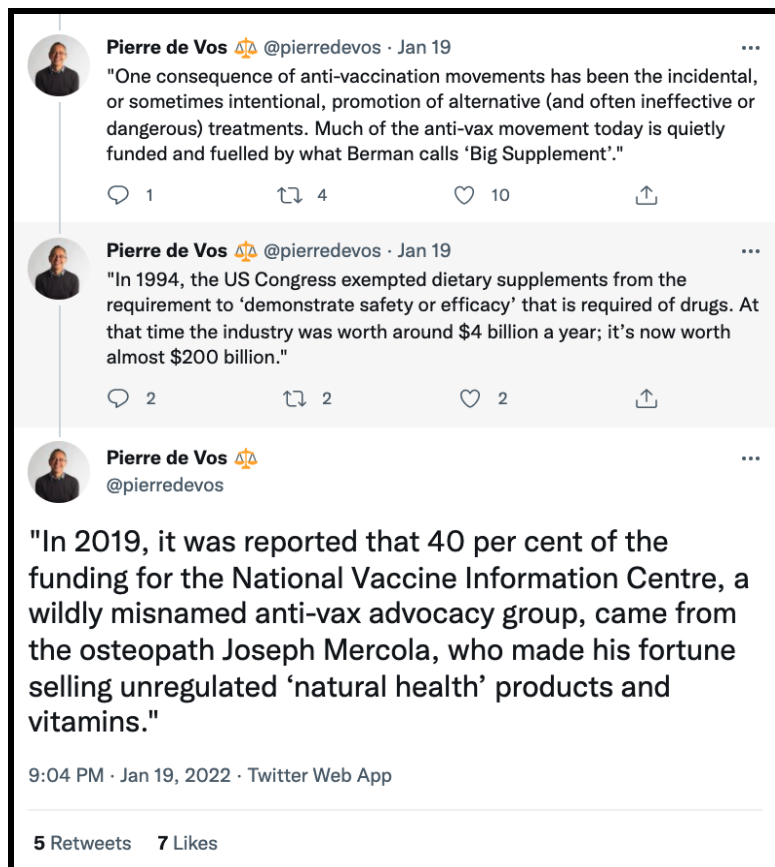
And, anti-vaxxers have become more and more emboldened. See [post](#):



Dialogue Responses:

- *Shame, we also looked for options that worked, created hope & saved lives. Turns out....it was the vaccine! Who would have thought?*
- *Are people still getting covid despite your 4 options?*
- *No one has said that this pandemic would end humanity but in order to combat that, the vaccine is a solution.*
- *Why wont you just get the jab to save your life?*

Well-known commentator Pierre de Vos [shared](#) a thread on anti-vaxxer history in order to shed some light on why so many remain hesitant:

**Dialogue Responses:**

- *Petition to call these institutions "Big Harma" (Harmer)?*
- *Please share a link with more info on this. If true, it's unacceptable.*
- *I would appreciate it if you shared the link of this information.*

Conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories show no signs of slowing down. The topic surrounding 5G seems to continuously garner considerable traction online.

Have a look at the multiple 5G conspiracy theories and suggested dialogue responses:

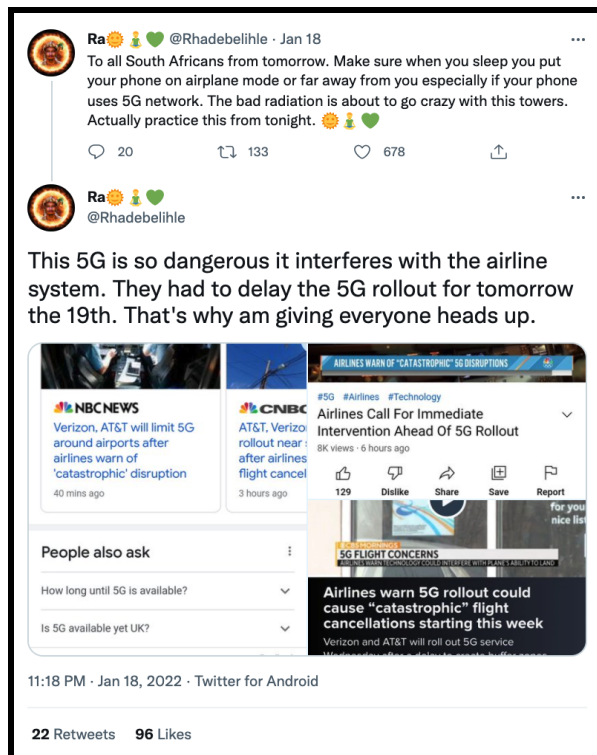
This [tweet](#) encourages people to get help if they start getting ill from 5G:



Dialogue Responses:

- *This is not necessary - the vaccine does not contain 5G...*
- *Haibo? I got vaxxed, where's my 5G?*
- *Is all this backed by scientific evidence ?*
- *Share a link with proof. I would like to know how G5 is directed to people who took the jab. Where did you get that information from?*

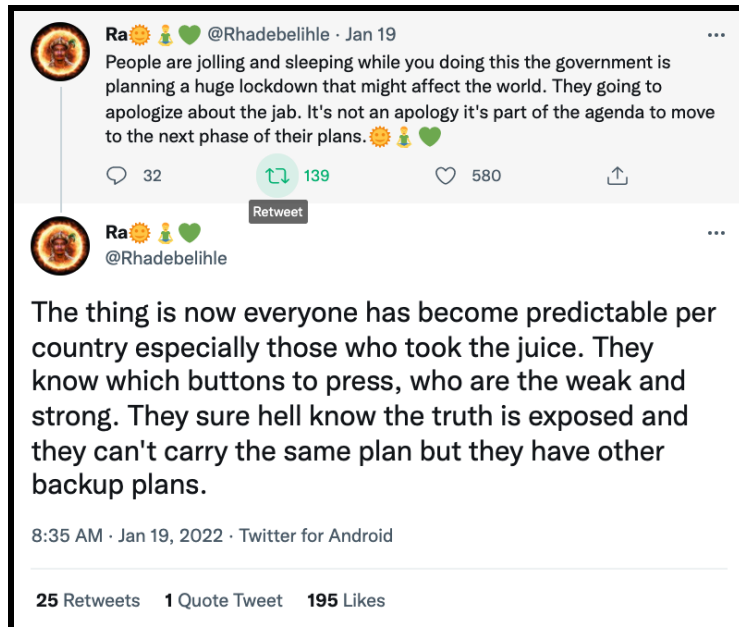
This [thread](#) highlights the supposed dangers of 5G and how it interferes with airline systems:



Dialogue Responses:

- *Where are you getting this information from?*
- *All your pictures are saying that 5G could disrupt airplanes from flying. Where does radiation come in?*
- *It is not yet proven that 5G has substantial consequences on the human mind. You are speculating. There are no facts here stating how 5G interferes with the airline.*
- *Can you not bore us with your wrong information please.*

This [post](#) continues on the same bizarre theories:

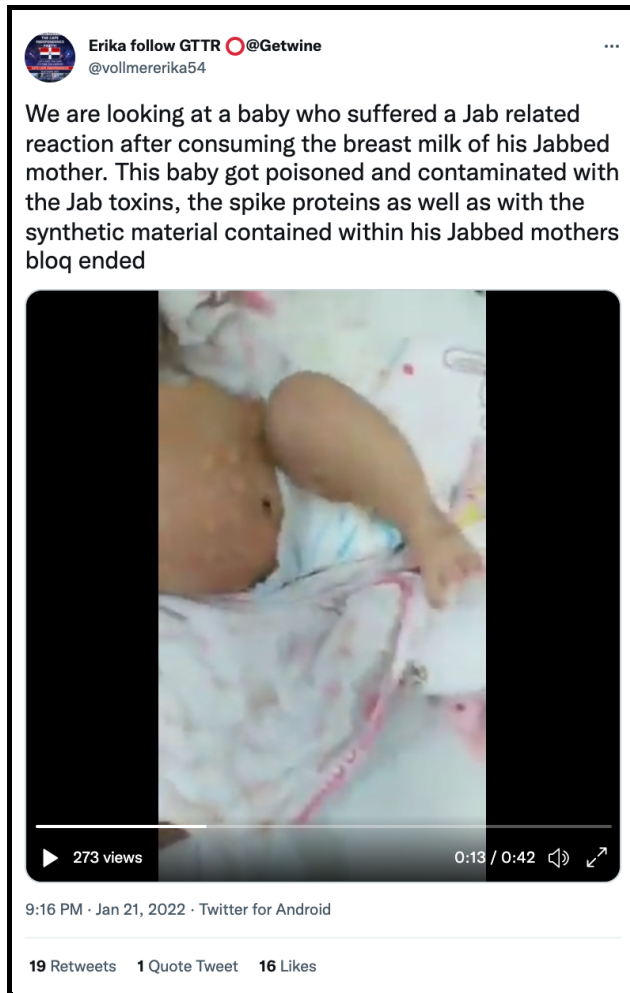
**Dialogue Responses:**

- *Out of interest, what is the next phase of their plan?*
- *Why are these theories getting wilder and wilder? Do you really believe that the pandemic was planned?*
- *Share a link please or proof. I would like to know how all this is being planned. Unless of course you are making this up.*
- *The world has seen more than one pandemic in its history, what makes you think this was planned and which agenda are you talking about ?*
- *What makes you think all of this was planned? Who planned it? What makes you believe in that?*
- *You seem to know more without evidence, what plans are you talking about?*

Vaccine injuries and deaths

There have been many claims, both locally and internationally, about people experiencing severe injuries and/or deaths following their jabs. These conversations trend particularly amongst those who are against the vaccine.

This [post](#) shared a video of a baby who has apparently been poisoned by the vaccine:



Dialogue Responses:

- *This is terrible, but doesn't seem to be from the vaccine.*
- *Instead of you explaining what happened, can we get the study on this? Research supporting your statement? Stop shamelessly promoting your narrative without facts.*
- *Facts only please. Is there any report from doctors on this?*
- *We should be careful sharing information that aren't backed by scientific proof as it can lead to misinformation*
- *This is not good, but can we not involve the vaccine where we don't have evidence of if it was caused by it*

This [post](#) shares a link to a flawed study about vaccine deaths. It has already been debunked:



Dialogue Responses:

- Have these been linked to the vaccine?
- This study was debunked as it was flawed. See here:
<https://healthfeedback.org/claimreview/scientific-evidence-shows-covid-19-vaccination-reduces-risk-infection-mortality-analysis-cases-deaths-from-145-countries-methodologically-flawed-steve-kirsch/>
- Surely each one of those 145 countries would have their own research done that would indicate the cause of increase in death. Until then, no speculations are necessary.
- It has not been proven that the vaccine was the direct cause of it.
- Aybo introduced where?

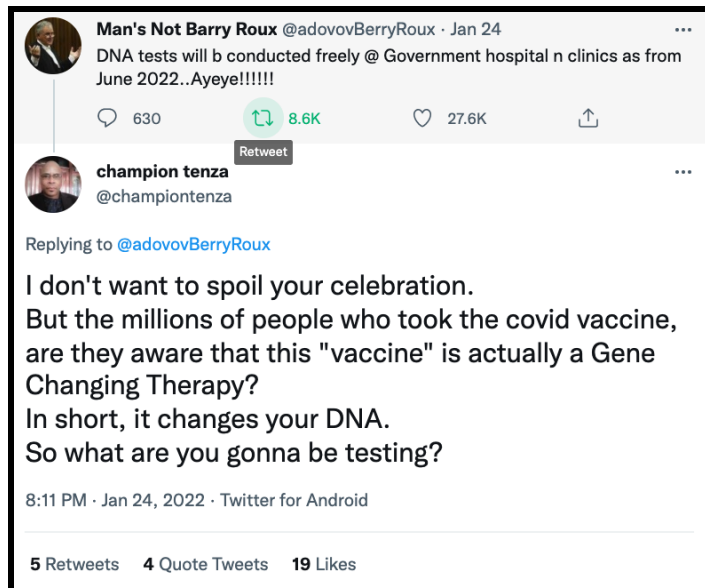
This [tweet](#) claims that vaccines are killing people:



Dialogue Responses:

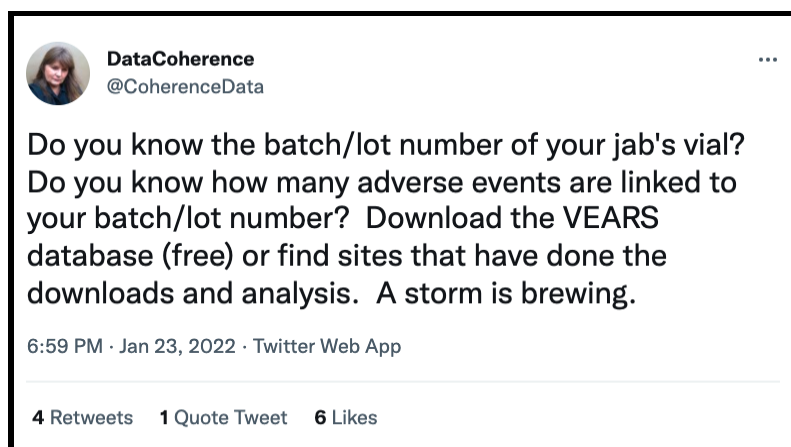
- *Where is the proof of this “toxic” vaccine?*
- *Billions have taken this vaccine. Surely we woulda been digging mass graves if this vaccine was killing people? What do you think?*
- *Can you provide the link to the research?*
- *I have not heard such a thing, where did you get this information from?*

A [comment](#) to this post claims that the vaccine is “gene changing therapy”.

**Dialogue Responses:**

- Give me the link to any reliable study that says vaccines are gene changing therapy.
- Provide proof please?
- Where did you get this information from ?
- Lol where does that come from?

This [post](#) attempts to raise awareness about apparent adverse events due to the vaccine:



Dialogue Responses:

- Anyone can go to VAERS and report an adverse event. It is not a reliable source for information. Don't you think?
- Please if you need any information about the vaccine the government page is always available