

Viewpoint: Just one COVID-19 vaccine is not enough to win the war. We need an army

Scientists have created more than 70 vaccine candidates so far. “If we end up with two, three, or four vaccines, that’s good, since we have seven billion people,” says Harvard vaccine researcher Dan Barouch, who led the development of one of the vaccines featured in recent news. His group began working on a vaccine in January, after the virus started spreading in China.

There are good reasons for him and other scientists to be optimistic.

“For COVID-19, it’s clear most humans who get infected recover ... that alone shows the human immune system can eliminate the virus,” he says.

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Art Krieg, a physician and founder of Checkmate Pharmaceuticals, says he’s very optimistic that because the human immune system can successfully battle the virus, so will one or more of the many experimental vaccines.

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Krieg says all the novel vaccines work through the same well-established scientific principles, and are very likely to be safe. Still, he says, it’s well known that vaccines don’t work as well in the elderly and immunocompromised. Imperfect vaccines could still eradicate the virus through herd immunity but only if the bulk of the population gets vaccinated. Once the technical hurdles are overcome, there will be social hurdles — already, there are [movements](#) among [anti-vaxxers](#) to resist — but it’s not too soon to plan to surmount them.

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