Pfizer COVID trial patient calls vaccine ‘miracle from the biotech revolution’

It was early August, and I had enlisted in the clinical trial for the vaccine that has just reported very promising results: the one developed by Pfizer with the German company BioNTech. It is a new type of RNA vaccine that has never before been deployed.

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The success of the Pfizer vaccine means that the plague year of 2020 will be remembered as the time when traditional vaccines began to be supplanted by genetic vaccines. Instead of delivering tiny and safe doses of the virus itself, these new vaccines deliver a piece of genetic coding that will instruct human cells to produce, on their own, components of a targeted virus. These safe components can then stimulate the patient’s immune system.

It is another wondrous miracle from a biotech revolution in which knowledge of genetic coding will become as important as digital coding and molecules will become the new microchips.

The great news about RNA vaccines is that they can easily be reprogrammed. Even after we defeat covid-19, new viruses will come along. When that happens, it will take only days to code a new RNA sequence to make a vaccine to target the new threat. Tools made with RNA will enable us both to edit our genetic material and to devise easily reprogrammable vaccines.

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