

Anti-vaxxers based their rejectionism on a study claiming COVID shots caused excessive deaths. Now it's been retracted

Back in January, [an academic study](#) gave heart to critics of COVID-19 vaccines by estimating the number of U.S. deaths from the vaccines at 278,000.

That was a bombshell, if true. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [cited only 19,476 reports of deaths](#) after COVID vaccination in a national database of unverified adverse reactions to the shots.

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Yet the study, by economist Mark Skidmore of Michigan State University, was taken as gospel truth by a legion of anti-vaccine activists.

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Now take a deep breath. BMC Infectious Diseases [retracted the Skidmore study](#) on [April 11], specifically citing doubts about "the validity of the conclusions" related to death statistics because of flaws in its methodology. Skidmore disagrees with the retraction.

The retraction, which followed months of [dickering between Skidmore and the journal's editor](#) over the nature and text of the retraction notice, points to some important questions about how the spread of misinformation about COVID affects public health.

It also raises questions about how the piece got published in the first place. As [Stephanie M. Lee of the Chronicle of Higher Education](#) has pointed out, the flaws in Skidmore's paper were virtually self-evident from the moment it reached print.

[This is an excerpt. Read the full article here](#)