Written by **Veronika Kyrylenko** on April 28, 2023

Dr. Madhava Setty: Transforming Vaccine Policies via Open Debate

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In early April, the 23rd World Vaccine Congress took place in Washington, D.C. Dedicated to all-things vaccines, the event gathered high-profile professionals from the pharmaceutical and biotech industries, academia, and government "to produce more and better vaccines for the market." The so-called vaccine hesitancy was recognized as a major challenge, "as big as protecting the world from the next deadly pathogen."

In this interview with *The New American*, Dr. Madhava Setty shares his observations on the conference, which he said demonstrated that the pro-vaccine camp is not as monolithic as it seems, even though the keynote speakers channeled the agreed-upon orthodoxy. Addressing the "anti-vaxxer" movement, the experts unequivocally dismissed the reasonable need for engaging with its experts and learning more about their concerns. Instead, said Dr. Setty, they are employing behavioral science and targeted messaging to reach particular audiences and, practically, manipulate them into accepting vaccines. At the same time, neither of the two major forces driving vaccine skepticism — safety concerns and institutional mistrust — was given proper consideration by the panelists.

The goal of the scientists who see major flaws in vaccine-related matters is to reach the undecided public by maintaining an open dialogue, said the doctor, arguing that in the end, people can clearly see that one side is asking for an honest discussion and the other is relying on censorship. When enough people start doubting the narrative and talking about it with their primary care physicians, then we'll see a much-needed transformation of vaccination policies.

Dr. Madhava Setty is a senior science editor for The Defender, a board-certified anesthesiologist, and the author of the book "Woke. An Anesthesiologist's View."

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