

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a social-media influencer [Name TBD] finds an opportunity to make some money by selling an alleged “treatment” for the Coronavirus. They have read in numerous studies that Vitamin-D deficiency is linked to the severity of the illness of those who catch the disease, and that taking Vitamin-D supplements might help with the severity of Covid-19. The influencer buys the original tablets on market for €0.10 per tablet and re-sells them at €2.00 a tablet, for a total price of €200 per bottle on their online store. Leveraging their social-media following of 1 million followers, the influencer starts promoting their product as a “Covid-19 Treatment” that prevents consumers from catching the disease. The influencer’s following consists mostly of minors. The influencer posts on their Instagram story a video promoting this new product [See Storyboard Below]. At the same time, they include a link on their Instagram bio that if users open redirects them to a report explaining the immune-strengthening properties of Vitamin-D and its relation to Covid-19 [See Annex 1]. The promotion is a success and the influencer makes close to €100,000.



Scene 1: Introduction [At Home, Selfie Shot]

The influencer pitches the Vitamin D product as a “prevention” for Covid-19. The influencer states that their product can keep people ‘safe’ from Covid-19 and allow them to be with friends again. To prove the point, the influencer is shown taking the Vitamin D tablet and telling viewers that they will attend a party.

The influencer does not mention that they have included a link to a scientific study in their Instagram bio.



Scene 2: The Party [POV of the Influencer]

The influencer attends a party full of people. For the purposes of producing the video, we will use stock footage of a party. The influencer themselves will not appear in the footage, but it will be made clear that they are the one filming it.



Scene 3: The Pitch [At Home, Selfie Shot]

The influencer (a week after the party) tells their followers that they feel great and that the product was a “success”.

In the same clip, there is a ‘swipe up’ feature that redirects viewers to the influencer’s online shop where they can purchase the Vitamin D tablets.

Alex, a 17 year-old follower of the social-media influencer, sees their Instagram story and is motivated to buy an entire bottle of the supposed Covid-19 Treatment. Alex wants to spend time with his friends, but is worried that he may catch the Coronavirus. He is especially afraid of catching the virus and passing it on to his family, including his grandmother, who lives with them at home. Believing that the drugs will work, Alex purchases an entire bottle of the treatment from the online store, but does not open the link included in the influencer’s bio. Alex and his friends agree to go to the cinema, but before going, he takes the recommended dosage of the treatment. Due to bad weather, the cinema is busy and is at the maximum capacity permitted. Alex is not concerned, however, as he has taken the drug and enjoys the movie. One week after the movie, Alex begins to feel sick and gets tested for Coronavirus. Sure enough, he has caught the disease. Contact-tracing through the CoronaMelder app reveals that he caught the disease at the cinema, as he has received a notification that someone with Corona was in close proximity to him during the movie. Alex suffers from a severe form of the illness, requiring him to stay home for 4 weeks. Alongside the ordeal of recovering from the illness, Alex was unable to work at his local grocer, where he gets paid by the hour. He is not compensated by his work-place for taking time-off to recover. He is also unable to help in doing basic

household chores. Alex's entire household must also quarantine for 14-days. Some members of the family, including grandma, catch the virus from Alex.

Alex recovers from the illness and is upset that the drugs he purchased from the influencer did not work. Alex feels that it is the influencer's fault for selling a treatment that did not work and would like to receive compensation for the cost of the drugs. He has the following conversation over Instagram with the influencer:



Having attempted to resolve the matter out of court, Alex commences a lawsuit against the influencer, in order to receive compensation. Not only does he seek compensation for the cost of the drugs but also for the loss he suffered while recovering from the coronavirus.

## Annex 1: Report on the relationship between Vitamin-D Deficiency and Covid-19:

Vitamin D is important for bone and muscle health and may also have a role in the body's immune response to respiratory viruses. Two forms of vitamin D (vitamin D2 ergocalciferol and vitamin D3 colecalciferol) are licensed for the prevention and treatment of vitamin D deficiency but are not specifically licensed for preventing or treating any infection including the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. In June, the UK Government found that there was no evidence to support taking vitamin D supplements to specifically prevent or treat Covid-19. At the same time, everyone should have vitamin D intake equivalent to an average daily intake of 10 micrograms (400 international units) to protect bone and muscle health. This advice suggests that everyone should consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement during autumn and winter.

Original source: National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (2020). *Covid-19 Rapid Evidence Summary: Vitamin D for Covid-19*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/es28/resources/covid19-rapid-evidence-summary-vitamin-d-for-covid-19-pdf-1158182526661>