

Youth Vaccine Perception

A Mixed Methods Investigation on Confidence and Hesitancy

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Panel Discussion: National
Perspectives, Needs, Expectations
Across Europe.
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Research Question & Methods



Context

- Prevalent low confidence levels and declining public trust in vaccination
- Anti-vaccine sentiment and distrust becoming a global health concern
- Rise in hesitancy as 'a delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite availability of vaccination services' (WHO definition)

Objectives

- Understand & investigate European youth views and awareness levels on vaccination
- Analyse information sources, and key determinants of vaccine confidence and hesitancy
- Survey (511 students and young professionals in Belgium)
- 6 focus groups (n=33)

Key Findings: Survey Results

- Majority of young people with positive views on vaccines (65% benefits outweigh the risks). This percentage is higher (75%) amongst the self proclaimed more well informed group on vaccines and health.
- Young people most confident when receiving information on vaccines from their doctor (83%), family (50%), health journals (47%) or individual research (47%).
- Most influential reasons to vaccinate: self protection (26%), preventing illnesses (15%) and following the advice of the healthcare community (14%).

Key Findings: Survey Results

- Lowest awareness levels with regards to the benefits of vaccination against AMR.
- Biggest contributors to vaccine hesitancy: concerns on safety and efficacy (25%), preference for alternative medicines (24%). Distrust in pharmaceutical companies and lack of reliable information on illnesses further contributors.
- Better access to transparent and reliable information the best way to increase the image and uptake of vaccination. Targeted campaigns a further important means.

Key Findings: Survey & Focus Group

- Large majority of young people (83%) believe the EU should be monitor and ensure Member States have equal levels of vaccine coverage.
- 71% view the EU as having a responsibility to ensure elimination strategies for certain VPDs, and 67% want to see the creation of an EU wide electronic immunisation record.

Focus Group Key Themes

1. Need for clear and transparent information on vaccines and their impact.
2. Social media as a determinant of hesitancy.
3. European responsibility to ensure vaccination coverage.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Building trust through reliable and accessible information on vaccines and VPDs as important a measure as tackling the 'knowledge deficit' approach adopted by other hesitancy strategies.

Recommendations

1. Investigate and monitor youth attitudes to vaccination on a larger scale
1. Ensure EU policy sets targets for vaccination coverage across Member States.
1. Restore trust in multiple actors in the vaccination process
1. Where crucial low levels of knowledge exist (HPV in male population/AMR vaccine) – undertake targeted awareness raising actions.