

PUBLIC RESPONSES TO PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES ENCOURAGING VACCINATION DURING PANDEMICS OR EPIDEMICS: A RAPID REVIEW

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BACKGROUND

Trials are currently underway to identify an effective vaccine to protect communities against the novel COVID-19 virus. Vaccination coverage rates have declined in the UK in recent years and a recent poll by the Royal Society for Public Health revealed one in five (19%) respondents would not or were unsure if they would take up a vaccine for COVID-19. Health campaigns are used to advise the public about how best to reduce transmission of novel viruses (including encouraging the uptake of vaccinations); understanding the public's response to such campaigns can inform future communication strategies. A group of health psychology researchers forming part of the Health Psychology Exchange (HPX) conducted a rapid review of public health messaging about vaccinations during pandemics or epidemics, to inform public health organisations of how to approach messaging around a new vaccine for COVID-19.

AIMS

To conduct a rapid review of evidence relating to how people respond to messages encouraging vaccination during pandemics or epidemics to prevent disease transmission.

METHODS

Searches were performed in Ovid PsycINFO, Ovid MEDLINE and healthevidence.org for a review of public health messaging, using terms specific to public health campaigns (e.g. "messages"), and pandemics or epidemics (e.g. "outbreak"). PsyArXiv Preprints and OSF Preprints were searched for grey literature. A further keyword search using terms relating to vaccination (e.g. "vaccine") was performed on the results from the searches for the main review, to identify potentially eligible studies.

Studies were included if they tested at least one type of message, measured at least one vaccination-related outcome (e.g. uptake), and participants were adults. Message delivery could include one or more of: mobile technology, news media, broadcasts, adverts, posters, social media posts, letters, websites or health alerts. All study designs were considered for inclusion. Non-English language articles were excluded.

RESULTS

This rapid review is ongoing and the results will be reported in a future publication.