

Adherence to COVID-19 vaccination during the pandemic and fake news: Correspondence

Hinpetch Daungsupawong¹

ORCID: 0009-0002-5881-2709

Viroj Wiwanitkit^{II}

ORCID: 0000-0003-1039-3728

¹ Private Academic and Editorial Consultant.
Phonhong, Laos.

^{II} Chandigarh University Gharuan, University Centre for
Research & Development Department of Pharmaceutical
Sciences. Mohali, Punjab, India.

Corresponding author:

Hinpetch Daungsupawong
E-mail: wviroj@yahoo.com

Submission: 05-20-2024

Approval: 06-30-2024

Dear Dr Dulce Aparecida Barbosa

Editor in Chief of the Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem

We would like to share ideas on the publication "Adherence to COVID-19 vaccination during the pandemic: the influence of fake news"⁽¹⁾. This study, carried out in Campo Grande, Mississippi, looked at how nursing professionals saw the population's reaction to vaccine reluctance. According to the findings, experts saw a rise in vaccination reluctance in the public, which they blamed on the impact of fake news and denialist activities. It was discovered that the public's trust in vaccinations and the medical personnel who deliver them is adversely impacted by these circumstances. Twenty nursing professionals participated in semi-structured interviews for the study, and the data was analyzed using thematic content analysis.

The study's tiny sample size of only twenty nursing professionals is one possible weakness. This small sample might not fully represent the views of all nursing professionals in Campo Grande, MS, or represent the entire spectrum of viewpoints about vaccine hesitancy. Furthermore, the study's conclusions can include biases and inconsistencies because it only used the nursing professionals' self-report data. Expanding the sample size and utilizing various data collection techniques should be part of future study in this field to guarantee the accuracy and consistency of the results.

The study's exclusive focus on the opinions of nursing professionals, without taking into account those of other healthcare providers or community members, is another drawback. Incorporating a variety of viewpoints may yield a more thorough comprehension of the variables influencing vaccination reluctance within the populace. Furthermore, the study did not examine any possible tactics or solutions to deal with vaccine reluctance, which can be a useful topic for further investigation. Researching efficient strategies to dispel myths and boost vaccine acceptability could contribute to the development of public health programs and regulations meant to raise immunization rates.

It is agreeable that it is need to properly manage the fake news and it requires attention from all parties. Regarding vaccination, it sometimes very complex. Due to the advent of social media technology, it is difficult to manage. Several anti-COVID-19 blogposts exist and circulate. In a more serious situation, a blogpost owner might disguise his/her own conflict of interest and write/pay for publication of an article in a standard journal with hidden agenda to support his/her own website business and the published work might be further references with risk to the general readers. The qualification of the author of an article is the important thing to be focused⁽²⁾.

Regarding future directions, it would be advantageous for researchers to carry out a follow-up study in order to investigate the effects of denialist actions and fake news on vaccination hesitancy in the general public. This can entail looking into the precise sources of false information and how

they affect how the general public views vaccines. Future studies could also look into how well various communication tactics work to overcome vaccine skepticism and encourage vaccine

adoption. Healthcare providers and legislators can endeavor to raise vaccination rates and boost public confidence in vaccinations by identifying successful treatments and tactics.

REFERENCES

1. Borges LCR, Marcon SS, Britto GS, Terabe M, Pleutim NI, Mendes AH, et al Adherence to Covid-19 vaccination during the pandemic: the influence of fake news. *Rev Bras Enferm.* 2024;77(1):e20230284. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7167-2023-0284>
2. Daungsupawong H, Wiwanitkit V. Re: How the adverse effect counting window affected vaccine safety calculations in randomised trials of COVID-19 vaccines. *J Eval Clin Pract.* 2024 <https://doi.org/10.1111/jep.13976>. Online ahead of print.

AUTHORS' RESPONSE

Elen Ferraz Teston^I

ORCID: 0000-0001-6835-0574

Sonia Silva Marcon^{II}

ORCID: 0000-0002-6607-362X

Luana Cristina Roberto Borges^I

ORCID: 0000-0001-6729-7388

Gabrielly Segatto Brito^I

ORCID: 0000-0003-4310-8778

^I Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul. Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil.

^{II} Universidade Estadual de Maringá. Maringá, Paraná, Brazil.

Corresponding author:

Elen Ferraz Teston

E-mail: elen.ferraz@ufms.br

Submission: 05-20-2024

Approval: 06-30-2024

Dear Professor Doctor Dulce Aparecida Barbosa
Editor-in-Chief of the Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem

In response to the letter to the editor regarding our article titled *Adherence to COVID-19 Vaccination During the Pandemic and Fake News*, published in volume 77, number 1, we present the following considerations:

1. Small sample size: The small sample size, consisting of only twenty nursing professionals, may be seen as a limitation, as it does not represent the opinion of all nursing professionals in Campo Grande, MS, regarding vaccine hesitancy.
 - We remind you that qualitative studies are not intended to make generalizations, and for this reason, the statements made throughout the article were always presented in a relativistic manner. Furthermore, the methodology explicitly mentioned that the sample consisted of nursing professionals involved in immunization across nine urban health units, which make up one of the seven Health Districts in the municipality. Qualitative studies generate hypotheses that can be confirmed or refuted through studies using other designs and robust statistical methods.
2. The study's conclusions may include biases and inconsistencies because it used only self-reported data from nursing professionals. Expanding the sample size and using different data collection techniques should be part of future studies in this area to ensure the accuracy and inconsistency of the results.
 - It is worth noting that obtaining information through self-reports (interviews) is the most widely used data collection technique in qualitative studies. Furthermore, the suggestions presented may be considered in future quantitative studies, since qualitative studies do not aim to guarantee the accuracy of the results. Thus, the difference in qualitative research lies in the singularities and meanings attributed to experiences and the appreciation of the sociocultural dimensions of certain events⁽¹⁾.

3. The study's exclusive focus on the opinions of nursing professionals, without taking into account those of other health care providers in the community. This is another disadvantage.
 - We agree that incorporating a variety of points of view could produce a more in-depth understanding of the factors that influence the population's reluctance to vaccination. For this reason, the participation of only nursing professionals in the study was pointed out as a possible limitation of the study, as we believe that the participation of other professionals and even users of the service could contribute to broadening the perspective regarding adherence to vaccination. Despite the limitation presented, the results found corroborate (from a qualitative perspective) other studies, worldwide, in relation to the drop in vaccination rates and vaccine hesitancy(2-4).
 - Furthermore, we believe that in order to broaden the understanding of the phenomenon, in addition to incorporating professionals with different backgrounds, it would be more appropriate to conduct a study that adopted another methodological framework, for example, Grounded Theory, rather than a descriptive study like the one carried out here.
- The objective of the study was to understand how fake news influenced adherence to immunization against COVID-19, from the perspective of health professionals. Therefore, exploring possible tactics or solutions to deal with reluctance to vaccinate is an object to be explored in another study with a specific purpose. - We agree that the investigation of strategies to dispel myths and increase the acceptability of vaccines can contribute to the development of public health programs and regulations aimed at increasing immunization rates. However, we remember that the present study originated from a professional master's dissertation presented to a Postgraduate Program in Family Health and that students at this level of education are able to develop studies that do not require much time for data collection. It is also important to highlight that in order to obtain the master's degree, the main author defended her dissertation before an evaluation committee composed of the advisor and two other professors (one from an external institution) and that the evaluation of the final product was based on ethical principles and good practices in the development of scientific research.

REFERENCES

1. Minayo MCS. Amostragem e saturação em pesquisa qualitativa: consensos e controvérsias. *Revista Pesquisa Qualitativa*. 2017;5(7):1-12. <https://editora.sepq.org.br/rpq/article/view/82/59>
 2. Procianoy GS, Rossini Junior F, Lied AF. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the vaccination of children 12 months of age and under: an ecological study. *Cien Saude Colet*. 2022;27(3):969-78. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232022273.20082021>
 3. Silveira MF, Tonial CT, Goretti K, Maranhão A. Missed childhood immunizations during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil: analyses of routine statistics and of a national household survey. *Vaccine*. 2021;39(25):3404-09. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vacina.2021.04.046>
 4. Santos VS, Vieira SCF, Barreto IDC. Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on routine pediatric vaccination in Brazil. *Expert Rev Vaccines*. 2021;20(12):1661-6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14760584.2021.1990045>
-