

Vaccine hesitancy more likely in young people, women and some ethnic groups

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In a new large-scale UK-wide study, led by the University of Glasgow in collaboration with the University of Essex, researchers looked at vaccine hesitancy in the population alongside the reasons why the COVID-19

vaccine would be accepted or refused. Their findings are published today in the journal *Brain Behaviour and Immunity* and were based on data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study.

Overall intention to have the COVID-19 [vaccine](#) was high, with 53.5% of participants very likely to and a further 28.5% likely to take up vaccination when offered. However, there were marked differences in some population subgroups including [black people](#), Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups and younger age groups.

The study found that black or black British were the ethnic group with the highest rate of vaccine hesitancy, with 71.8% of the people surveyed in that group reporting that they wouldn't have a COVID-19 vaccination. Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups were the next most vaccine hesitant ethnic group, with 42.3% reporting they wouldn't take-up vaccination when offered.

A higher proportion of female participants indicated vaccine hesitancy, 21% compared to 14.7% of male participants. Younger age groups were also more vaccine hesitant with 28.3% of younger adults aged 25-34 reporting they wouldn't take up the vaccine, compared to only 14.3% in the 55-64 age group, 8.1% in the 65-74 age group and 4.5% in the 75+ age group. Vaccine hesitancy was also inversely linked with education, with the most educated least likely to be vaccine hesitant.

The main reasons for vaccine hesitancy were concerns over future unknown effects of a vaccine, with 42.7% citing this as their main reason. Reasons for vaccine hesitancy were often similar across ethnic groups however, when compared to the White British/Irish group, Black/Black British participants were more likely to state they "Don't trust vaccines" (29.2% vs 5.7%) and the Pakistani/Bangladeshi ethnic group reported worries about side-effects (35.4% vs 8.6%).

The two ethnic groups most likely to take up the COVID-19 vaccine when offered were the white British and Irish groups with 84.8% being likely or very likely to take a vaccine, and the any other Asian background group, which includes participants of Chinese ethnicity, 86.1% of which said they would take up the vaccine.

Professor Vittal Katikireddi, lead author of the study from the University of Glasgow MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, said: "Our study data shows a positive picture in terms of being willing to vaccinated overall, however the research does highlight that very large differences in vaccine hesitancy exist by ethnicity, with some but not all minority ethnic groups being hesitant.

"These differences highlight the potential to widen health inequalities, and therefore the importance of deliberate efforts to engage with these groups as a priority. Initiatives to improve uptake in Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi [ethnic groups](#) within the UK should continue to be a priority—for example, by working in close partnership with communities and making use of community champions."

When asked what would most convince participants to take the vaccine, 43.2% of Black/Black British maintained that they would not take it, while a further 44.7% reported that they would if the vaccine was demonstrated to be safe. Pakistani and Bangladeshi participants reported that they may be persuaded if the vaccine reduced their risk of catching COVID-19 and if it was demonstrated to be safe.

The paper, "Predictors of COVID-19 [vaccine hesitancy](#) in the UK Household Longitudinal Study' is published in *Brain, Behaviour and Immunity*.

More information: Elaine Robertson et al. Predictors of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in the UK Household Longitudinal Study, *Brain*,

Behavior, and Immunity (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.bbi.2021.03.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2021.03.008)

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