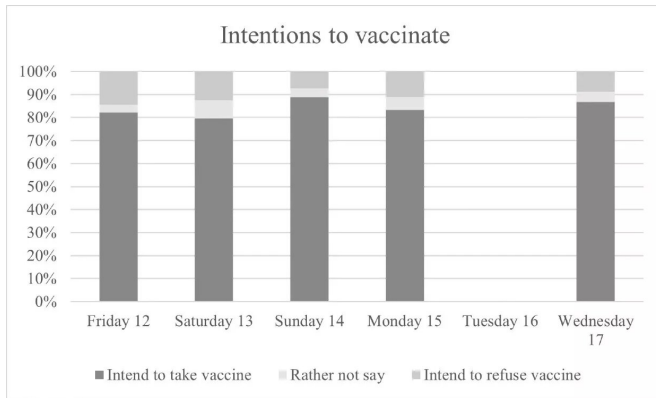


AstraZeneca suspension did not impact vaccine intentions

26 March 2021, by David Comerford



Responses to the question “Do you intend to get the Covid vaccine?” (yes, no, rather not say). Data was not collected on Tuesday. Credit: University of Stirling

New research from the University of Stirling has shown that the suspension of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccination had no effect on the UK general public's intention of getting the vaccination.

Last week, various European countries including France, Germany and Italy, suspended use of the [vaccine](#) because of reported links to blood clots and deaths. On Tuesday 16 March, the story was front-page news across the UK.

In the period immediately surrounding these events, a multi-disciplinary team of researchers, including Dr. David Comerford of Stirling's Behavioral Science Center, was collecting data for a [wider project](#) on fear and concerns relating to COVID-19.

Dr. Comerford said: "Our data provided time-lapse footage of the public's response to the story. We found no effect of the press stories on intentions to take the vaccine or on intentions to refuse it. Furthermore, there was no change to the

perceived costs and benefits of being vaccinated.

"This is not to say that the UK public were not concerned by the news. Google Trends data shows increasing search activity for the terms 'vaccine' and 'safe' as the AstraZeneca suspension story was unfolding, but that concern did not translate in to mistrust of the vaccination program in the UK.

"In fact, a record number of people took the vaccine on the following Saturday, 20 March."

The results suggest that [public confidence](#) in the vaccination program remains strong within the UK, but there is emerging evidence that confidence of the vaccination program among European residents was damaged by these events.

Dr. Comerford says the research has opened up further questions, he added: "An important question for future research is why the UK and European public responded differently and whether there are any lessons that can be learned to manage future scare stories."

More information: David Comerford et al. Did Negative News Regarding the Oxford AstraZeneca Vaccine end in Vaccine Hesitancy? A Repeated Cross-Section Event Study from the UK, (2021). [DOI: 10.21203/rs.3.rs-355311/v1](https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-355311/v1)

Provided by University of Stirling

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