

Peer Review Report

Review Report on Trust in institutions and the COVID-19 threat: a cross-sectional study on the public perception of official recommendations and of othering in Switzerland

Original Article, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Michael Deml

Submitted on: 08 Sep 2021

Article DOI: 10.3389/ijph.2021.1604223

EVALUATION

Q 1 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

This represents a well-written and welcome contribution to the literature on COVID-19 vaccination, particularly regarding trust and its relationship to vaccination intention.

Several minor points that should be addressed, in my view:

Please do a search for all uses of the word "current" or any indications of evidence that was true at the writing of the manuscript in the text to make sure that it remains true and that everything is contextualized with dates in the text itself (and not in bibliographic references alone). As an alternative, the authors could make a 1 sentence statement somewhere in the text stating when the manuscript itself was written and that the references/data reflect what was available at the writing of the manuscript. These statistics rapidly become outdated, and context should be included in the text directly.

Please in the abstract's results section, specify that the official recommendations are recommendations for coronavirus mitigation measures.

Please include in the abstract's results section which socioeconomic variables were associated with vaccination intent.

In the abstract, please change "Results on 1518" to "Results from 1518"

In the abstract's results sections, please find a clearer term than "othering" or briefly describe what it means. It does not have to be complex. It might be a difficult term for more biomedical-oriented audiences to understand. The explanation and use in the text is 100% OK, but its use in the abstract may be confusing for those who only read the abstract.

Line 74, please indicate a month and date to show what is meant by "at the beginning of the pandemic".

Line 76, please include references for the statement about "numerous countries"

Line 91, please justify the sending of paper questionnaires to 65+ and online questionnaires to <65. Is this an evidence-based approach, or was it an assumption of the researchers that people 65+ would be more likely to reply to paper surveys?

Line 115, I find the use of the term "Beliefs" to be problematic if the authors are referring to perceptions of disease threat, concerns about socio-economic consequences and perceived infectability. Could the authors instead refer to perceptions and concerns? I'd like the authors to respond to this.

Line 116, it is not clear to me what the authors mean by "infectability". Why not instead say "perceived susceptibility"? Please revisit this concept/term and make sure to make the chosen term coherent/standardized throughout the whole manuscript.

Line 202, "please change "a Othering" to "Othering"

In Table 2, the authors should not refer to effectiveness of official protective measures but rather "perceived effectiveness"

In the conclusion, the last sentence is too vague for my taste. I recommend ending with the sentence: "This could be done by (...) avoid incoherencies or uncertainties." If the authors wish to retain the last sentence (lines 322–323), I recommend taht they specific which variables in individuals' socioeconomic backgrounds are barriers and place it earlier in the conclusion.

Q 2 Please summarize the main findings of the study.

The authors showed how participants' perceptions of disease threat and trust in institutions are associated with vaccination intent and their perceptions of effectiveness of official recommendations.

Q 3 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

Strengths: high response rate with an impressive sample size. The authors also found many important and interesting associations between their variables of interest.

Limitations: the data is now already outdated; vaccination implementation has been ongoing since December 2020/January 2021. However, this is inherent to the fast-moving pace of the pandemic and is outside of the researchers' control.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Yes

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes, I would remove "othering strategies" since it is unlikely to be useful for indexing the article.

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes































Q 7 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

Q 8 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

Yes. It would be helpful if the authors could provide 1–2 references to contextualize vaccination hesitancy/decision-making in the Swiss context prior to the COVID–19 pandemic. Perhaps literature related to influenza vaccination uptake. This could be inserted with 1–2 sentences in the introduction.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9	Originality					
Q 10	Rigor					
Q 11	Significance to the field					
Q 12	Interest to a general audience					
Q 13	Quality of the writing					
Q 14	Overall scientific quality of the study					

REVISION LEVEL

Q 15 Please take a decision based on your comments:

Minor revisions.
