

Exploring the Slower Uptake of the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Young Adults in Island Health: A Qualitative Approach

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Background

Young adults aged 20-29 years initially showed a slower uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine relative to older adults,¹ and in the Island Health Authority compared to the Vancouver Coastal Health Region.¹

For many young adults within this demographic, the COVID-19 vaccine may have been their first time deciding about a vaccine independently of their parent/guardians.

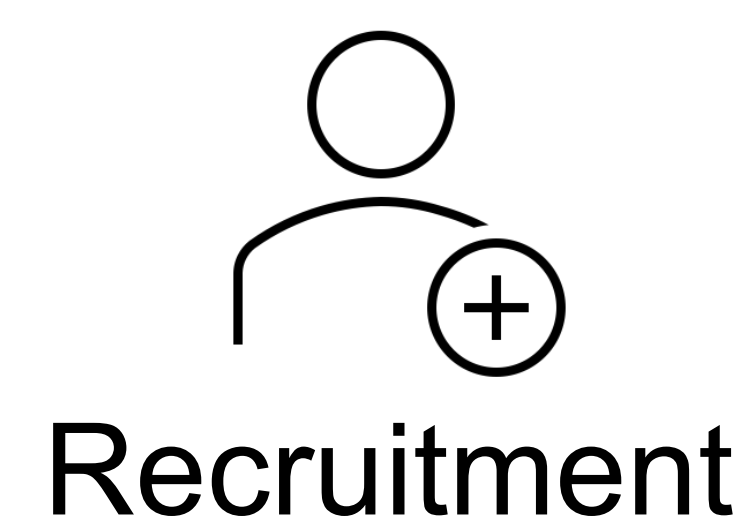
Therefore, exploring and identifying any form of vaccine hesitancy among young adults in their 20's is important not only for herd immunity but to help these individuals establish healthy vaccination patterns for the rest of their lives.

Objective

Explore reasons why young adults aged 20-29 years living in the Island Health region had slower uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine compared to older adults.

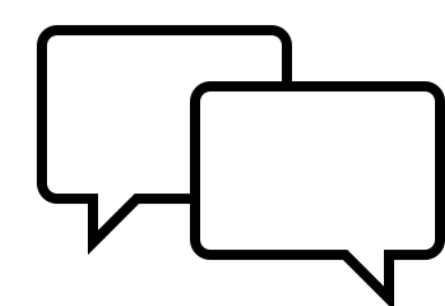


Methods



Recruitment

Demographics: 17 Women and 8 Men ranging between 20 to 29 years of age
Total: 25 interviews

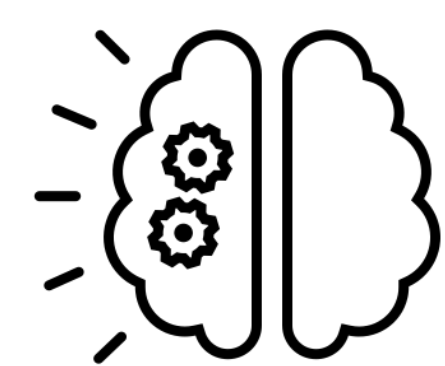


Semi-Structured Interviews

August 2022 to March 2023

Topics:

- 1) COVID-19 vaccine perception and uptake
- 2) Vaccine information sources
- 3) Past vaccination history
- 4) Perception about infant/childhood vaccinations or during pregnancy



Thematic Analysis

Iteratively identifying, redefining, and summarizing results into themes as they relate to the study objective

Results

Theme 1: Reasons for slower COVID-19 vaccine uptake

- 1) Viewing the perceived risks of COVID-19 as not justifying the effort needed to go and get the vaccine
- 2) Lack of trust in the vaccine due to general fear and safety and perceived lack of vaccine effectiveness
- 3) Lack of urgency due to feeling burnt out and exhausted by the COVID-19 pandemic



Theme 2: Improve content of vaccine messaging

Ensure the content of messaging:

- 1) Attracts and keeps the reader's attention (e.g., debunking common misconceptions, outlining incentives, use of celebrities/pop stars, and use of quick and short communication)
- 2) Be clear about the individual advantages and social responsibility of getting vaccinated
- 3) Provide a direct way to register for vaccination rather than requiring people to look it up

Theme 3: Use appropriate messengers of vaccine information

Use messengers who:

- 1) Are deemed credible based on medical or scientific education/credentials
- 2) Are relatable to the demographic (e.g., same age, ethnicity, gender)
- 3) Have personal lived experience with COVID-19



Key Takeaway

Decreased perceived risk of COVID-19, lack of trust, and lack of urgency contributed to slower uptake of COVID-19 vaccination among young adults aged 20-29 years old living in Island Health.

Tailoring vaccine information to young adult demographics and using trusted and relatable sources to deliver it may facilitate swifter uptake of future vaccinations.

Reference / Bibliography

1. BCCDC COVID-19 Regional Surveillance Dashboard – Archived. <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/bccdc/viz/BCCDCCOVID-19RegionalSurveillanceDashboardArchived/Introduction>

Acknowledgement

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