

# Most parents believe vaccines are safe for children, research finds

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(Medical Xpress)—New research from the University of Adelaide shows that 95% of parents believe vaccines are safe for their children despite the spread of misinformation about vaccine safety.

The study, conducted by researchers in the University's Robinson Institute and School of [Population Health](#), sought to better understand parents' [attitudes](#) to vaccines and the perceived risks associated with them.

The study surveyed a random sample of 469 South Australian parents. While 95% were confident in vaccine safety in general, almost half expressed some concern for the prior testing of vaccines, and one in four was not aware that Australia has a system of vaccine safety monitoring.

The results, now published in the international journal *Vaccine*, show that parents also commonly perceive and report to a [healthcare provider](#) that their child has experienced side effects from a vaccine.

"Our study demonstrates a high level of [confidence](#) in vaccines among parents, but also some degree of concern about vaccine safety, in particular safety testing of vaccines before they are licensed for public use. This includes what to expect when their child is immunised," says the lead author of the study, PhD student Adriana Parrella from the University's Robinson Institute and the School of Population Health.

"Anti-immunisation groups have worked hard to spread [misinformation](#)

about vaccines, and often this has been widely reported in the media. But until now, little has been known about what Australian parents really think about vaccine safety, and how they respond to a perceived adverse event.

"Parents have shown some concern about the side effects of vaccines, with more than 40% saying their child experienced side effects, and about 30% of parents whose child had experienced side effects having sought further [medical care](#) or advice for their child after the immunisation had been given. Most of the side effects parents stated their children had previously experienced were common and expected effects following vaccination, such as fever or redness at the injection site.

"Our study suggests that more could be done to educate parents about what the normal [side effects](#) of vaccines are and that healthcare providers are an important source of information about vaccine safety for parents. We might also need to raise awareness about the safety testing of vaccines prior to their clinical use and the existence of a surveillance system that monitors the ongoing safety of all vaccines," Ms Parrella says.

This is one of three studies on [vaccine safety](#) surveillance being conducted by Ms Parrella as part of her PhD.

**More information:** [www.sciencedirect.com/science/ ...ii/S0264410X13001643](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/...ii/S0264410X13001643)

Provided by University of Adelaide

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