

New research prepares for COVID-19 vaccine roll-out

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As the world waits for a COVID-19 vaccine, University of Western Australia researchers are part of a new study designed to prepare parents and government for a potential Australia-wide vaccination program.

Funded by Wesfarmers Limited, the Coronavax project will lay the

groundwork for the successful implementation of a [coronavirus vaccine](#) once it is available and ensure the ongoing success of the existing immunisation schedule.

Led by UWA Associate Professor Chris Blyth, Co-Director of the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases, from Telethon Kids Institute, and Dr. Katie Attwell, Senior Lecturer and ARC Discovery Fellow from UWA's School of Social Science, the project brings together key vaccination researchers in Western Australia.

Associate Professor Blyth said Coronavax would play a vital role in building community confidence and planning effective methods of delivery ahead of any future roll out of a coronavirus vaccine.

"The global scientific community is currently racing to develop an effective and safe vaccine, with more than 100 COVID-19 vaccine candidates now under investigation, and many already in [human trials](#)," A/Prof Blyth said.

"Unfortunately, the most effective vaccine in the world won't restore our way of life unless it is widely accepted and reaches the arms of all Australians.

"We will need to vaccinate the population to build immunity and prevent outbreaks, and this means developing a successful rollout plan is crucial. If we don't plan ahead now, we risk being unprepared to implement the vaccine we are desperately waiting for."

Researchers involved in the Coronvax project will analyse two key aspects of childhood vaccination within the current coronavirus pandemic. Firstly, the needs of parents and carers in terms of vaccine communication will be investigated, as well as exploring attitudes and concerns around the potential COVID-19 vaccine. Secondly, the team

will explore how the government can help parents maintain routine vaccines during this time.

Dr. Katie Attwell from the UWA School of Social Sciences said a vaccine was important to restore freedom and way of life.

"However our experience with existing vaccination programs such as influenza has shown us that uptake is entirely dependent on parents' attitudes around safety for children and the vaccine's [health benefits](#)," Dr. Attwell said.

"The Coronavax project will provide an essential link between the community voice and the ears of government, allowing informed decisions to be made and assisting with the speedy and efficient implementation of the COVID-19 vaccine."

Provided by University of Western Australia

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