

Think everyone will be clamoring to get a COVID-19 vaccine? Think again, study says

August 6 2020, by Peter Ramjug



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If a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available, as promising reports suggest could be the case by winter, 66 percent of U.S. residents say they will get vaccinated, but others may not because of fears of side effects or a mistrust of the healthcare system, a new [survey](#) by researchers from Northeastern, Harvard, Northwestern and Rutgers has found.

Seventy-seven percent of U.S. residents of Asian origin,, 71 percent of Hispanics and 67 percent of [white respondents](#) say they were likely to seek a [vaccine](#) for SARS-CoV-2, the [coronavirus](#) that causes COVID-19, compared to 52 percent of Black respondents who are likely to do so.

A possible explanation for the discrepancy could be the population's historic mistrust and wariness of the U.S. health system, explains David Lazer, university distinguished professor of political science and computer and [information sciences](#) at Northeastern, and one of the researchers who conducted the study.

"Hesitancy about being vaccinated is disproportionately among people who are distrustful of the system of science and doctors," he says.

His comments were underscored by the study's findings that individuals who have more trust in doctors and hospitals were decidedly more likely to seek vaccination than those who didn't (77 percent vs. 20 percent, respectively). The pattern was similar for those with more trust in scientists and researchers.

"The impact of COVID-19 has been disproportionate among non-white Americans, in terms of infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths," researchers wrote.

The study of 19,058 people across all 50 states and the District of Columbia was conducted between July 10 and July 26, 2020. It asked residents if a vaccine against COVID-19 was available, how likely would they be to get vaccinated. Answers ranged from "extremely unlikely" to "extreme likely."

Those with lower levels of education and lower incomes were also less inclined to seek the vaccine.

Only 58 percent of individuals without a [high school education](#) say they plan to get vaccinated compared to 78 percent with at least a bachelor's degree. In turn, 59 percent of those who earn less than \$25,000 a year anticipate vaccinating, compared to 78 percent who make more than \$100,000 annually.

One finding that Lazer highlighted was that women were less likely to get vaccinated than men. Sixty-two percent of female respondents were less likely to say they would take the vaccine compared to 71 percent of men.

He could not pinpoint a specific cause, saying it warranted further study.

"It'll be interesting to see the difference between women who have younger children versus not [younger children](#)," Lazer says. "Because disproportionately it's mothers who are dealing with health issues for children, and whether this reflects some degree of vaccine hesitancy remains to be seen."

Politics is another factor in who gets treated for the virus.

Sixty-two percent of Republicans and an identical number of independent voters say they would be likely to seek vaccination, compared to 75 percent of Democrats, according to the findings.

Those who wear masks consistently are more likely to seek vaccination, although the two behaviors are not perfectly correlated.

Forty-seven percent of those who say they are not following mask-wearing guidelines very closely say they were likely to seek vaccination, compared to 73 percent who say they were following guidelines very closely.

The findings show that "the people who trust President Trump trust doctors and scientists less than the rest of the population, and the people who trust Trump are less likely to want to be vaccinated, but Trump is pushing the vaccines," says Lazer.

"Does that cause some of his followers to say 'maybe the vaccine is OK?'
"And conversely, does that mean some of the people who are very liberal say 'anything that Trump likes, I don't want it.' That is a very plausible dynamic this fall."

Provided by Northeastern University

Citation: Think everyone will be clamoring to get a COVID-19 vaccine? Think again, study says (2020, August 6) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-08-clamoring-covid-vaccine.html>

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