

Attitudes toward vaccination more favorable after J&J vaccine pause

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While public awareness of the hold on the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine was very high, researchers of a [national poll](#) found no negative impact on vaccination attitudes. In fact, immediately

following the pause, a slightly larger percentage of the unvaccinated moved to the pro-vaccine category.

Between April 1 and 26, researchers from Northwestern, Harvard, Northeastern and Rutgers universities surveyed more than 18,750 individuals across the U.S. to measure attitudes about vaccination.

Between April 14 and 23, the J&J vaccine was paused following a report that a rare type of blood clot emerged in a small number of individuals following the use of the vaccine.

Using poll data, the researchers were able to measure changes in intention to vaccinate before, during and after the J&J vaccine pause to evaluate impact on vaccine hesitancy and resistance.

Awareness of the J&J vaccine pause was very high, with 74% of respondents indicating awareness. However, comparing data collected before, during and after the J&J pause showed there was not a significant impact on intention to vaccinate. The sum of the two most vaccine-enthusiastic categories remained consistent through the three periods (70%, 69%, 70%).

"This is an encouraging finding that people seem to understand and trust the reality that science requires due diligence, and the disruption should not be taken as news to not get the vaccine," said political scientist James Druckman, the Payson S. Wild Professor of Political Science in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and associate director of the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern. He is one of the researchers investigating Americans' attitudes about COVID-19.

Attitudes before and after the pause

For additional insight on [attitude](#) changes, the researchers recontacted

1,143 non-vaccinated individuals April 17 to 19 who responded before the J&J pause to determine changes in vaccine attitudes and intention to become vaccinated after the pause.

To indicate enthusiasm versus resistance, respondents were asked "If you were able to choose when to get a COVID-19 vaccine, would you get it as soon as possible, or would you not get the vaccine?"

The researchers found that attitudes remained stable across all categories of intention to vaccinate, with an overall modest tendency to shift in the pro-vaccine direction.

The report also highlights why vaccination rates are starting to slow down in the United States: Individuals who wish to get vaccinated "as soon as possible" or "after at least some people I know" are rapidly getting vaccinated, and these groups are "refilling" with previously vaccine skeptical individuals much more slowly than they are emptying.

Demographic subgroups including sex, race/ethnicity, age, education, income and political affiliation also were analyzed before and after the pause. The researchers found that immediately after the J&J pause, the sum of vaccinations and vaccine enthusiasm increased across almost every demographic subgroup in the sample.

Other key findings

- U.S. vaccination rates are slowing as vaccine-enthusiastic individuals are being replaced by previously vaccine-skeptical individuals who are slower to vaccinate
- Respondents who were resurveyed after the pause showed a clear preference for [vaccine](#) options, preferring Pfizer over Moderna, which in turn is preferred over J&J; AstraZeneca, which is not yet approved in the U.S., lags far behind

More information: Lazer, David, et al. "The COVID States Project #48: Assessing the Impact of the Pause in Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Use on COVID-19 Vaccination Intent." OSF Preprints, 1 May 2021.
osf.io/j5hf2/

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