

Attitudes toward vaccine travel requirements

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There is an urgent need in the tourism industry to determine effective ways to stop the spread of COVID-19 and facilitate future travel. Pre-travel vaccination requirements may hold the key to restoring travel to pre-pandemic levels, but understanding travelers' views on such requirements is essential.

In a recent study published in the journal *Tourism Management*, Courtney Suess, Ph.D., from Texas A&M University's Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism Sciences, and Jay Maddock, Ph.D., of the Texas A&M School of Public Health, used a Health Belief Model approach to better understand traveler intent to [vaccinate](#) and support for vaccination requirements in the [travel](#) industry.

The researchers surveyed nearly 1,500 travelers on their perceptions and attitudes. The survey also collected data on [demographic factors](#) like age, education and [marital status](#) as well as whether respondents had previously tested positive for COVID-19 and how much they had traveled domestically and internationally in 2019 and 2020.

Researchers found that there were notable differences in the perceived benefits of vaccination and willingness to vaccinate relative to travel amount and prior COVID-19 diagnosis.

"Travel is one of the foremost ways disease can spread, and understanding effective strategies to prevent the spread, particularly with the anti-vaccination movement, is important. People who are unwilling to vaccinate otherwise become more receptive to doing so if it means resuming their vacations," Suess said.

Those who traveled more and who had previously tested positive were more willing to be vaccinated and saw more potential benefit in the vaccine. Willingness to vaccinate and beliefs that others should vaccinate predicted advocacy for pre-travel vaccine requirements.

Approximately 56 percent of the travelers had taken a vacation more than once from March 1, 2019, to Nov. 15, 2020. Of the sample of travelers, a third of the respondents were younger than 35, 60 percent had a college degree and 45 percent were married with children.

"Study results provide convincing evidence that willingness to vaccinate and beliefs that others should vaccinate predict support for federal and international authorities imposing vaccination mandates, both domestic and international alike," said Maddock. "Implementation of such requirements will be a key factor in the global endeavor by authorities to ensure vaccine coverage, with travel administrators at the forefront of vaccine campaigns."

More information: Courtney Suess et al, Using the Health Belief Model to examine travelers' willingness to vaccinate and support for vaccination requirements prior to travel, *Tourism Management* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104405](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104405)

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