

Vaccine lotteries were not a win, study finds

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The use of cash lotteries to boost COVID-19 vaccination rates were not effective, according to a new study from UO economist Ben Hansen and researchers from Bentley University, the University of Colorado Denver and San Diego State University.

"We studied the announcement of these large [lottery](#) prizes for vaccinations and found no [supporting evidence](#) for the claim that they increase new [vaccination rates](#)," Hansen said.

The team of researchers wanted to examine the success of [cash](#) incentives like Ohio's "Vax-a-Million," which 19 different states launched after vaccination rates dipped significantly from April to May. The lotteries were part of an effort to get the nation's vaccination rate closer to 70 percent, the number that President Joe Biden targeted to reach herd immunity.

To assess the effectiveness of those efforts, the team of researchers looked at daily vaccination data in each of the 19 states that employed lotteries, including Oregon.

The researchers examined daily vaccination rates both before and after the lotteries were announced and compared that data to vaccination rates in states without cash incentives.

Their findings showed that the cash drawings did not do much of anything to convince people to get vaccinated. The researchers reported that the association between the lottery announcements and vaccination rates was "very small in magnitude and statistically indistinguishable from zero." The lotteries did not move any needles, either into arms or with the vaccination rate.

The researchers hope the study will help inform policymakers about effective, and ineffective, ways to invest in public health efforts. While they stress that the findings do not necessarily reflect any generalizations about incentives and vaccines, they do believe the results demonstrate a need to consider other efforts, like guaranteed incentives or better messaging on vaccinations.

More information: Dhaval Dave et al, Association Between Statewide COVID-19 Lottery Announcements and Vaccinations, *JAMA Health Forum* (2021). [DOI: 10.1001/jamahealthforum.2021.3117](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamahealthforum.2021.3117)

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