

# Parents more likely to refuse COVID jab for children than adults

December 17 2021

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In a study of South Australian households, researchers at the University of Adelaide have found parents are more likely to refuse COVID-19 vaccination for their child than the proportion of adults refusing

vaccination for themselves.

In the study published in *Vaccines*, 3003 households were surveyed between May and July 2021 about their willingness to immunize themselves and their children against COVID-19, along with whether they would support mandatory vaccination strategies.

Lead researcher and author, Professor in Vaccinology at the University of Adelaide Professor Helen Marshall, said: "While COVID-19 [vaccine rollout](#) has been extended to children aged between 12 and 15 years in many countries, including Australia, parental support hasn't been well captured, and very few have looked at community acceptance of mandatory policies.

"We need to ensure children are protected against COVID and the long-term complications of disease such as long COVID and the multisystem inflammatory condition.

"High coverage in the whole population, including [young children](#), will need to be achieved to reduce transmission, so it is essential to understand community attitudes to continue to improve COVID-19 vaccine uptake in target groups."

The majority of respondents in the study indicated they were very likely to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, or they were already vaccinated with at least one dose. However, 8.1 percent were resistant to vaccination and 13.5 percent of parents were not at all likely to get their child vaccinated.

"This will result in a vulnerable unvaccinated group as COVID-19 restrictions are further eased across Australia," said Professor Marshall.

The study also found low socioeconomic and [education levels](#), being single, non-English speaking backgrounds and being parents were

associated with decreased COVID-19 vaccine willingness and/or vaccination rates.

Despite a [small sample size](#), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more hesitant to receive COVID-19 vaccines. The researchers suggest further research led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is needed to improve understanding of factors associated with COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in this important group.

"What the study tells us is that despite enormous efforts that have delivered the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, governments, [health professionals](#) and COVID-19 vaccination providers need to address vaccine hesitancy and improve access to vaccines in parents and other socioeconomically disadvantaged groups.

"COVID vaccine will be available soon for the 5–11 year age group, and for younger children the best thing parents can do to protect them now is to be vaccinated themselves, to stop the spread of infection to their [children](#).

"Targeted strategies are needed to improve access to vaccines for Aboriginal people, those living in lower socio-economic circumstances and culturally and linguistically diverse groups."

In response to questions around mandatory [vaccine](#) policies, respondents were generally supportive in some high risk settings with 84.8 percent of respondents supporting vaccination requirements for international travel and 60.7 percent for domestic travel; and 67.9 percent for visiting residential aged care homes and working in healthcare settings.

Professor Marshall said: "Overall the results suggest with careful consideration of implications, government interventions, including mandates for high risk settings, are likely to be supported by the

community."

**More information:** Bing Wang et al, COVID-19 Immunisation, Willingness to Be Vaccinated and Vaccination Strategies to Improve Vaccine Uptake in Australia, *Vaccines* (2021). [DOI: 10.3390/vaccines9121467](https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines9121467)

Provided by University of Adelaide

Citation: Parents more likely to refuse COVID jab for children than adults (2021, December 17) retrieved 25 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-12-parents-covid-jab-children-adults.html>

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