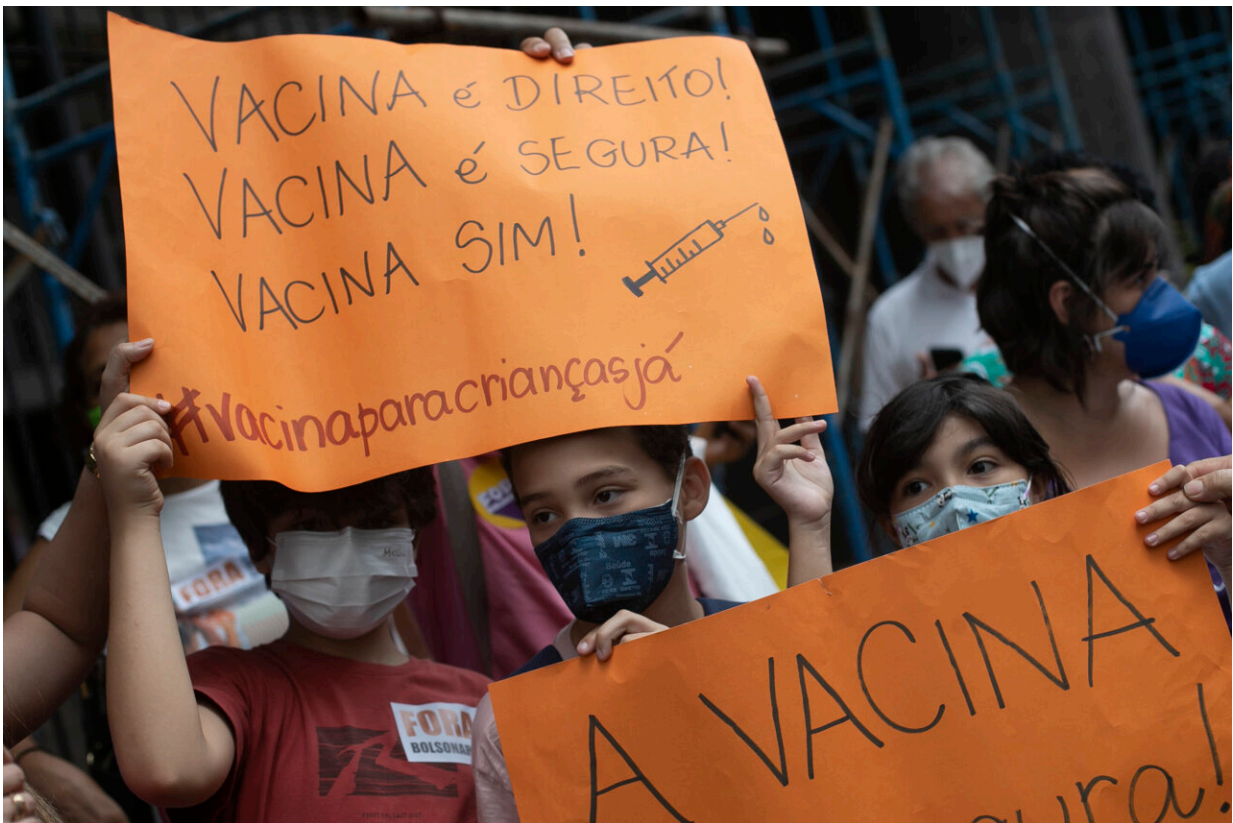


Brazil to vaccinate kids, stops short of demanding scripts

January 6 2022, by Débora Álvares



Children hold the Portuguese messages: "Vaccine is a right! Vaccine is safe! Vaccine yes!" during a demonstration in favor of COVID-19 vaccinations for children outside Rio state's Ministry of Health office in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Bruna Prado

Vaccination of Brazilian children between the ages of 5 and 11 will

begin in January, without the demand for prescriptions from doctors the government had previously signaled, officials from the health ministry announced Wednesday.

The government's guidelines come almost three weeks after the health regulator authorized use of Pfizer's shot for children, setting off backlash from none other than President Jair Bolsonaro. After sowing doubt about the efficacy of the [vaccine](#) and refusing to be vaccinated himself last year, in recent weeks the president staked out a position opposing vaccines for kids and warning of possible side effects.

A study released in late December by U.S. health authorities confirmed that serious side effects of the Pfizer vaccine in children ages 5 to 11 are rare. The results were based on approximately 8 million doses dispensed to youngsters in this age group.

Taking a cue from Bolsonaro, his [health ministry](#) last month published an online questionnaire about the issue, and some of the president's supporters also leery of the vaccine [actively engaged on messaging apps trying to pressure people to swing the results.](#)

They failed: the majority of the survey's almost 100,000 participants opposed the need for a doctor's script, a health ministry official said in a public hearing on Tuesday, without providing figures. Speaking to reporters Wednesday, Minister Queiroga also didn't disclose what percentage of respondents opposed prescriptions.



Brazil's Health Minister Marcelo Queiroga announces guidelines for vaccinating children with the COVID-19 vaccine, during a press conference, in Brasilia, Brazil, Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Eraldo Peres

"With regard to the prescription, a public consultation was done. We heard society, specialists," said Queiroga. "It isn't backtracking; it is part of the decision-making process. A recommendation has been made."

Other countries, such as the U.S., Germany, France, Argentina and Chile are already vaccinating their children.

It had been unclear whether Brazil's health ministry could impose a demand that children obtain a prescription for vaccinations; most Brazilian states' health secretariats openly said they would defy such an

order. Although the ministry stopped short of issuing such a directive, its official in charge of fighting COVID-19 still said parents should seek out medical opinions.

"It is essential that parents consult a doctor. Why? Children in this age group are developing and we have some adverse effects. At this age, care should be greater," said the official, Rosana Leite.



People protest against COVID-19 vaccine passports and obligatory vaccines for COVID-19 for children during a protest organized by supporters of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro at the Pan American Health Organization headquarters in Brasilia, Brazil, Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Eraldo Peres

The announcement came one day after a small protest in opposition of vaccinating children outside the Pan American Health Organization's office in capital Brasilia, where children held signs reading "I'm not a [guinea pig](#)." Inside, members of medical societies and experts participated in a public hearing promoted by the government to debate the issue, most of whom reinforced the safety of the vaccine. Pfizer's director in Brazil, Marjorie Dulcine, stated several times: "The vaccine isn't experimental."

Bolsonaro, for his part, has characterized vaccination as an issue of personal choice rather than a means for ensuring the common good. He has repeatedly claimed, incorrectly, that he's immune to the virus because he already contracted it in 2020. At least 16 of his 22 ministers have been vaccinated, along with his political children and his wife. Bolsonaro has said he won't let his 11-year-old daughter be vaccinated.

Last month, he said he would name and expose the public servants who issued the approval of the Pfizer shot for children, prompting a union representing [health](#) agency workers to express concern about online abuse or even physical attacks.



Demonstrators set fire to a COVID-19 vaccination card during a protest outside the Pan American Health Organization headquarters against COVID-19 vaccine passports and obligatory vaccines for COVID-19 for children, during a protest organized by supporters of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro in Brasilia, Brazil, Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Eraldo Peres



El presidente de Brasil, Jair Bolsonaro, en conferencia de prensa desde el Palacio de Planalto en Brasilia, el 24 de noviembre de 2021. Credit: AP Foto/Raul Spinasse, File



People demonstrate in favor of COVID-19 vaccinations for children outside Rio state's Ministry of Health office in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Bruna Prado



Brazil's Health Minister Marcelo Queiroga announces guidelines for vaccinating children with the COVID-19 vaccine, during a press conference, in Brasilia, Brazil, Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Eraldo Peres



A woman shouts during a protest against COVID-19 vaccine passports and obligatory vaccines for COVID-19 for children during a protest organized by supporters of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro at the Pan American Health Organization headquarters in Brasilia, Brazil, Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Eraldo Peres

In Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday, a group of people demonstrated in favor of vaccinating [children](#).

Two young boys held a sign reading: "Vaccine is a right! Vaccine is safe! Vaccine yes!"

© 2022 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Brazil to vaccinate kids, stops short of demanding scripts (2022, January 6) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-brazil-vaccinate-kids-short-demanding.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.