


# Public health researchers develop web-based guide to help family physicians address COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy

July 26 2022

**How might providers better engage in conversation with patients hesitant to be vaccinated against COVID-19?**

Findings from data collected as part of the development of an interactive patient-provider conversation guide, available for free at [vhguide.ca](http://vhguide.ca)



- 1 Engage**  
as an informed ally rather than a detached expert
- 2 Affirm**  
concerns expressed by the patient
- 3 Ask permission**  
to continue the conversation
- 4 Share information**  
related to their reasons for hesitancy
- 5 Evoke**  
future risks to motivate the patient to reconsider

Source: Leslie M, et al. "Improving Conversations with COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitant Patients: Action research to support family physicians". *AnnFamMed*. 2022.

ANNALS OF FAMILY MEDICINE

How might providers better engage in conversation with patients hesitant to be vaccinated against COVID-19? Findings from data collected as part of the development of an interactive patient-provider conversation guide. Credit: Annals of Family Medicine

Public health researchers in Canada developed an interactive, web-based

guide to help family physicians better address a wide range of patient concerns related to the COVID-19 vaccine. To ensure relevancy, the researchers conducted qualitative interviews with primary care physicians in multiple Canadian provinces. The data was then used to identify commonly held beliefs, attitudes and perceptions that impact a patient's willingness to receive the vaccine.

The research team found that physicians frequently encountered many of the same reasons for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, including concerns around safety; interactions with co-morbidities; conspiracy theories; religious or moral restrictions; and past traumas experienced in the medical setting. Using this information, researchers created several physician resources to help better counsel vaccine-hesitant patients, in direct response to each potential concern.

Additionally, the free guide outlines four steps to help physicians have better conversations with vaccine-hesitant patients, emphasizing the physician's role as an ally on the patient's health journey. Steps include engaging with patients; affirming patient concerns; asking permission before sharing information; and evoking future risks to motivate patients to reconsider vaccine hesitancy.

The research was published in *The Annals of Family Medicine*.

## Why are patients hesitant to be vaccinated against COVID-19?

Findings from qualitative interviews with primary care providers collected as part of the development of an interactive patient-provider conversation guide

**RESOURCES FOR EACH HESITANCY ARE AVAILABLE FOR FREE AT [VHGUIDE.CA](http://VHGUIDE.CA)**



### **Safety and science concerns**

Reproductive or fitness impacts, side effects, concerns about the science, worried about DNA/mRNA, medical complexity



### **Influenced by conspiracies**



### **Conflicts with values or politics**

Naturalist/alternative medicine, politics and government involvement



### **Religious or moral objections**



### **Traumatized by health system**

personal trauma, group historical trauma



### **Afraid of needles**

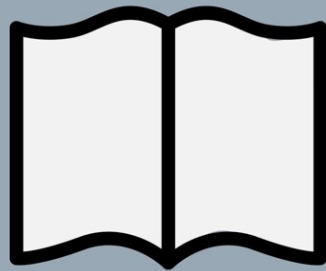
Source: Leslie M, et al. "Improving Conversations with COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitant Patients: Action research to support family physicians". *AnnFamMed*. 2022.

Why are patients hesitant to be vaccinated against COVID-19? Findings from qualitative interviews with primary care providers collected as part of the development of an interactive patient-provider conversation guide. Credit: Annals of Family Medicine

# How might researchers build an evidence-based tool to enable patient-provider conversations around vaccine hesitancy in the primary care setting?

Canadian “action researchers” built an interactive provider guide

## 1. Leverage existing theory



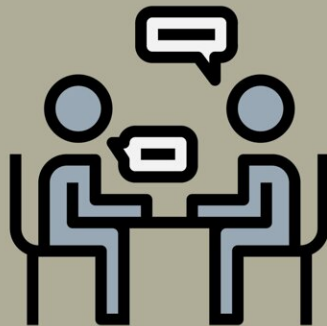
Review relevant literature and develop draft typology of expected hesitancies.

## 2. Develop hypotheses



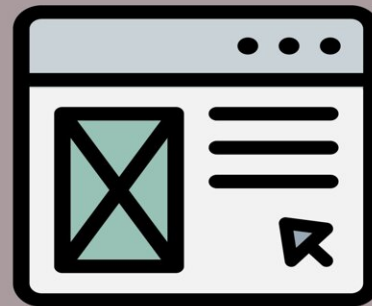
Conduct interviews with clinical experts to identify the hesitancies they encounter in-clinic. Update typology.

## 3. Role play conversations



Role play patient-provider conversations to gain deeper insights on how clinicians respond to hesitancies.

## 4. Create usable website



Use interview data to inform the structure and layout of the provider website.

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conversations around vaccine hesitancy in the primary care setting? Credit:  
Annals of Family Medicine

**More information:** Myles Leslie et al, Improving Conversations With COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitant Patients: Action Research to Support Family Physicians, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.2816](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2816)

Guide: [www.vhguide.ca/](http://www.vhguide.ca/)

Provided by American Academy of Family Physicians

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