

Vaccination skepticism and esoteric attitudes are linked, study finds

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Covid-19 vaccination syringes Credit: Jürgen Gocke / University of Freiburg

Esoteric attitudes—especially with regard to complementary and alternative medicine—have an influence on the willingness to be vaccinated. Dr. Sebastian Jäckle and Dr. James K. Timmis, both from the Department of Political Science at the University of Freiburg, have demonstrated this in a study published in August in the journal [npj Vaccines](#).

The researchers show that respondents who view conventional medicine positively have on average one more vaccination dose against coronavirus than respondents who view it negatively. Respondents who are in favor of Waldorf education and homeopathy are significantly less likely to be vaccinated (a second time).

"People with a positive view of homeopathy received an average of 0.4 fewer coronavirus vaccine doses than those who do not trust homeopathy," explains Jäckle. "With a maximum of four [vaccine](#) doses possible up to the time of the survey, these are very substantial effects." The study included more than 7,000 people across Germany and was carried out in 2022.

Varying motivations for vaccinations

The study also sheds light on the different motivations of respondents to get vaccinated against coronavirus: Those who were in favor of conventional medicine stated that they followed medical advice and the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) or focused on protecting others.

Those in favor of Waldorf education and [homeopathy](#) were motivated,

among other things, by being able to participate in public life—such as going to restaurants—without any problems when vaccinated.

Furthermore, the analyzed data indicate that positive attitudes towards esotericism, complementary and [alternative medicine](#) not only lead to a lower number of coronavirus vaccination doses, but also negatively influence the view of childhood vaccinations in a very similar way. This finding differs from study results from the U.S., which showed that attitudes towards coronavirus vaccination and pediatric vaccination differ.

"This knowledge can help to better measure the willingness of the population to be vaccinated and to plan vaccination campaigns in a more targeted manner," says Timmis.

More information: Sebastian Jäckle et al, Esoteric beliefs and CAM impact SARS-CoV-2 immunization drivers, uptake and pediatric immunization views in Germany, *npj Vaccines* (2024). [DOI: 10.1038/s41541-024-00928-7](#)

Provided by Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg im Breisgau

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