

“Getting the vaccine makes me a champion of it.”: Understanding the motivations of Australians to talk about the COVID-19 vaccines to family and friends

Karras J¹, Harrison M², Seale H¹

¹School of Population Health, UNSW, ²Centre for Social Research in Health

Background:

This study investigated individuals' perceptions of different forms of communication relating to the COVID-19 vaccine and their effects on vaccine intentions. It also examined individuals' desires to promote the vaccine or correct misinformation with peers after becoming vaccinated themselves.

Methods:

Eighty semi-structured interviews were conducted with Australian adults located across every state and territory. It included those who were vaccinated and those who do not intend to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The interview included questions to establish their sources of information, sentiments towards communicating about the vaccine and perceptions of the importance of the vaccine on themselves and society.

Results:

Key findings included that most participants sought information about the COVID-19 vaccine from a wide range of sources, including government sites, social media, news, research articles, health care workers, and personal networks. Perceptions around trustworthiness of sources varied between vaccinated and unvaccinated participants. While some participants felt a motivational responsibility to communicate about the vaccine after receiving it; others felt that they were not experts, or that they only felt a duty to become vaccinated themselves. Finally, though participants were open to discussing vaccination, their willingness to engage on the topic varied case to case.

Conclusion:

This study has identified peer to peer communication as a factor in the decision making process of individuals when considering vaccination. It found that many vaccinated individuals feel an increased desire to promote vaccination after becoming vaccinated. There is therefore an opportunity to support peer-to-peer communication as a means of engaging with hard to reach populations.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

This study was funded by the University of New South Wales and the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, Australia.