

Perspectives on Vaccine Information Sources and Vaccine Confidence among Parents of Adolescents



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Introduction

- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, parents broadened sources for vaccine information including sources via social media
- Access to various perspectives across social media platforms is difficult to ignore, irrespective of scientific accuracy
- Adolescent and young adult (AYA) vaccine doses plummeted and have begun to return to pre-pandemic levels
- To improve our understanding of the impact of vaccine information sourcing across digital/social media platforms, Unity conducted two independent market research studies that analyzed the influence of information sources on parental decisions to vaccinate their AYAs

Methods

Market Research Study 1:

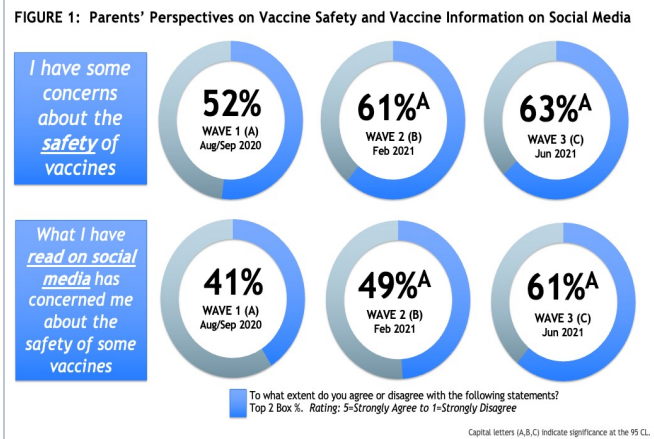
- Unity conducted multi-wave, online survey research on preventive health and immunizations with U.S. representative groups of adolescents aged 13-18 (n=300/wave) and parents of adolescents (Wave 1 n=582 weighted sample, Wave 2 n=531, Wave 3 n=500)
- Oversampled disproportionately impacted populations, considering income, household location and race/ethnicity
- The majority of the survey instrument was repeated across waves; updates and additions in waves 2 and 3 were based upon COVID-19 vaccine availability and recommendations
- Research fielded in August 2022, February and June 2021

Market Research Study 2:

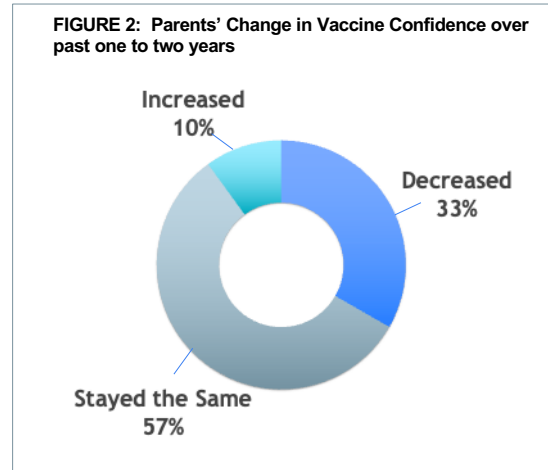
- Unity conducted multi-phase research on vaccine confidence and social media with social media influencers and parents of adolescents and young adults (AYAs) in Nov/Dec 2021

Social Media Influencer Interviews	n = 5
Asynchronous Online Discussions with Parents of AYAs	n = 60
In-depth Parent Triad Discussions on Vaccine Beliefs	n = 18

Results



Source: Unity@ Market Research Study 1



Source: Unity@ Market Research Study 2, Phase 2

TABLE 1: Credibility Continuum

Parents' Perceptions of Sources of Vaccine Information		Participant Verbatims Asynchronous Online Discussions (n=60)
MORE Credibility LESS	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ♦ Trust in personal doctors has decreased ♦ Remains most important influence	"I prefer to talk to my pediatrician and read the materials provided to make informed decisions." "None of those other sources have a personal loyalty to or interest in my children or my family."
	SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY ♦ Many find comfort in scientific, medically-backed data ♦ Links to data sources especially important to many	"I look at it all, but in the end, I trust the expert doctors and scientists." "I follow the advise [sic] of the medical community to make my decisions whether or not to get vaccinated."
	PERSONAL EXPERIENCES ♦ Parents trust other parents and seek stories and experiences	"A few things I did find helpful...were trusted medical friends sharing their opinions on vaccines." "I prefer to see updates from friends, family and acquaintances who have experienced the vaccine."
	GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ♦ Majority believe government agencies are vaccine experts, interest is public health ♦ A small minority question the integrity of CDC, FDA and other government entities	"I'm not a fan of government websites in general...[they are] broad and not providing detailed information...I will consult the CDC website since I believe they are closest to what's going on with the virus and the vaccine."
	NONE OF THE ABOVE ♦ Small, but vocal, group do not find any credible sources ♦ Distrust government ♦ Most reside in rural areas	"We have followed the vaccine schedule for the majority of her vaccines. However, there are a few that I have not consented to based on the age of the vaccine and the side effects associated with it [HPV]." "We've gotten most all recommended vaccines minus the Gardasil so far. That one I wanted to wait on and let them have some choice in the matter."

Source: Unity@ Market Research Study 2

Discussion

- Vaccine safety concerns continue to rise (Figure 1)
- A notable proportion of parents reported a decrease in vaccine confidence during the pandemic (Figure 2)
- There is confusion about trusted sources and doubt in expert opinions, even amongst previously vaccine positive parents
- Parents seek information from their trusted sources, choosing healthcare providers as most credible (Table 1)

Conclusions

- Unity's research uniquely assessed sources and their influence on parents' decisions to vaccinate their AYAs
- COVID-19 heightened skepticism on vaccine information, with many sources fueling safety concerns
- Healthcare providers remained trusted messengers, however, government organizations declined in credibility
- The high levels of contradictory information, the need to check multiple sources, and knowledge that their decisions impact their adolescent's future increased parental stress
- Healthcare providers may consider routine processes for actively disseminating vaccine information across digital communication channels to address vaccine concerns