

## Understanding vaccine hesitancy and refusal

Safe and effective vaccines provide a route out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using nationally-representative data from six European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain and Sweden) from the COME-HERE survey, we outline the sources of individual reluctance to be vaccinated. In the October 2021 sweep of the COME-HERE survey, 4714 respondents participated in the survey (France=926, Germany=692, Italy=934, Spain=989, Sweden=541, and Luxembourg=632).

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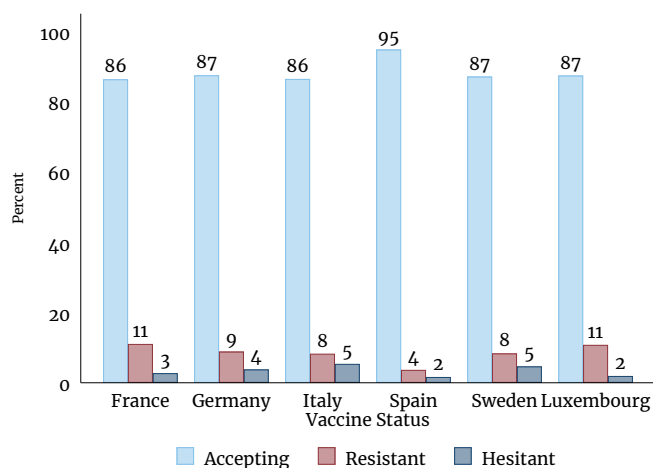
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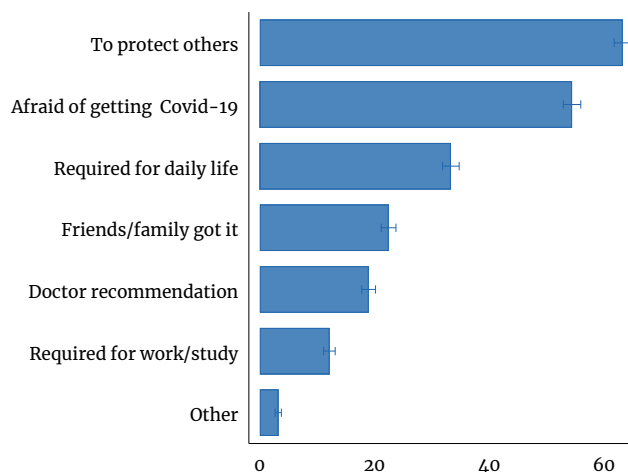
### Vaccine Incidence

Following the World Health Organization (WHO) definition, we identify three different groups of people based on their vaccine preference: vaccine accepting (those that are already vaccinated), vaccine hesitant (those who delay taking the vaccine) and vaccine resistant (those who refuse to take the vaccine). In all six countries over 85% of participants have already been vaccinated. Vaccine uptake is the highest in Spain, with 95% of the sample having taken the shots. Vaccine refusal, on the other hand, is highest at 11% in France and Luxembourg followed by Germany (9%), and Italy and Sweden (both 8%). The lowest vaccine-refusal figure, 4%, is in Spain.



### The reasons for vaccine uptake

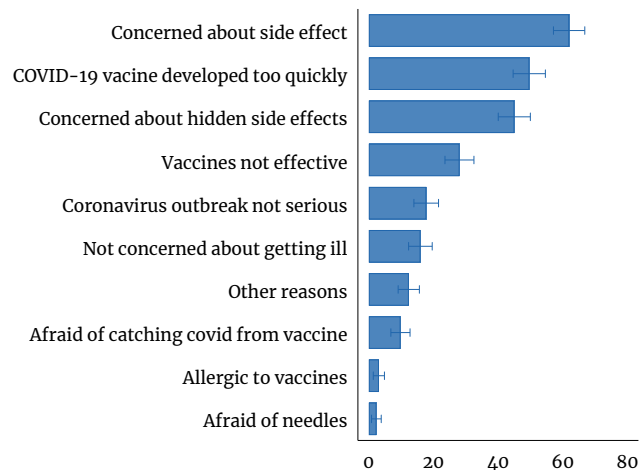
In our combined European sample, a large majority of participants (63%) reported that they decided to be vaccinated in order to protect others, and 54% because they were afraid of getting seriously ill from COVID-19 (individuals could cite more than one reason for their vaccination decision). A significant number of respondents were motivated by the easier daily life that vaccination affords them: 35% of the participants took the vaccine because a vaccine pass is required for daily life, and a further 12% attribute their decision to requirements at work. The influence of family and friends is mentioned by 22% of the respondents, and Doctors' recommendations by 18%.



Even though the top ranked reason for vaccine uptake in all six countries is to protect others, the rest of the reasons slightly differ across countries. In France, the vaccine-pass requirement is the second most-cited reason, while afraid of getting COVID-19 ranked second in the other countries. Vaccine requirements for work or study is the least-mentioned reason in Luxembourg, and the second lowest in France, Spain and Germany. Doctors' recommendations is the lowest-ranked reason for vaccine acceptance in Italy and Sweden; it is not a particularly popular reason in the other countries as well.

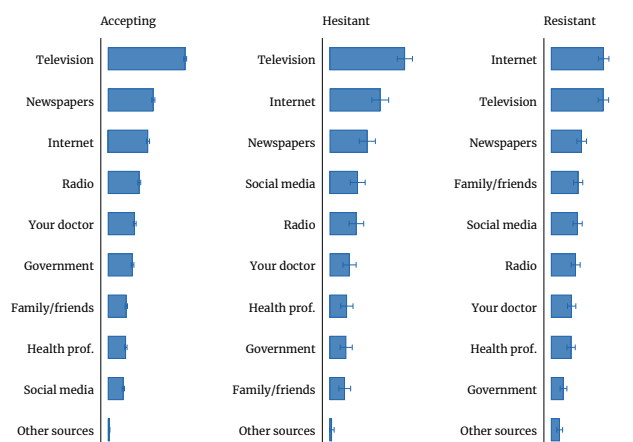
#### The reasons for vaccine resistance

The main reasons for vaccine resistance were concerns over the vaccine's side effects, mentioned by 62% of the vaccine-reluctant. Substantial numbers of the latter also mentioned concerns over vaccine safety (50%) and hidden side effects (45%). A little over one quarter of the vaccine-resistant believe that vaccines do not work.



#### Sources of Covid Information

Participants were asked about their main sources of COVID-19 information: Newspapers, Television, Radio, Internet websites, Social media, Your doctor, Other health professionals, Government agencies, and Family or friends. The answers differed by vaccination status. The vaccine-accepting mainly obtain COVID-19 information from TV (73%), newspapers (43%) and internet sources (38%). The vaccine hesitant are somewhat similar, but with a larger information role for social media. Last, the most importance source of information for the vaccine-resistant is the internet (50%) followed closely by TV (49%). The vaccine-resistant are much less likely to obtain information from the Government than are the vaccine-accepting.



## Summary

It is encouraging that almost 90% of respondents have already been vaccinated, and that the majority did so mainly to protect others. Worries about side effects are the top reason for vaccine refusal in five of the six countries, suggesting a role for public-health messaging regarding these concerns. The vaccine-hesitant and vaccine-resistant are less likely to obtain their information from their Doctor or from Government sources, underlining the importance of a variety of sources in transmitting COVID-19 information.

## Research sponsors

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