



# 10 Things to Know About Vaccine Hesitancy

1



Jamaica's vaccination rate is the second lowest in the Caribbean region, despite an adequate supply of vaccines. Jamaica is almost certain to fail to reach the desired goal of vaccinating 65 percent of the population by March 31, 2022.

2



A Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) study, conducted before Jamaica's vaccination programme began, found that only 35 percent of Jamaicans were willing to take a COVID-19 vaccine. Of all the countries surveyed in the Americas, Jamaica's projection was the lowest.

3



Higher educational attainment is associated with fewer concerns over vaccines. There is evidence that vaccination rates amongst those with at least a university degree are around 50 percent higher than those without a degree.

4



Individuals lower on the socio-economic scale are more likely to believe that the vaccine is unsafe. This could be attributed to level of education, by way of little exposure to and difficulty in understanding scientific information, along with higher mistrust of scientific research in general.

5



Gender is not an important determinant of vaccine hesitancy in Jamaica. Sixty percent of men did not take the vaccine, while 57 percent of women did not take it, a statistically insignificant difference.

6



The role of religion as a determinant of willingness to take the COVID-19 vaccine was not what might have been expected. Forty-seven percent of those who identified as religious had taken the vaccine, 12 percentage points more than the (self-identified) non-religious respondents who had not taken the vaccine.

7



Convenience was cited as an overwhelming factor in vaccine take up, where 95 percent of respondents described some aspect of the vaccination process delivery as inconvenient. This does not necessarily mean that that inconvenience was the binding obstacle to vaccination (only 4 percent stated that a more convenient location would make it more likely for them to take the vaccine) but the high proportion is nevertheless noteworthy. Many of those could very well be unvaccinated primarily because of the other factors discussed in this report – distrust, fear, complacency, etc.

8



The predominant profile of the vaccine hesitant Jamaican is a young, low income person (more likely male than female but not significantly so), who did not finish primary school, is not religious, is not complacent but is risk averse, and who does not trust the government or the vaccine.

9



One of the top reasons cited for not taking the vaccine are lack of trust in the government and in the efficacy of the vaccine itself. Nearly 80 percent of those who did not take it indicated that they lacked trust in their government, compared to 36 percent of people who do trust the government. There is even higher distrust in the vaccine itself: 87 percent of the unvaccinated do not trust the vaccine, compared to 35 percent of the vaccinated. Fifty-six percent of the respondents cited the newness of the vaccine, its potential harm, or not knowing enough about the vaccine as reasons for not getting vaccinated.

10



If even a tenth of the unvaccinated overcome their reluctance because getting vaccinated becomes convenient, the country's vaccination rate would rise by eight percentage points.

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