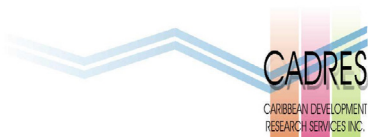




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COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Survey Report 2021

Barbados



Background

Limited take up of COVID-19 vaccines has been an ongoing issue hampering the response to the pandemic across the Eastern Caribbean subregion as elsewhere. Vaccination has emerged as the best possible tool to stem the tide of a pandemic which is having a profoundly negative impact on children and their families.

UNICEF and USAID commissioned Caribbean Development Research Services Inc (CADRES) to conduct a survey on vaccine hesitancy across six countries: Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

The study was carried out in October and November 2021 and explores the extent of, and reasons for, COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and if anything can be done to change the minds of those reluctant to take the vaccines.

These are the findings for Barbados.

Demographics

The Barbados survey was conducted face-to-face with 1,080 participants, evenly spread across males and females and three age ranges. 64% said they were parents. The majority were employed, had a secondary-level education and 12% said they were unemployed because of COVID-19.

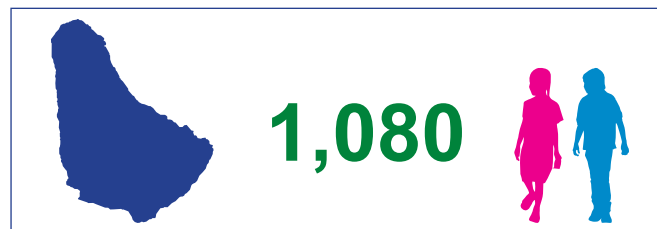
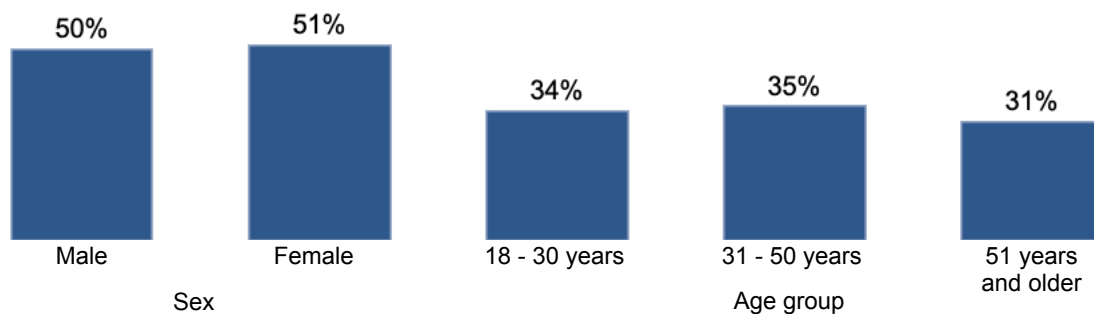
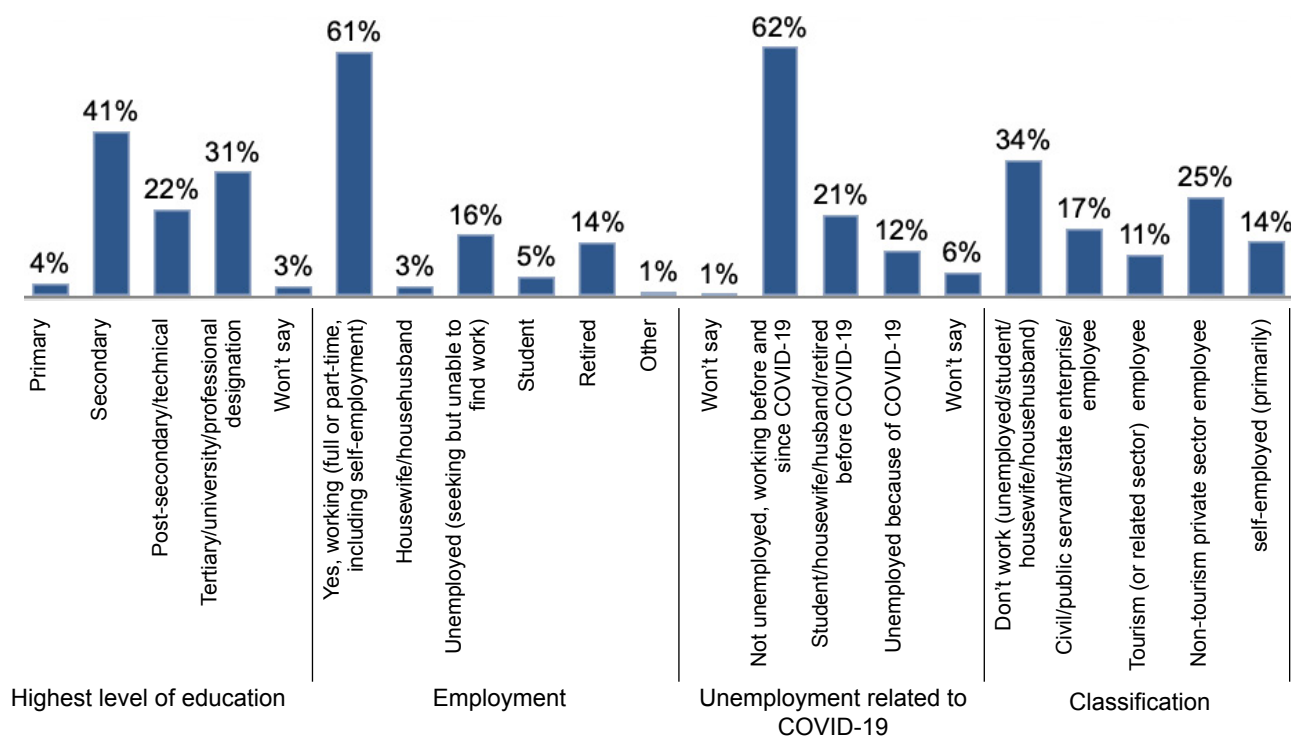


Figure 1: Sex and age group



Sex and age group



General findings

- Of all six countries surveyed Barbados was the least vaccine hesitant, according to the Vaccine Hesitancy Index tool used in the study. The country scored 3.9 on this index where 1 is a perfect score, 3 is the objective score and 10 an imperfect one.

69% of respondents said they had been vaccinated.

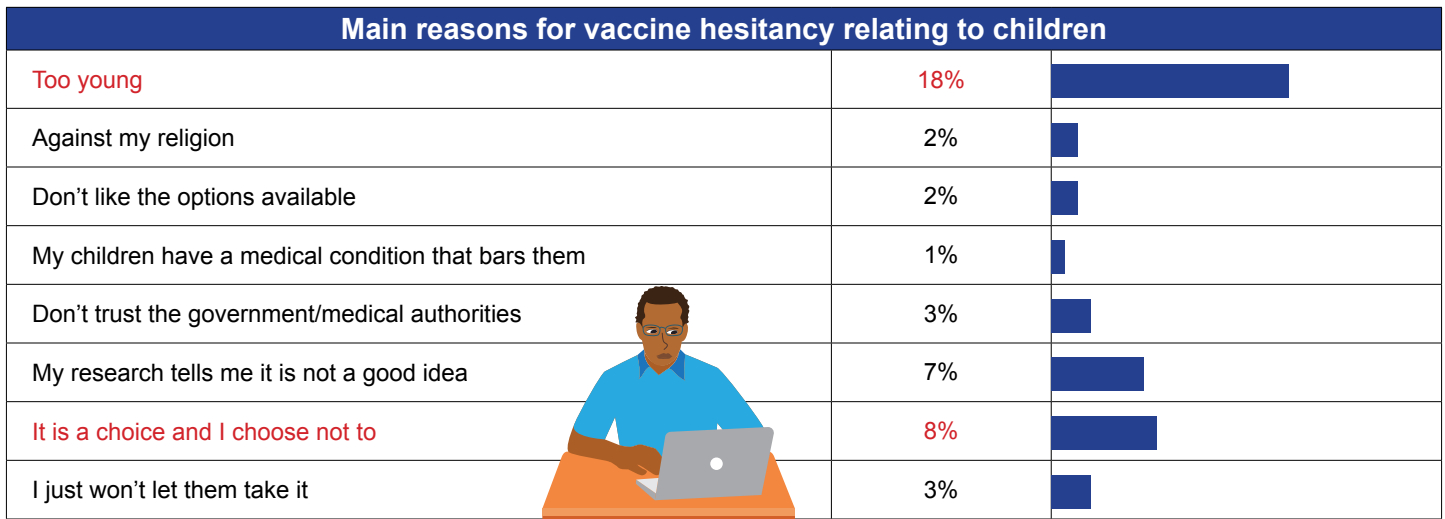
General views and opinions on the vaccination of children

- Respondents were asked if they would agree to have their children vaccinated against COVID-19. 42% said yes at primary level, rising to 58% for secondary school students.



Would you agree to have children vaccinated against COVID-19?							
Pre-primary		Primary school		Secondary school		Post-secondary/ tertiary level	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
33%	51%	42%	45%	58%	32%	64%	25%

3. The justification respondents (vaccinated and unvaccinated) gave for hesitating to vaccinate their children related to their age (18% said their children were too young), followed by 8% saying 'I choose not to'.



4. For those who were persuaded to allow their children to take vaccines, this was because they did more research or spoke to their doctor or paediatrician.

Views and opinions of VACCINATED persons

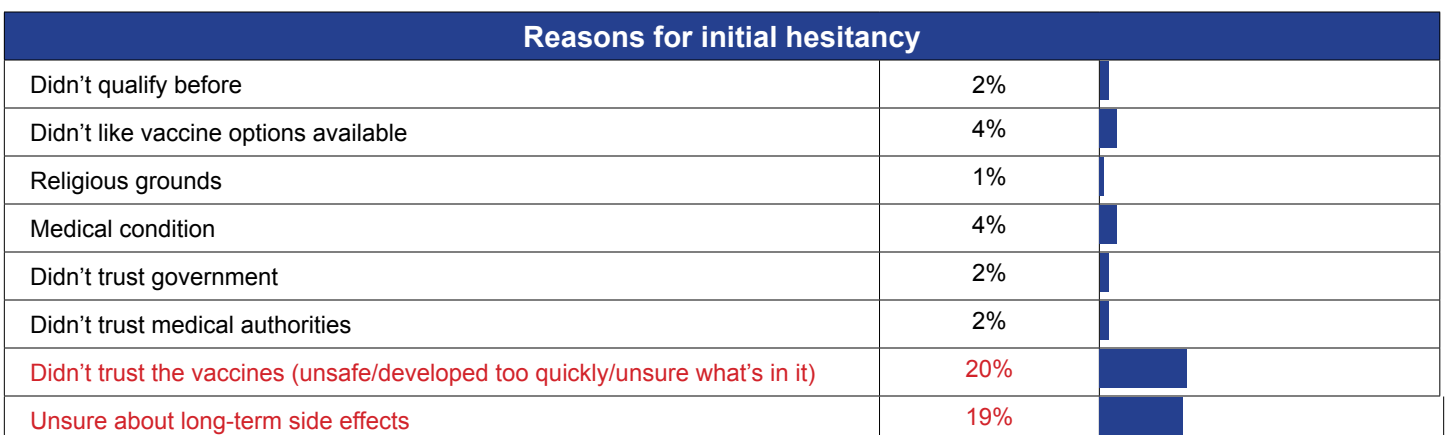
Vaccine uptake

5. As noted, 69% of respondents in Barbados report having been vaccinated, with **Oxford/AstraZeneca**, the most used at 63%. The next most popular was BioNTech/ Pfizer.

62% of people took what was available while 38% chose their preferred vaccine.

Initial vaccination hesitancy

6. The reasons for *early* hesitancy were a lack of trust in the vaccines on account of the speed of their development and concerns about long-term side effects.



7. The major factors that convinced respondents to take the vaccine were medical advice and personal research.

Factor that changed respondents' mind		
Offered the vaccine with which I was more comfortable	6%	
Spoke to my doctor	10%	
Did more research	11%	
Consulted family and friends	5%	
My spiritual/religious leader advised me	0%	
Persuaded by government/public health authorities	3%	
Noticed that a personality (public or otherwise) took it	0%	
Was forced by my employer/family members/didn't have a choice	5%	
Felt more comfortable because several people took it	7%	
Frightened by the increased infections/deaths	5%	
My circumstances changed (such as being pregnant or other medical or personal factor)	2%	


Information and communication for vaccinated persons

8. The **primary** sources of information on the COVID-19 vaccine situation for these respondents were governmental/official sources and social media.

Primary source of information on COVID-19 situation		
Government/official sources	31%	
Private/personal medical sources	7%	
Social media	24%	
Personal internet research	15%	
Local radio/television/newspapers	19%	
Information from family and friends	4%	

9. The preferred medium of communication was television.

Best way to communicate/preferred source of information		
Via newspapers (paper/electronic)	11%	
Via radio	15%	
Via television (local or cable)	22%	
Via Facebook	10%	
Via Instagram	11%	
Via WhatsApp	17%	
Via Twitter	1%	
Via TikTok	0%	
Via YouTube	2%	
Social networks (family and friends)	11%	










10. In terms of whether the use of local and international personalities has any effect, 54% said this was useful. However, at 34% those who found it *unhelpful* was noticeably higher than the regional average of 28%.

Information conveyed by local and international personalities helpful

Yes, very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful/ distracting/misleading	Unsure/ won't say
19%	35%	34%	12%












Vaccination mandates

11. Most vaccinated Barbadians believe in a vaccine mandate for a wide range of people, though less so for primary school children.

Support imposition of COVID-19 vaccine mandates		
Arriving visitors	81%	
Frontline medical/elder care workers	73%	
Public servants	58%	
Workers in the hotel/tourism sector	71%	
Taxi/minibus drivers and conductors	69%	
Secondary/tertiary students	56%	
Primary school students	43%	

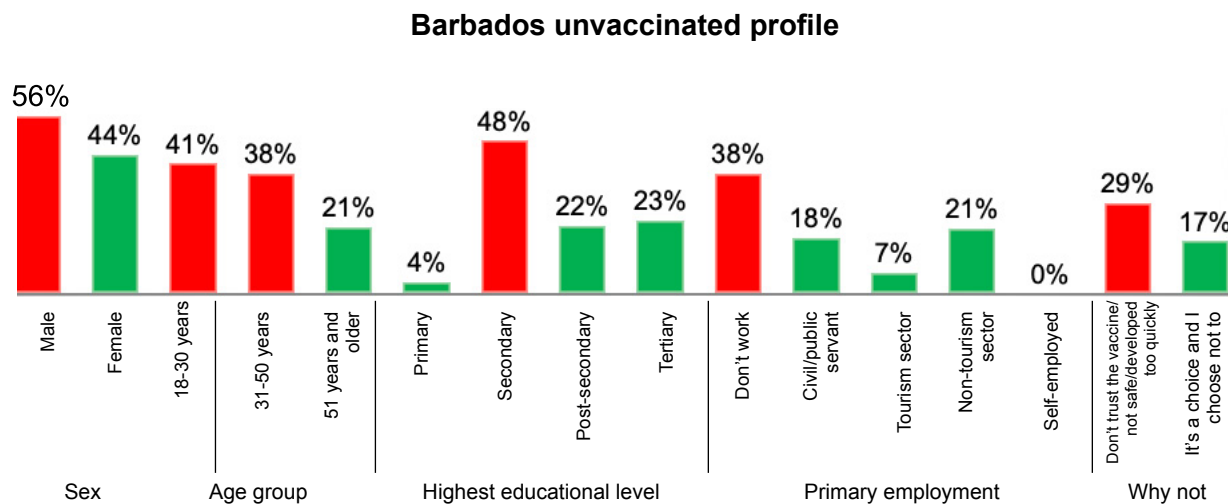
Views and opinions of UNVACCINATED persons

12. In line with those who were initially hesitant but decided to vaccinate eventually, those who remain *unvaccinated* cite reservations about the safety and rapid development of the vaccines and long-term side effects.

Main reason for being unvaccinated		
Didn't qualify to receive it	2%	
Can't find the time to go/lines are too long	3%	
Don't like any of the vaccine options available	2%	
Won't take it on religious grounds	7%	
Have a medical condition that bars me	8%	
Don't trust the government/medical authorities here	8%	
Don't trust the vaccine (not safe, developed too quickly, do not know what is in it)	29%	
It's a choice and I choose not to	17%	
No reason, just won't take it	6%	
Unsure about long-term side effects	18%	
Not mandatory for work	2%	

Profile

13. The unvaccinated Barbadian is more likely to be male, under 50 and unemployed, with secondary-level education.









14. When asked if their views on taking a vaccine changed over time, 64% of the unvaccinated said no, 20% said they were more inclined to get vaccinated and 16% said they were less inclined.

Information and communication for the unvaccinated









15. The preferred mode of communication for unvaccinated persons was WhatsApp, followed by social networks.

Preferred mode of communication/receipt of information		
Via newspapers (paper/electronic)	8%	
Via radio	7%	
Via television (local or cable)	14%	
Via Facebook	9%	
Via Instagram	12%	
Via WhatsApp	28%	
Via Twitter	0%	
Via TikTok	2%	
Via YouTube	3%	
Social networks (family and friends)	17%	

16. The sources that respondents relied on to inform their decision to remain unvaccinated were social media and personal internet research.

Source most helpful in deciding NOT to take vaccine		
Government/official sources	14%	
Frontline medical/elder care workers	16%	
Social media	25%	
Personal internet research	25%	
Local radio/television/newspapers	9%	
Information from family and friends	12%	

17. Was there any information that would make reluctant respondents take the vaccine? Most said more information on side effects and efficacy could sway them.

Information that could help convince you to take a COVID-19 vaccine		
Side effects	39%	
Efficacy	37%	
Numbers of people who got sick/died and their vaccination status	23%	
Different types of vaccines available	28%	
Location of vaccination sites	14%	
Position of your church or religious leaders	4%	
Impact of the vaccine on your sexual health	20%	
Impact of the vaccine on your ability to have children	20%	

18. It is interesting to note that, for the unvaccinated, information conveyed by personalities was more likely to be unhelpful, distracting or misleading.

Information conveyed by popular personalities helpful			
Yes, very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful/ distracting/ misleading	Unsure/ won't say
13%	29%	46%	12%

19. When asked if there were any other factors that could help change their minds, apart from more medical information, respondents suggested they might do it to get or keep a job or travel overseas.

Factors that could possibly change your mind regarding COVID-19 vaccine		
Necessary to secure/maintain job	32%	
Allow free access to social activities	18%	
More scientific or medical information	54%	
Saw people they care about getting sick/dying	26%	
Saw influential people switch their position	8%	
Required to travel overseas	33%	

20. In relation to vaccine mandates, unvaccinated respondents were much less likely than their vaccinated counterparts to support them.

Would support vaccine mandates in respect of...		
Arriving passengers	48%	
Frontline medical/elder care workers	36%	
Public servants	23%	
Workers in the hotel/tourism sector	33%	
Taxi/minibus drivers and conductors	30%	
Secondary/tertiary students	14%	
Primary school children	9%	

Recommendations

Communication strategies need to speak to key concerns, target the demographic profile of the unvaccinated and hone the use of non-governmental personalities and influencers.

Supplemental strategies should consider the risk to vulnerable groups and, in respect of younger and unemployed persons, consider promoting infotainment products that might reach this audience.

Vaccination tracking is necessary to determine if strategies are working and it is therefore suggested that this exercise be repeated in another year if the issue continues to be relevant.