

COVID-19 Vaccination Information Sources, Mistrust, and Infection Prevention: A Comparison of Healthcare Workers in a Single State

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the responses of 405 vaccinated and unvaccinated healthcare workers to gain a clearer understanding of differences in COVID-19 infection prevention behaviors, government and medical mistrust, perceived threat, and cues to action via information sources.

Parent Study

The South Carolina Testing and Representative Outreach for Novel Coronavirus Guidance (SC STRONG) was conducted by the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) and the University of South Carolina to respond to the spread of COVID-19 and understand residents' experiences.

Data is available via ICSPR:

<https://www.openicpsr.org/openicpsr/project/161504/version/V1/view>

Methods

This is a secondary data analysis using the South Carolina Testing and Representative Outreach for Novel Coronavirus Guidance (SC STRONG)

Data Collection: August - September 2021

Sample: 50 unvaccinated HCWs / 355 vaccinated HCWs

Analysis: Descriptive statistics, Chi-Square with Fishers Exact, & Pairwise Comparisons with Bonferroni Corrections

Results

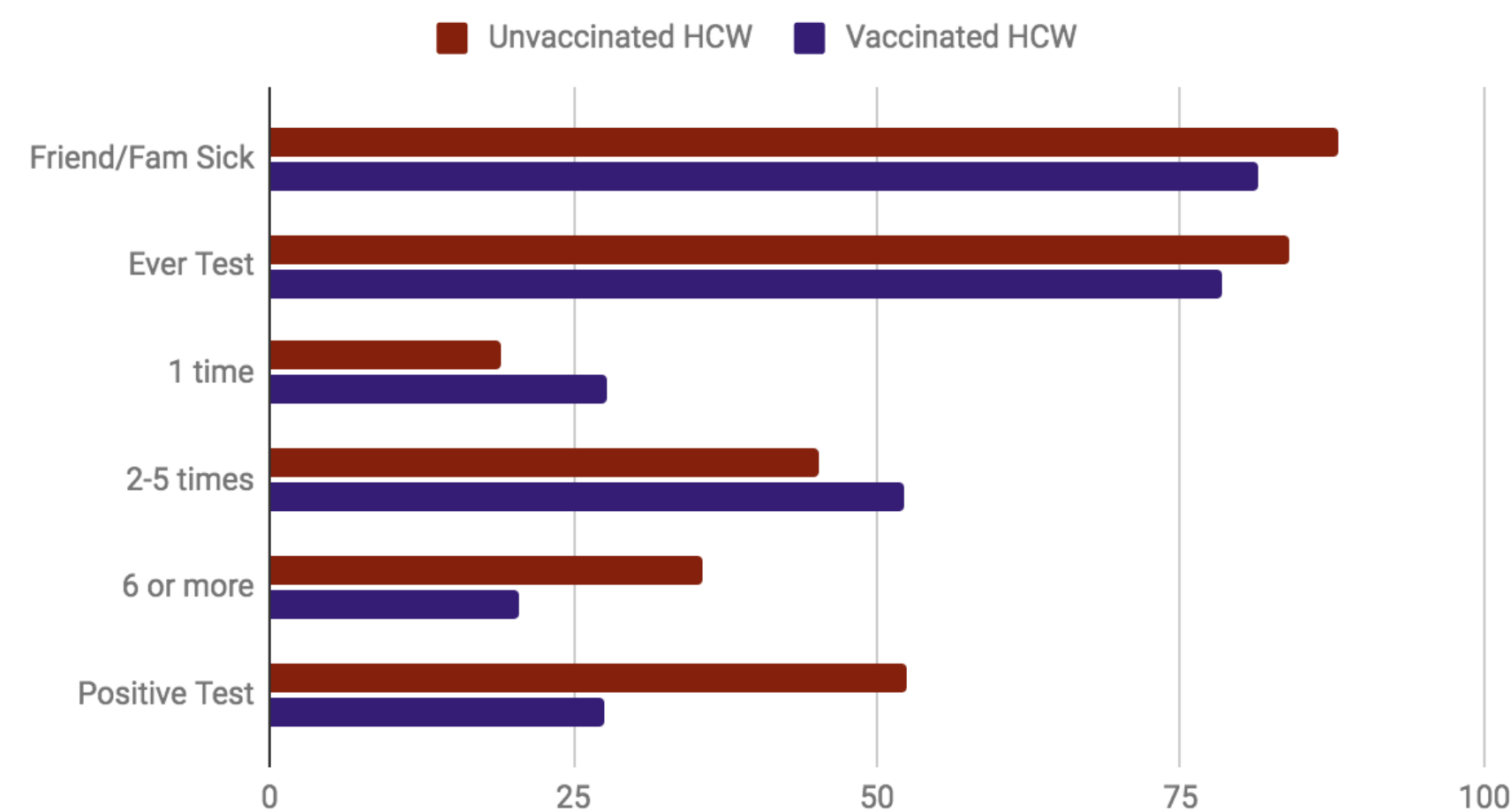
Demographics: The sample was overwhelmingly white, non-Hispanic, female, and over the age of 40. The only statistically significant difference in demographics between the vaccinated and unvaccinated samples was household income ($p=0.020$) with higher household income being associated with vaccination.

Perceived Threat: Spread in the community, vaccinated participants were more likely to report they were "very concerned" (57%) whereas the majority of unvaccinated HCWs were more likely to report "not concerned" (54%). Spread to self or person in household, vaccinated participants reporting "very concerned" drops rather to 24.8%, while unvaccinated HCWs reported "not concerned" at an increased rate (64%).

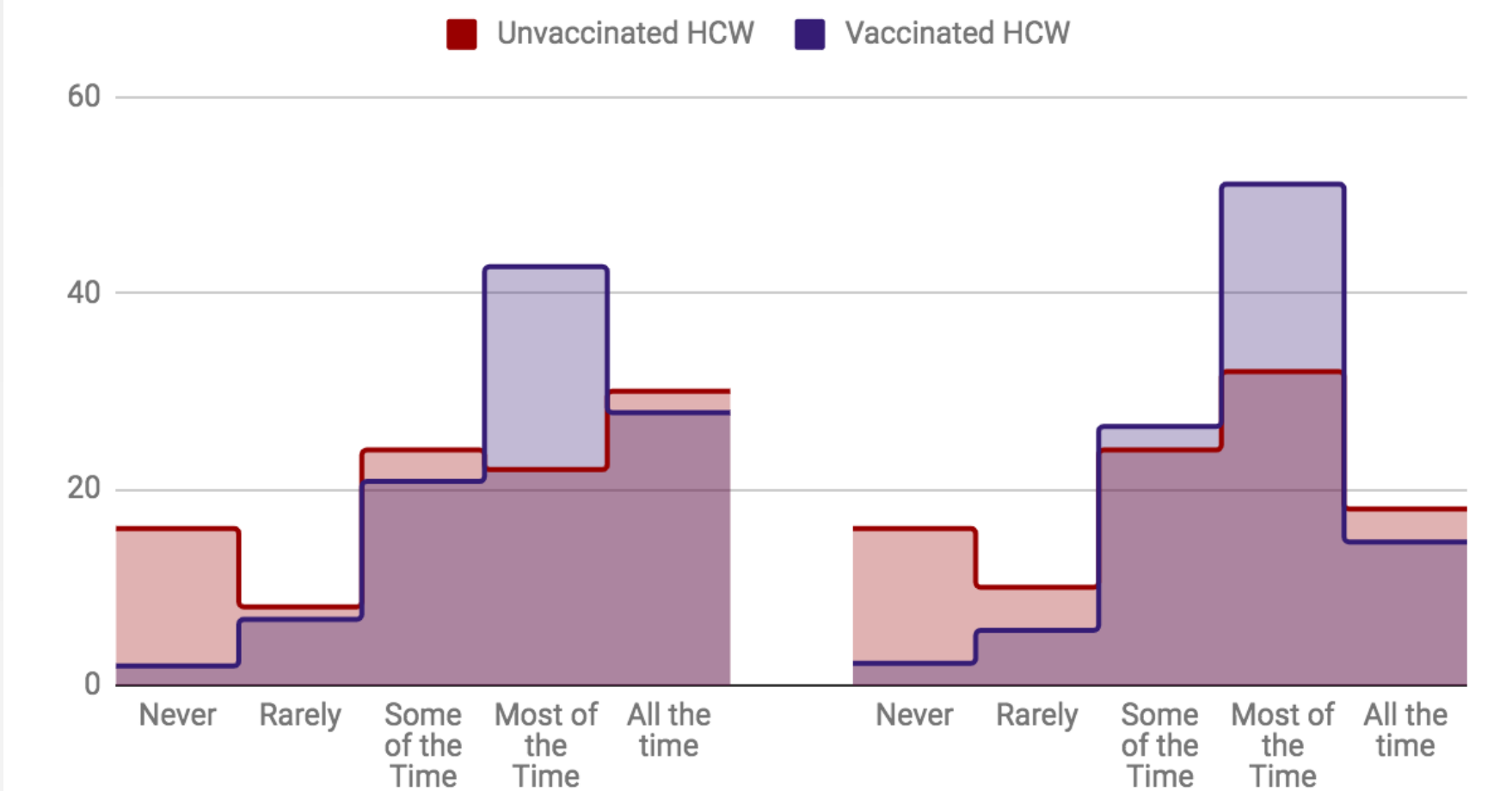
Information Sources: Same top three informational resources reported "service providers or health professionals" (80% & 85.5% respectively), "news websites or apps" (46% and 47.7%) and "announcements or news conferences held by local public health officials and agencies (46% and 56.82%). Unvaccinated HCWs reported "social media" use at twice the rate of vaccinated HCWs ($p=0.015$).

Main Findings

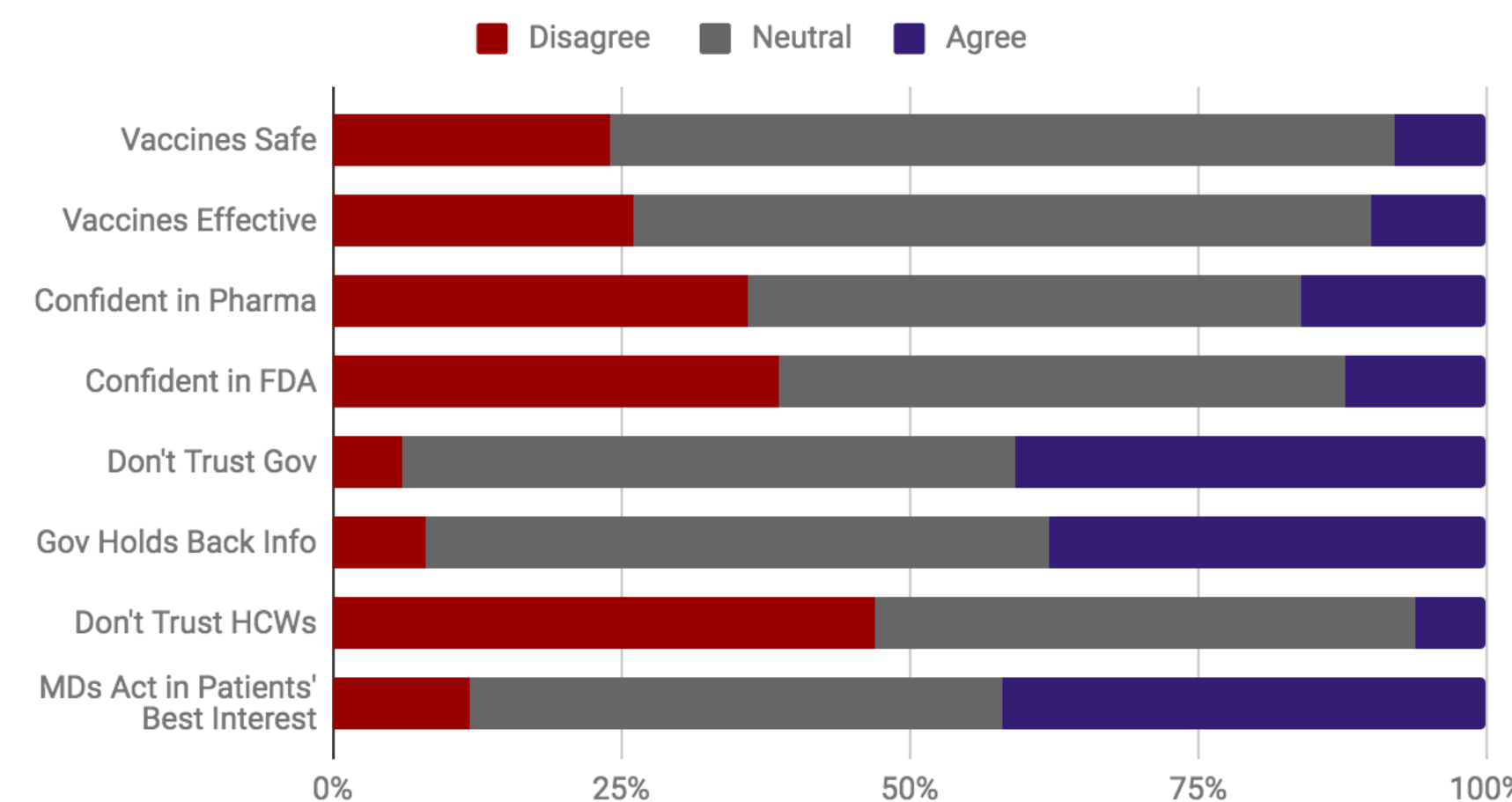
COVID-19 Testing Related



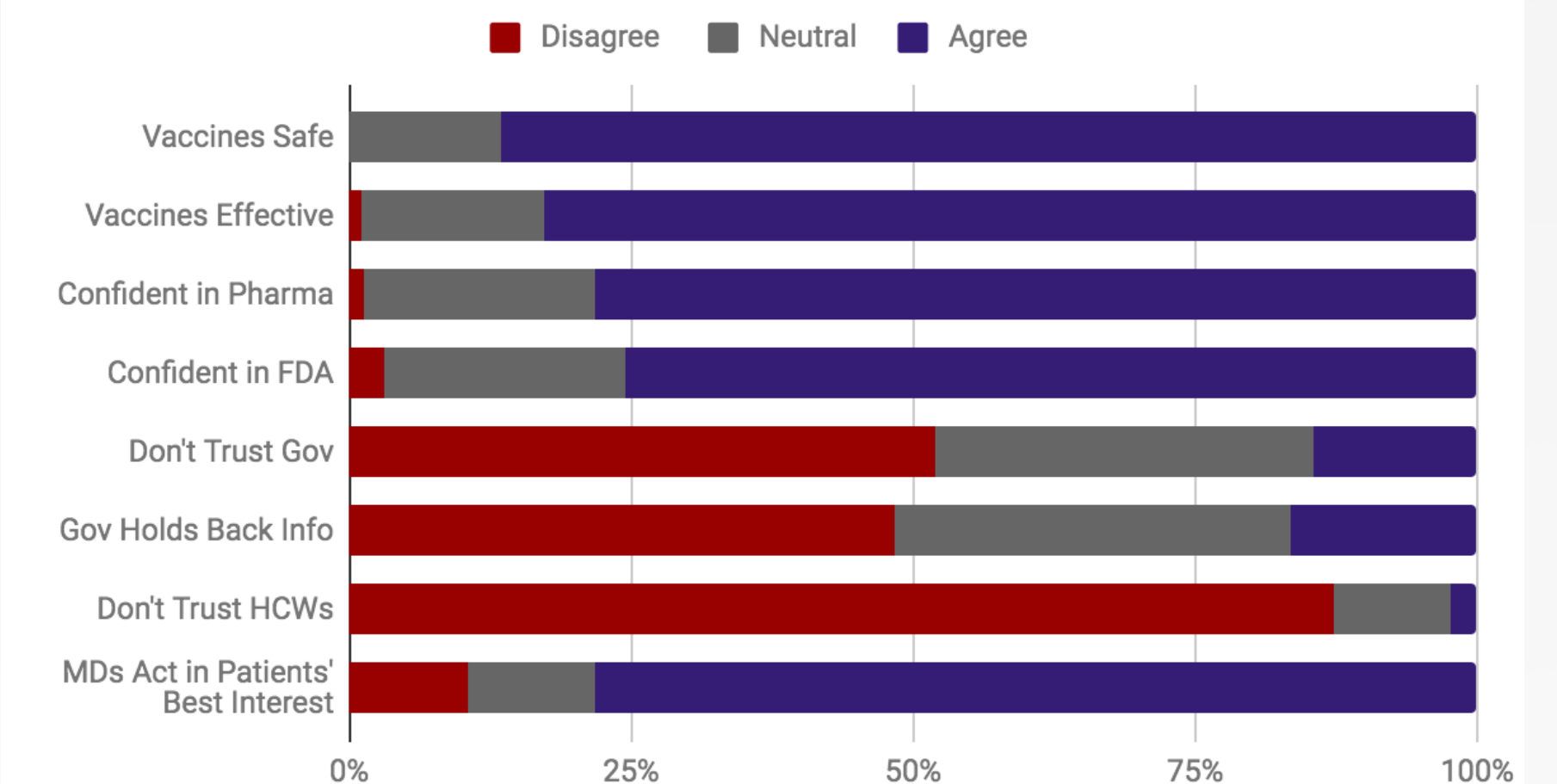
Masking and Distancing



Unvaccinated



Vaccinated



Discussion

In this study the use of social media as an information source is correlated with lower levels of vaccine acceptance. Unvaccinated HCWs statistically significantly perceived less risk of COVID-19 community spread and were more likely to have had a positive COVID-19 test.

Yet we do see high levels of masking and social distancing reported with over half of those unvaccinated and 65-70% of vaccinated participants reporting adhering to protective health behaviors at "most" or "all of the time". This trend for the unvaccinated participants however runs counterintuitively to views of concern over COVID-19 spread.

Unvaccinated participants were also more likely to display medical and governmental mistrust or neutrality. It is unclear if this selection of neutral truly indicates neutrality in terms of ambivalence, or rather a dubious or unsure sentiment. However, in-person interprofessional trust may have the potential to be leveraged into adjunctive institutional level policy measures beyond mandates.

Acknowledgements

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