

COVID-19 Vaccine Acceptance among Victorian Parents

Introduction

The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) National Child Health Poll is a periodic national survey of Australian parents shedding new light on the big issues in contemporary child and adolescent health. The Poll's structure and focus combines the rigour of academic discovery with the timeliness and reach of online quantitative research, to deliver significant new knowledge about the health, wellbeing and lives of children and young people in contemporary Australia. See <https://www.rchpoll.org.au> for further information.

The RCH National Child Health Poll conducted three surveys focusing on the pandemic and related impacts in 2020 and this short report contains findings on COVID-19 vaccine acceptance.

Methods

Three separate cross-sectional surveys on intention to receive the COVID-19 vaccine were conducted between June and December 2020. First survey was in the field from June 15 to June 23, 2020, second survey from September 15 to September 29, 2020 and third survey from December 7 to December 17, 2020. The study population of the first two surveys consisted of Australian parents or carers of children aged less than 18 years while the third survey was limited to Victorian parents only. The results presented here are only for Victoria with parents from other jurisdictions who participated in the first two surveys excluded from analysis.

In these surveys, separate representative random samples of Australian parents were asked about whether they intended to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. Parents who responded 'definitely yes' and 'probably yes' were classified as 'yes' and those who responded 'definitely no' or 'probably no' were classified as 'no'. Those responding 'no' or 'unsure' were asked the reasons why they were unsure or would not have the vaccine. The questionnaire is presented in the Appendix.

The surveys were conducted online for the RCH National Child Health Poll by a private vendor, The Online Research Unit (ORU). The ORU has a consumer panel of over 350,000 adults living in Australia aged 18 years and over with internet access. Participants are randomly recruited to the panel using both online and offline methods and only one person per household can complete the questionnaire. Parents were randomly selected by the ORU proportional to the relevant population of states and territories in Australia. The Victorian data were subsequently weighted

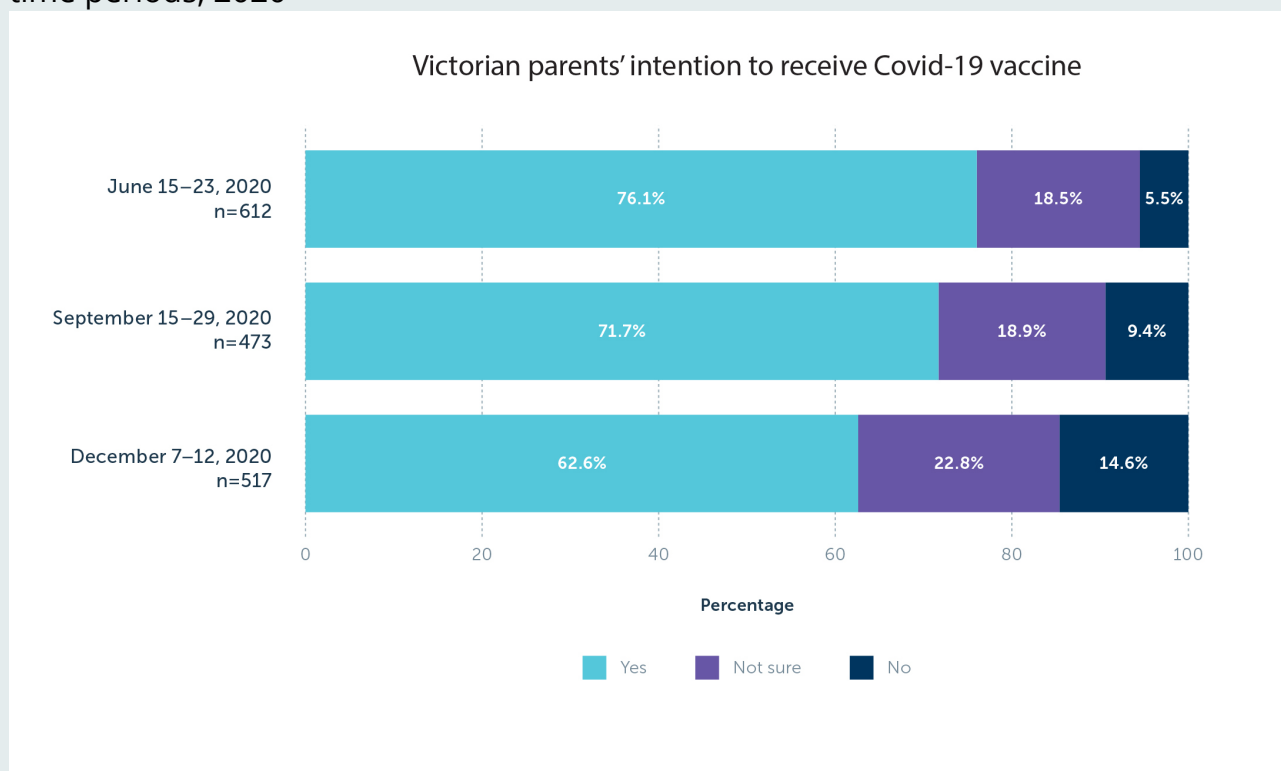
to reflect the distribution of the Victorian parent population by, age, sex and socio-economic status using Estimated Resident Population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The study protocol was approved by The Royal Children's Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee.

Results

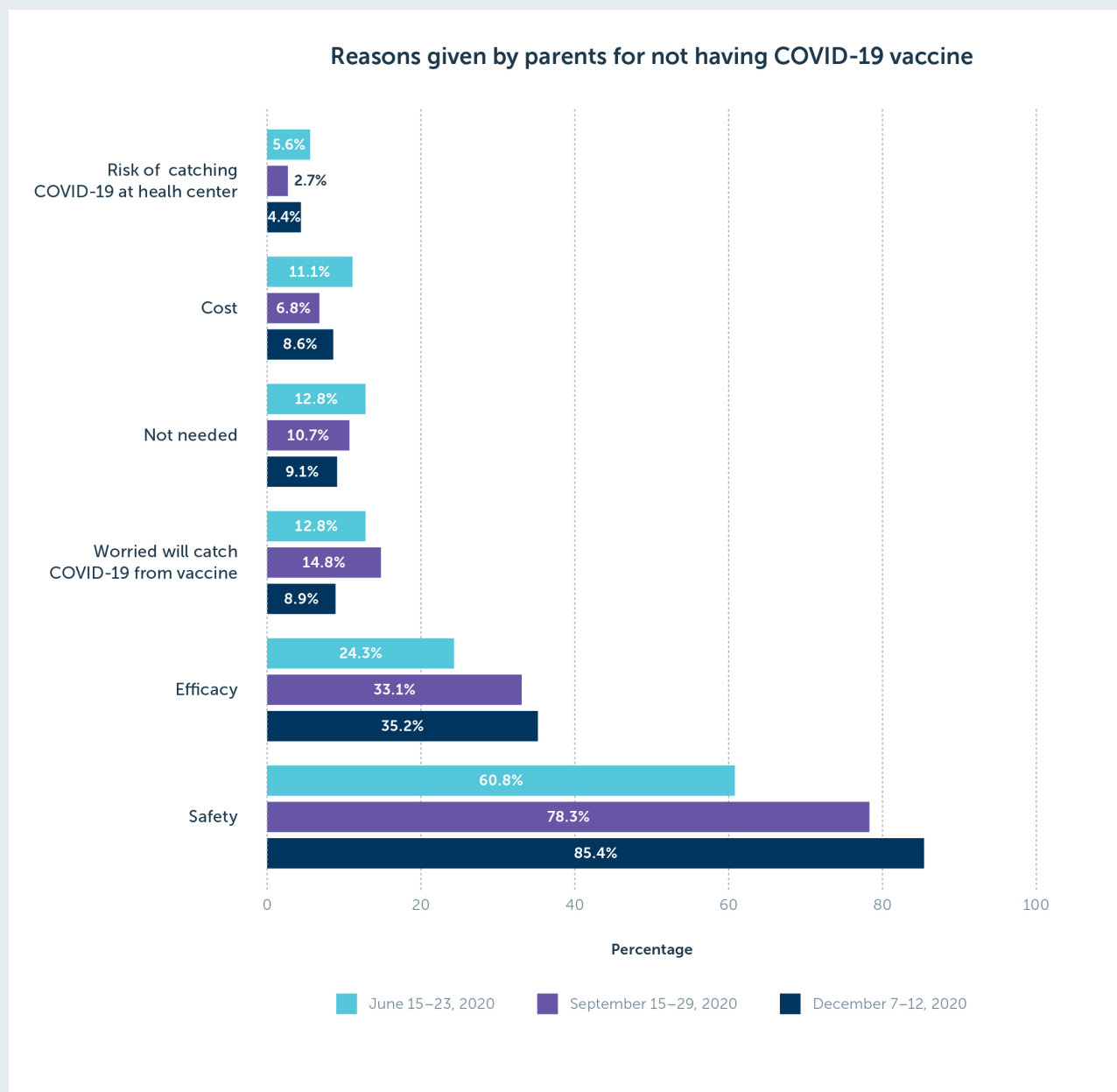
The proportion of parents who intend to receive the COVID-19 vaccine declined over the period June to December 2020 (Figure 1). The main reason why parents reported not intending to receive the vaccine was worry about its safety (Figure 2). The proportion of parents reporting safety worries increased over the six-month period from June to December 2020 (Figure 2). Female respondents and those not engaged in full time work were the least willing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine (Figure 3).

Figure 1 Victorian parents' intention to receive COVID-19 vaccine for themselves, three time periods, 2020



Note: Parents who responded 'probably yes' or 'definitely yes' to Q1 (see questionnaire in Appendix) were classified as 'yes', those responding 'not sure yet' were classified as unsure and those responding 'probably no or definitely no' were classified as 'no'.

Figure 2: Reasons given by Victorian parents for not intending to have the COVID-19 vaccine, 3 time periods, 2020



Notes: 1. Parents who responded 'not sure', 'definitely no' or 'probably no' to Q 1 (see questionnaire in Appendix) were asked the reasons why they would not have the vaccine, responses are presented above.

2. Parents who reported the vaccine was not needed where those who selected option 'a' and/or 'b' for Q3 (see questionnaire in Appendix)

Figure 3: Proportion of Victorian parents who intend to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, 3 time periods, 2020, by demographic characteristics



Notes: 1. Parents who responded 'probably yes' or 'definitely yes' to Q1 (see questionnaire in Appendix) were classified as intending to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and are included in this figure

2. Socio economic status is reported based on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage decile (SEIFA, 2016), where 0 – 20% contains the bottom 20%.

Appendix A. RCH Child Health Poll: COVID-19 Vaccine Acceptance Questionnaire

The next few questions are about your thoughts on the COVID-19 vaccine. Scientists are working hard to develop safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19.

1. When the COVID-19 vaccine is available to everyone in Australia, do you think you would have it **yourself**? Please select one answer only
 - a. Definitely yes
 - b. Probably yes
 - c. I'm not sure yet
 - d. Probably not
 - e. Definitely not

2. Would you get the COVID-19 vaccine for **your child/ren**?
 - a. Definitely yes
 - b. Probably yes
 - c. I'm not sure yet
 - d. Probably not
 - e. Definitely not

BRANCHING If (b, c, d, e) for EITHER Q1 OR Q2 branch to Q3

3. For what reason(s) would you NOT have a COVID-19 vaccine for yourself AND/OR your child/ren? Please select all that apply.
 - a. It will not be needed as most people will have had the infection by then
 - b. I don't think the vaccine is necessary because COVID-19 is not that serious in most people
 - c. I don't think the vaccine is necessary for **children** because COVID-19 is not that serious **in children**
 - d. It may not work well enough to be worth having
 - e. I would be worried that is not safe and hasn't been tested enough for safety
 - f. I would be worried you could catch COVID-19 from the vaccine
 - g. I would not want to/be able to pay for the vaccine
 - h. I would not want to attend a health care provider to have the vaccine due to the risk of catching COVID-19

