

Trust of healthcare workers in vaccines may enhance the public's willingness to vaccinate

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Dear Editor,

We read with great interest the article by Ramot *et al.* entitled “Attitude of healthcare workers and numbers of the public toward the COVID-19 vaccine: A cross-sectional survey.”¹ The paper discussed the greatest influence on health-related decisions of information from medical sources. The authors emphasized that policymakers should consider these factors as promoting vaccination. Since COVID-19 omicron variant infection is still rampant currently and China is among the few countries with “dynamic zero-COVID-19” positive anti-epidemic measures, it is extremely urgent to overcome the pandemic through enhancing vaccination in a wide population. So far COVID-19 vaccines are important to improve immunity against pathogens and diseases. Here we would like to add that the trust of healthcare workers in vaccines in developing countries is very important to improve the public's willingness to vaccinate.

Vaccine hesitancy has never been a simple public health issue. It has a long history, and is no exception at home and abroad.² In the past three years, many approved COVID-19 vaccines are available and accessible; unfortunately, vaccine hesitancy hinders the public to take the vaccine.³

In the moment there is COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy around us. An online investigation showed that the overall prevalence of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy was 8.40% in about 30,000 participants from 31 Chinese provinces.⁴ Even in Shanghai, a super metropolis in China, the vaccination situation is not optimistic. As of 16 June 2022, the vaccination rate of the elderly aged 60 and above in Shanghai is 63.16%. Sadly, the unvaccinated population, especially the elderly, has a high incidence and mortality of serious consequences after infection with COVID-19. Such a low vaccination rate is far from establishing the colony immune defense.^{5,6}

There are various factors – individual, interpersonal, healthcare and societal level factors – affecting on COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Healthcare worker recommendations as well as sources or credentials of COVID-19-related information are important healthcare and societal level factors.

In many developing countries, healthcare workers generally play a great role in enhancing public intent toward vaccination. Many documents displayed that it is highly effective for healthcare workers to inspire public vaccine uptake by alleviating people's concerns over the vaccines and addressing vaccine-related misinformation which is

mainly from social media. In China, medical doctors usually enjoy a respectful position. Most Chinese people consider earnestly the opinions of the healthcare workers very much. In the current COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy period, the comprehensive and accessible vaccine information from authoritative healthcare workers may facilitate COVID-19 vaccination efforts. Effective, timely and positive communication between healthcare workers and the public/patients could combat misinformation and greatly reduce vaccine hesitancy in the vaccination campaign. Here, it is of importance for healthcare worker to build public trust in China vaccine.

Therefore, during the vaccine communication, if healthcare workers themselves know little the basic knowledge of vaccines, show a little hesitancy, and do not provide public with correct and the latest evidence-based information on vaccine varieties, public vaccine willingness is not possibly promoted. Only we can win public trust with strong clinical research data, vaccine hesitancy might be overcome. Last but not least, healthcare workers should maintain a fair and transparent attitude toward vaccine recommendation. When healthcare workers advocate vaccination, they should consider their native country's economic power. There are three key considerations: safe, economically viable and effective vaccine for their fellow citizens.

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