



Since January 2020 Elsevier has created a COVID-19 resource centre with free information in English and Mandarin on the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The COVID-19 resource centre is hosted on Elsevier Connect, the company's public news and information website.

Elsevier hereby grants permission to make all its COVID-19-related research that is available on the COVID-19 resource centre - including this research content - immediately available in PubMed Central and other publicly funded repositories, such as the WHO COVID database with rights for unrestricted research re-use and analyses in any form or by any means with acknowledgement of the original source. These permissions are granted for free by Elsevier for as long as the COVID-19 resource centre remains active.



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

The Lancet Regional Health - Americas

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/lana

Letter

A call for COVID-19 immunization campaigns that address the specific circumstances of indigenous peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean



Zeus Aranda^{1,*}, Marcos Arana-Cedeño^{2,3}, David Mariano Meléndez-Navarro⁴, Sergio Meneses-Navarro⁵, Héctor Javier Sánchez-Pérez^{6,7}

¹ Partners In Health Mexico/Compañeros En Salud, Ángel Albino Corzo, Chiapas, México

² Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Médicas y Nutrición Salvador Zubirán, Ciudad de México, México

³ Centro de Capacitación en Ecología y Salud Para Campesinos y Defensoría del Derecho a La Salud, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México

⁴ Comité Promotor por una Maternidad Segura en México, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, México

⁵ CONACYT/Center for Health Systems Research, Center for Population Health Research, National Institute of Public Health, Cuernavaca, Morelos, México

⁶ Grup de Recerca d'Amèrica i Àfrica Llatines, Cerdanyola del Vallès, Catalunya, Espanya

⁷ El Colegio de la Frontera Sur, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, México

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 24 August 2021

Accepted 26 August 2021

Available online 10 September 2021

COVID-19 immunization in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has been subject to low vaccine availability and unequal distribution of doses among countries.¹ In addition, historically marginalized populations in LAC, such as indigenous peoples, have suffered from the omission of their specific circumstances in national COVID-19 immunization plans, which represents an additional threat to the immunization coverage of these communities. Most national immunization plans did not involve indigenous communities' representatives in their development, and lack sociocultural appropriateness, use of indigenous languages, and consideration of the living conditions and socioeconomic adversities affecting these populations.^{2,3} This is compounded by the repeated violation of indigenous peoples' rights by government health professionals, which has led to mistrust and reluctance of some indigenous communities to use government health services,⁴ as well as the misinformation campaigns around COVID-19 that have plagued the continent.⁵ Lack of official information, poor access to immunization services and mistrust may be affecting COVID-19 immunization coverage among indigenous populations, which is difficult to demonstrate as most countries do not record disaggregated sociodemographic information on vaccinated persons.²

We strongly recommend that public authorities take into account the specific circumstances of indigenous peoples when de-

veloping immunization campaigns, always recognizing their rights to autonomy and self-determination, and that they ensure that the data collected on vaccinated individuals allows for tracking immunization coverage among indigenous populations. In addition, we encourage civil society organizations to join forces with the public sector by filing gaps in government immunization strategies and building bridges between public officials and indigenous communities.

Declaration of competing interest

None

References

- [1] Ritchie H, Ortiz-Ospina E, Beltekian D, et al. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research. Our World Data; 2021. <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations> (accessed Aug 17, 2021).
- [2] Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y El Caribe Cuarto Informe Regional: Pueblos Indígenas y Vacunación contra el covid-19. La Paz; 2021. <https://www.filac.org/cuarto-informe-regional-pueblos-indigenas-y-vacunacion-contra-el-covid-19/> (accessed July 17, 2021).
- [3] Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe El impacto del COVID-19 en los pueblos indígenas de América Latina-Abya Yala: entre la invisibilización y la resistencia colectiva. Santiago de Chile; 2020. <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/46543-impacto-covid-19-pueblos-indigenas-america-latina-abya-yala-la-invisibilizacion> (accessed July 17, 2021).

* Corresponding author. Zeus Aranda, Compañeros En Salud AC
E-mail address: zaranda@pnh.org (Z. Aranda).

- [4] Zepeda HR, Marín BAO. Vulnerabilidad impuesta y violación sistemática a los derechos de las mujeres indígenas en México. *Rev Médica Electrónica* 2017;39:933–46.
- [5] Epstein D, Nusser N, Otiel S. Misinformation fueling vaccine hesitancy, PAHO Director says. *Reg. Off. Am. World Heal. Organ. News.* 2021. <https://www.paho.org/en/news/21-4-2021-misinformation-fueling-vaccine-hesitancy-paho-director-says> (accessed Aug 24, 2021).