



COVID-19 RESEARCH GUIDEBOOK

Suggested Citation

Xu, K., Kim, S., Dunn, A., Zapolin, D., Murugesan, N., Baker, C. N., Hoerger, M., & The NOLA Pandemic Food Collaborative. (2021). COVID-19 Research Guidebook. Tulane University. <http://www.nola19.com/covid.pdf>



Funding

This project is funded through a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award (EASC-COVID- #00265, Hoerger & Baker).

Correspondence

For inquiries, please contact Michael Hoerger, Tulane University, mhoerger@tulane.edu



Introduction

This guidebook focuses on outlining three areas of COVID-19 specific research relevant to frontline essential food service workers and their families: COVID-19 media literacy, family vaccine decision making, and mental and physical health during the pandemic. Food service workers have experienced greater viral exposure and been more likely to have adverse COVID-19 outcomes. The patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR) arm of this research aims to support frontline essential food service workers by engaging with stakeholders from the community to emphasize what is important. The clinical effectiveness research (CER) arm of this research aims to compare plausible pandemic scenarios and develop clinical strategies to support frontline essential food service workers. This research focuses on outcomes that are meaningful to members of the community impacted by COVID-19. This study aims to weigh the benefits and harms of different care delivered in real-world settings during the COVID-19 pandemic by engaging with stakeholders in every stage of research. This research collaborative is purposed to benefit the population of frontline essential food service workers and model practices that inform the PCOR/CER community.



COVID-19 Media Literacy

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified misinformation, especially misinformation shared on social-media platforms, to be an ‘infodemic’ that must be fought in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic itself (Bin Naeem et al., 2021). Research has shown that people with higher misperceptions related to vaccines and other preventive measures more frequently consume news information from social media rather than traditional media outlets, and greater social media-seeking behavior was linked to higher COVID-19 misperceptions (Allington et al., 2021; Enders et al., 2021). In an overview of the types of COVID-19 misinformation spread online, the main types of false news regarding the COVID-19 pandemic relate to false claims about the pandemic, conspiracy theories, and pseudoscientific health therapies (Bin Naeem et al., 2021). This inaccurate, and often conflicting, misinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic can increase public confusion and put public health at risk (Hung et al., 2021). As a result, *media literacy* has emerged as an important practice to help combat COVID-19 pandemic misinformation. Media literacy is a practice that promotes awareness of the influence of media and allows individuals to demystify mass-media information by empowering individuals to create and access media, and importantly, critically evaluate media for themselves (Austin et al., 2021). In the context of the pandemic, media literacy aids individuals in identifying and analyzing various health information across different sources of media (Bin Naeem et al., 2021). As a consequence, media literacy has the potential to create positive changes in an individual’s health-related behaviors through bringing improvements and positive changes to their beliefs (Bin Naeem et al., 2021). Research on media literacy during the COVID-19 pandemic has found that individuals with greater media literacy are more willing to heed expert-recommended preventive actions and are better prepared to protect themselves (Austin et al., 2021). Taken all together, these findings demonstrate that media literacy education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic is an important element to include in COVID-19 specific community health promotion campaigns.

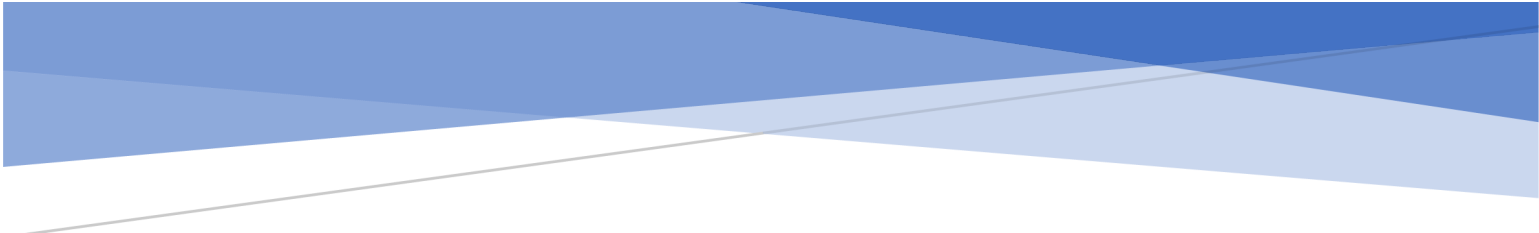


Family Vaccine Decision Making

Decision making regarding vaccines can be a complex and challenging process, placing a tremendous burden on frontline essential food service workers and their families. Several factors can influence vaccine decision making and vaccine hesitancy. In a study conducted on COVID-19 vaccine hesitation, the main factors explaining the probability of indecision or rejection of the vaccine were related to the severity of COVID-19, vaccine side effects and effectiveness, perceived benefits of the vaccine, responses from family and government, and susceptibility to COVID-19 (Cerdeira & Garcia, 2021). Furthermore, minority populations, who carry the highest risk of COVID-19 morbidity and mortality, have cited unclear and unreliable information, mistrust from historically unethical research, concerns regarding differential treatment and inequity, accessibility barriers, and fear of political and pharmaceutical industry influences as reasons for vaccine hesitancy (Carson et al., 2021). Addressing these concerns will be important in alleviating the overall burden of vaccine decision making. Deciding whether to vaccinate one's children presents an additional layer of consideration and complexity to the issue of vaccinations. Pediatricians and children's hospitals have an impact on whether parents decide to vaccinate their children (Kates et al., 2021). Specifically, having a trusted doctor or care provider providing information and positive encouragement can help parents make vaccination decisions (Kates et al., 2021).

Mental and Physical Health During the Pandemic

Historically, mental health problems have been shown to rise during the course of viral pandemics, referred to as a "parallel epidemic" (Vigo et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has been no different, with research showing upticks in maladaptive behaviors, emotional distress, and defensive responses during the pandemic (Cullen et al., 2020). Various aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to these conditions. The pandemic has dramatically altered daily life and routine, threatened individuals' senses of safety and protection, created

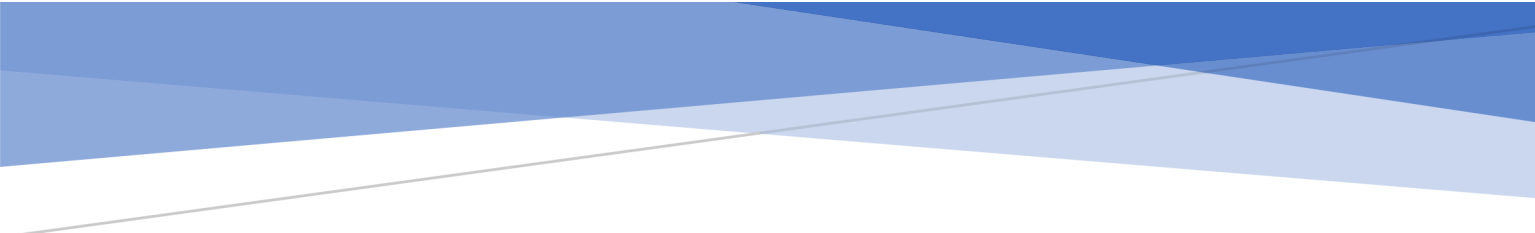


barriers to social support, and disrupted mental health care, which are factors that have contributed to deteriorating mental health (Alonzi et al., 2020). Routines give structure and activity, and play essential role in maintaining physical and mental well-being (Galea et al., 2020). Disruptions in these daily routines as a result of the pandemic have negatively interfered with well-being (Galea et al., 2020). In addition to this, the stress and social barriers resulting from being at risk for COVID-19 has exacerbated risk of mental health difficulties, and the loneliness and isolation from social distancing policies has impacted mental well-being (Alonzi et al., 2020). This is especially true for individuals with pre-existing physical and mental health conditions. Individuals with pre-existing mental and physical health conditions have had to cope with isolation from social support systems as well as potential adverse effects of getting a COVID-19 infection (Alonzi et al., 2020). In addition, these individuals have had reduced access to care, which for individuals with physical health conditions can not only worsen their physical condition, but also worsen their mental health due to resulting distress and uncertainty (Alonzi et al., 2020).



References

- Austin, E. W., Austin, B. W., Willoughby, J. F., Amram, O., & Domgaard, S. (2021). How media literacy and science media literacy predicted the adoption of protective behaviors amidst the COVID-19 PANDEMIC. *Journal of Health Communication*, 1-14.
- Allington, D., Duffy, B., Wessely, S., Dhavan, N., & Rubin, J. (2021). Health-protective behaviour, social media usage and conspiracy belief during the COVID-19 public health emergency. *Psychological medicine*, 51(10), 1763-1769.
- Alonzi, S., La Torre, A., & Silverstein, M.W. (2020). The psychological impact of preexisting mental and physical health conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(S1), S236–S238. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000840>
- Bin Naeem, S., & Kamel Boulos, M. N. (2021). COVID-19 Misinformation Online and Health Literacy: A Brief Overview. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(15), 8091. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18158091>
- Carson, S. L., Casillas, A., Castellon-Lopez, Y., Mansfield, L. N., Barron, J., Ntekume, E., ... & Brown, A. F. (2021). COVID-19 vaccine decision-making factors in racial and ethnic minority communities in Los Angeles, California. *JAMA network open*, 4(9).
- Cerda, A. A., & García, L. Y. (2021). Hesitation and Refusal Factors in Individuals' Decision-Making Processes Regarding a Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9.
- Cullen, W., Gulati, G., & Kelly, B.D. (2020). Mental health in the COVID-19 pandemic. *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine*, 113(5), 311-312. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qjmed/hcaa110>
- Enders, A. M., Uscinski, J. E., Seelig, M. I., Klofstad, C. A., Wuchty, S., Funchion, J. R., ... & Stoler, J. (2021). The relationship between social media use and beliefs in conspiracy theories and misinformation. *Political behavior*, 1-24.
- Galea, S., Merchant, R.M., & Lurie, N. (2020). The mental health consequences of COVID-19 and physical distancing: The need for prevention and early intervention. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 180(6), 817-818. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.1562
- Hung, S. C., Yang, S. C., & Luo, Y. F. (2021). New Media Literacy, Health Status, Anxiety, and Preventative Behaviors Related to COVID-19: A Cross-Sectional Study in Taiwan. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(21), 11247.
- Kates, J., Michaud, J., Tolbert, J., Artiga, S., Orgera, K. (2021). Vaccinating Children Ages 5-11: Policy Considerations for COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout. KFF. Retrieved from



<https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/vaccinating-children-ages-5-11-policy-considerations-for-covid-19-vaccine-rollout/>

Vigo, D., Patten, S., Pajer, K., Krausz, M., Taylor, S., Rush, B., Raviola, G., Saxena, S., Thornicroft, G., & Yatham, L.N. (2020). Mental health of communities during the pandemic. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 65(10), 681-687.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0706743720926676>