

Using the Health Belief Model to Decode COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy

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Introduction to the Clinical Question:

Which individual perceptions, as defined by the Health Belief Model, were most prevalent on social media with regards to vaccination in the United States and Italy?

How did cues to action, as defined by the Health Belief Model, differ on social media between the United States and Italy?

Background Information: Vaccine hesitancy has existed for as long as vaccines have existed. Due to mRNA vaccines being more a newer form of primary prevention people have become even more skeptical of receiving the vaccine. Science behind the vaccine is both trusted and not trusted by many due to lack of proper knowledge and misinformation.

Significance of the Clinical Problem: The purpose of this qualitative historical study is to understand the factors that influenced the decision to get the COVID-19 vaccine between the United States and Italy.

Theoretical Framework: A historical qualitative research design using deductive line-by-line coding based on the Health Belief Model was used to analyze Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram posts from Italy and the United States based on the coronavirus vaccine.

Methods: This qualitative research study used a historical research design to understand the factors that influenced the decision to get vaccinated in the United States and Italy. The purpose behind this specific research design is based upon looking at past material to inform the future of the findings of the past. A purposive sampling technique was used to select posts on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter using the hashtags: covid vaccine, covid vax, no vax, covid science, covid vaccino, covid19 italia, covid vaccine united states, and vaccine hesitancy. Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter were chosen because these platforms support lengths of fifty words or more.

Results: The results based on the Health Belief Model showed that people in the United States appeared to be less hesitant on the vaccine based on comparing social media posts with those posted from the Italians. Cues to action in the United States were much more focused on decreasing the number of unvaccinated and trying to understand the reasoning behind not getting vaccinated, while Italy pushed the vaccine with not as much support in cues to action.

Recommendations for Nursing Science: In conclusion, vaccine hesitancy remains a major problem in both Italy and the United States. Many struggle to be able to trust the science of vaccines and need to be further educated on these topics. Reaching out to public health personnel in both Italy and the United States could help decrease vaccine hesitancy. The use of social media influencing vaccine rates and vaccine hesitancy should not be overlooked and further research should be conducted to increase vaccine rates and decrease hesitancy.