Recommendations

In order to increase vaccine uptake amongst the youth population in Europe, the following steps are recommended:

1. Investigate and monitor attitudes to vaccination, including the role and impact of social media as an opinion changer.

2. Restore trust in the actors involved in the vaccination process and enhance the positive role of healthcare professionals in dealing with hesitancy.

3. Ensure vaccination coverage targets at the European level as a minimum standard for all Member States.

4. Undertake relevant and targeted awareness raising actions on the benefits of HPV vaccination, and the impact of vaccination against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

5. Enable easier access to accurate vaccination information through personalised electronic immunisation records at the European level.

Objectives and Research Question

Understand and investigate European youth views on, and awareness levels of vaccination. Analyse information sources, and key determinants of youth vaccine confidence and hesitancy.

Survey

Data collected from 511 participants aged 20 - 30 in Belgium

Focus Group
6 focus groups with 33 participants in total.
Key Findings

65%

Consider vaccination benefits outweigh risks

This percentage is higher (75%) in young people who claim to be well informed on vaccines, vaccination and health. Young people mostly agree with the statement that vaccines are important for health (85.5%), that they are effective in preventing disease (86%), and that they are important for herd and community protection and the health of the community (82%).

Awareness of vaccination benefits:

• 44% aware of the role of vaccination against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
• 51% aware of the vaccine against HPV related diseases and cancer.
• 82% Agree that vaccination is important for community protection and the health of the community.

Most Influential Reasons to get Vaccinated

- Self Protection: 26%
- Disease prevention: 15%
- Following Healthcare Advice: 14%

Most Trusted Information Sources on Vaccination

- Doctor: 83%
- Family: 50%
- Individual research: 47%
Influential Reasons to Avoid Vaccines

16% Fear of vaccine side effects
15% Distrust in pharmaceutical companies
11% Preference for alternative medicine

Better access to transparent and reliable information the best way to increase the image and uptake of vaccination. Targeted campaigns for specific sub-groups of the population are further important means.

Role of the European Union on Vaccination Policies

83% Large majority of young people (83%) believe the EU should monitor and ensure Member States have equal levels of vaccination coverage.
71% Believe the EU is responsible for infectious diseases elimination strategy
67% Believe the EU should create an electronic immunisation record system
Focus Group Key Messages

Social media as a determinant of vaccine hesitancy.

Need for clear and transparent information on vaccines and their impact.

European responsibility to ensure target vaccination coverage.

Context

Low confidence levels and declining public trust in vaccination.

Anti-vaccination sentiment and distrust becoming a global health concern.

Increase in vaccine preventable diseases as vaccination rates decline.

ThinkYoung

ThinkYoung is the first think tank that focuses on young people. It was founded in 2007 and has expanded to have offices in Brussels, Geneva, Madrid and Hong Kong. It is a not-for-profit organisation, with the aim of making the world a better place for young people, by involving them in decision making processes and by providing decision makers with high quality research on key issues affecting young people. ThinkYoung conducts studies and surveys, makes documentary movies, writes policy proposals and develops education programmes; up to date, ThinkYoung projects have reached over 800,000 young people.

Based on its research on young people’s necessities, ThinkYoung creates trainings and workshops to empower youth with the tools to have a positive impact and make a change. For more information, visit www.thinkyoung.org

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