

COVID-19 Vaccine and Hong Kong Citizens' Lives

Reporting Public Opinion Polls—Part 2

Initiated by Hong Kong Baptist University's "Overcoming Vaccine Hesitancy in Hong Kong" (OVH) research project, a rolling telephone survey of Hong Kong people's attitudes and opinions towards vaccination and other relevant topics is being conducted in six consecutive weeks from July 2021 to August 2021, on a random sampling basis. With the survey data at different time intervals, we hope to provide insights for the Government and other stakeholders' strategic decision-making.

Methods

This report covers the results obtained through a telephone survey conducted from 8 July to 20 July 2021. The survey used a random sampling method and employed a dual sampling frame design with an approximate 1:1 ratio of landline telephone numbers to mobile phone numbers. A total of 1,017 Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above, including 508 landline telephone samples and 509 mobile phone samples, were successfully interviewed. The effective response rate was 72.7%. Based on the total sample size, the standard error was less than 1.6% (the sampling error was at +/- 3.1% at the 95% confidence level).

In addition, the survey data has been weighted by the Random Iterative Method (RIM) according to the latest statistics provided by the Census and Statistics Department of the Government. The gender–age distribution was obtained from "Mid-year Population for 2020", while the educational attainment (highest level attended) distribution and status in economic activity were obtained from "Women and Men in Hong Kong—Key Statistics (2020 Edition)".

Results (weighted)

1) Vaccination rate close to 50%

Over 50% of the respondents said they had received the COVID-19 vaccine, which 14.5% had received the first dose and 37.1% had been fully vaccinated. This figure is relatively higher than the rate (34%) of vaccination against other infectious diseases, for example, seasonal influenza, hepatitis, and HPV.

Comparing the two vaccines currently available in Hong Kong, the public has higher confidence in the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (Comirnaty). Respondents were asked to rate the safety and efficacy of the vaccine on a 10-point scale, with 10 as the highest score and 0 as the lowest. For the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the average safety score was 6.2 (N = 957) and the average efficacy score was 6.6 (N = 962). The average safety and efficacy scores for the Sinovac vaccine (CoronaVac) were 5.4 (N = 985) and 5.1 (N = 975), respectively.

2) The correlation between vaccine hesitancy and participation in social affairs

48.4% of the respondents indicated that they had not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine. Among this group, 18.6% said they planned to get vaccinated (accounting for 9% of the total sample size), 38.5% were considering vaccination (accounting for 18.7% of the total sample size), and 40.1% did not intend to be vaccinated” (accounting for 19.4% of the total sample size).

Further analysis revealed that citizens with intention for vaccination tend to be more enthusiastic for social affairs, such as election voting. The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that respondents who planned to get vaccinated or were considering vaccination have greater recalled participation score in social affairs than those who did not plan to get vaccinated. The differences are statistically significant.

Vaccination intention of the respondents who are yet to get vaccinated

	Planning to get vaccinated (N=91)	Considering getting vaccinated (N=187)	Not planning to get vaccinated (N=190)
Mean (Standard Deviation)	5.58¹ (2.15)	5.47¹ (2.70)	4.87¹ (3.29)

Notes:

1. Respondents were asked to rate their enthusiasm for participation in social affairs on a 10-point scale, in which 0 means “very unenthusiastic”, 10 means “very enthusiastic”, and 5 means “fifty-fifty”.
2. Results of the analysis of variance: $F = 4.49$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.01$

3) The Government’s promotion and non-governmental sectors’ incentives for vaccination

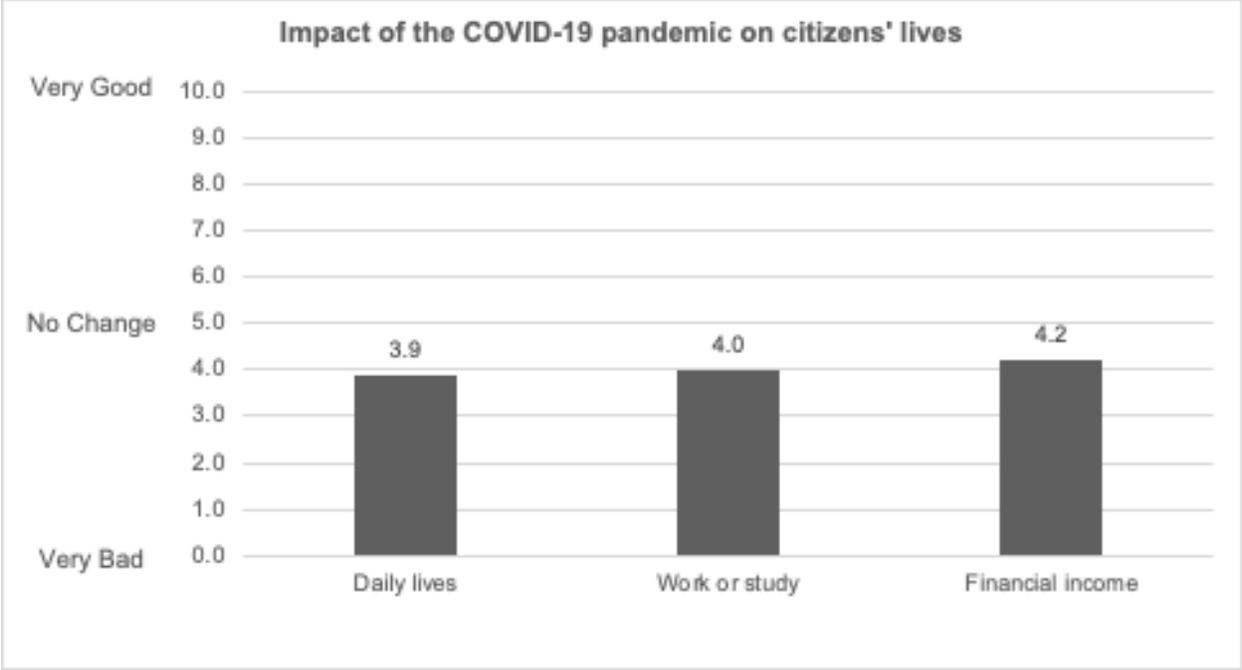
Regarding the Government’s promotion of vaccination, 49.6% of the respondents considered it “basically adequate” while 21.9% held a view of “very adequate”, constituting a total of 71.5% of the respondents considering it “adequate”, which is much more than those who considered it “inadequate” (27.6%). Meanwhile, 20.9% of the respondents thought the Government’s promotion was “not quite sufficient” and only 6.6% said it was “not sufficient at all”.

In terms of the vaccination incentives offered by the business sector or other non-governmental organizations, 17.2% of the respondents considered them “very attractive” and 39% said they were “somewhat attractive” (46.2% in total). However, still more than 40% of the respondents thought the incentives were not attractive enough. Among them, 22.5% thought incentives were “not very attractive” and 19.5% considered them “not attractive at all” (42% in total).

4) The impact of the pandemic on citizens’ lives

The questionnaire also includes questions about the impact of the pandemic on citizens’ lives. Respondents were asked to rate the impact of COVID-19 on their daily lives, work or study, and

financial income on a 10-point scale, in which 10 indicates “very good”, 0 indicates “very bad” and 5 indicates “no change”. Results showed that Hong Kong citizens generally thought that the pandemic had had a negative impact on their lives, with all three average scores below 5. Specific scores are shown in the below Figure.



Summary

This pandemic has impacted people’s work and lives negatively, in varying degrees. Nearly half of Hong Kong’s eligible citizens have already received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. However, to reach the 70% vaccination rate, an additional 2.3 million people need to be vaccinated. The survey results showed that people’s vaccine hesitancy is related to their enthusiasm for participation in social affairs. Most people thought that the current promotion of vaccination is sufficient, but it is not enough for them to take immediate actions. There should be more proactive mobilization and effective community support if we hope to reach the 70% vaccination rate, which is the threshold for herd immunity. In order to boost the vaccination rate, business and different social groups have offered incentives to encourage people to get vaccinated. Yet, the launch dates, forms, rules, and requirements for participants of different incentive programmes vary a lot, leading to polarized public opinions on these programmes. We believe that targeted

communication and persuasion strategies along with the integration of information resources can help reduce the public's vaccine hesitancy to a certain extent.

The research team of Hong Kong Baptist University will continue to monitor the dynamic changes in public opinion in the coming weeks, so that different stakeholders in our society can keep up with the status of the long battle against the COVID-19 epidemic. Let's work together to end the epidemic and return to normal life soon!