

## **Confidence in Vaccination, Evaluation of Anti-epidemic Efforts and Anticipation of Border Reopening Reporting Public Opinion Polls—Part 3**

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 15 July to 27 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 71.8%. 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 (the 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 status**

More than half (55.4%) of the respondents said they had received a COVID-19 vaccination, in which 13.1% had received the first dose and 42.3% had been fully vaccinated.

44% of the respondents indicated that they had not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine. Among this group, 21% said they planned to get vaccinated (accounting for 9.3% of the total sample size); 34.4% were considering whether they would get the vaccine (accounting for 15.3% of the total sample size); and 41.8% did not intend to be vaccinated (accounting for 18.6% of the total sample size).

### **2) Confidence and understanding of COVID-19 vaccines**

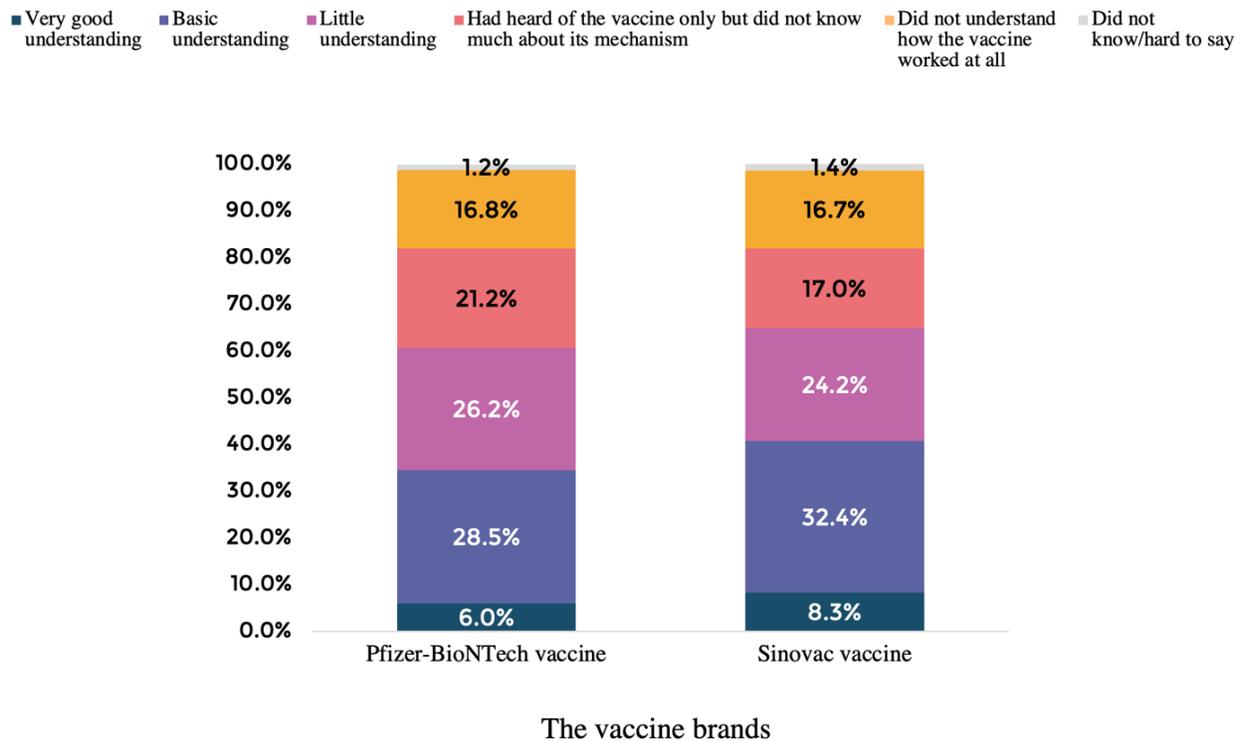
Comparing the two types of COVID-19 vaccines currently available in Hong Kong, the public had higher confidence in the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (Comirnaty). The respondents were asked to give a rating based on their perceived safety and efficacy of the vaccines on a 10-point scale, where 10 was the highest score and 0 was the lowest. For the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the average safety and efficacy scores were 6.25 (N = 960) and 6.57 (N = 954), respectively. The average safety and efficacy scores for the Sinovac vaccine (CoronaVac) were 5.6 (N = 988) and 5.18 (N = 974), respectively.

The respondents were also asked to rate their level of understanding of the mechanisms and side effects of the vaccines. As for the mRNA technology used to develop the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, 6% of the respondents said they “had a very good understanding” of it; 28.5% “had a basic understanding”; and 26.2% “had little understanding”. 21.2% said they had heard of the vaccine

only but did not know much about its mechanism. 16.8% said that they did not understand how the vaccine worked at all. The above results showed that 60.7% of the respondents considered themselves to have a certain understanding of how the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine worked, more than those (38%) who said they knew nothing about it.

Similarly, a larger proportion (64.9%) of the respondents had a certain understanding of how the Sinovac vaccine worked (the use of an inactivation vaccine technology), while fewer respondents (33.7%) said they did not know about it at all. 8.3% claimed that they “had a very good understanding” of it; 32.4% “had a basic understanding”; and 24.2% “had little understanding”. 17% said they had heard of the vaccine but did not know much about its mechanism. 16.7% claimed that they did not understand how it worked at all.

**Figure 1:** The respondents’ level of understanding of the technologies behind the two vaccines

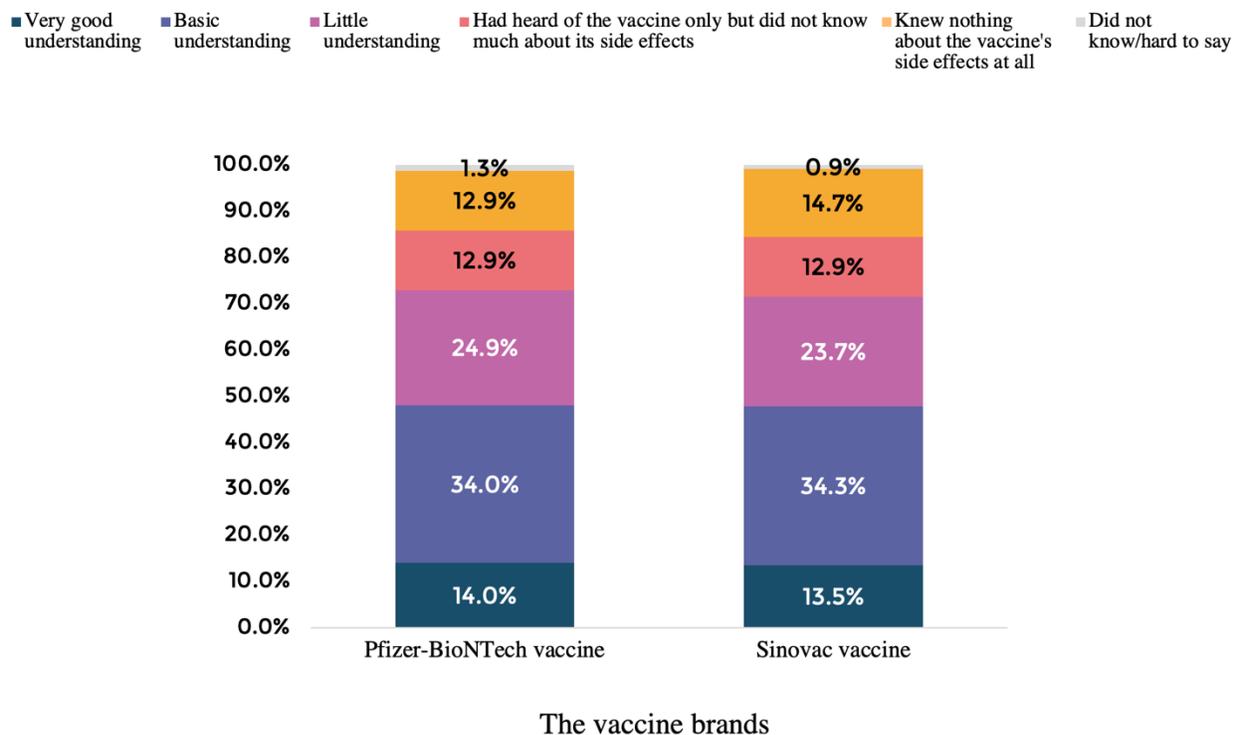


Most respondents (72.9%) had a certain understanding of the side effects of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, much more than those who said they did not know about them at all (25.8%). 14% claimed

that they “had a very good understanding of” the vaccine’s side effects; 34% “had a basic understanding”; and 24.9% “had little understanding”. The respondents who “had heard of the vaccine but did not know much about its side effects” accounted for 12.9%, same as those who “knew nothing” about the side effects.

Similarly, 71.5% of the respondents had a certain knowledge of the side effects of the Sinovac vaccine, more than those who knew nothing about the vaccine’s side effects (27.6%). 13.5% said they “had a very good understanding”; 34.3% “had a basic understanding”; and 23.7% “had little understanding”. 12.9% “had heard of the vaccine but did not really understand its side effects”. 14.7% did not know about the vaccine’s side effects at all.

**Figure 2:** The respondents’ level of understanding of the two vaccines’ side effects



### 3) Citizens’ confidence in Hong Kong’s public health care system

Citizens' vaccination intention was found to be correlated to their confidence in Hong Kong's public health care system. The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that among the unvaccinated group, the respondents who planned to get vaccinated had higher confidence in Hong Kong's public health care system than those who were still considering vaccination and those who did not plan to be vaccinated. The differences are statistically significant.

**Table 1:**

<b>The unvaccinated respondents' intention to be vaccinated</b>			
	<b>Planning to get vaccinated (N = 95)</b>	<b>Considering getting vaccinated (N=154)</b>	<b>Not planning to get vaccinated (N = 184)</b>
<b>Mean (Standard Deviation)</b>	<b>6.22<sup>1</sup> (1.71)</b>	<b>5.55<sup>1</sup> (1.71)</b>	<b>5.55<sup>1</sup> (2.15)</b>

*Notes:*

- 1. Respondents were asked to rate their confidence in Hong Kong's public health care system on a 10-point scale, where 0 means "very low", 10 means "very high", and 5 means "half-half".*
- 2. Results of the analysis of variance:  $F = 4.015$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < 0.01$*

#### **4) Citizens' evaluation of the Government's anti-epidemic efforts**

The questionnaire also asked the citizens to give an overall rating of Hong Kong Government's anti-epidemic performance. It is found that the respondents who had been vaccinated gave a higher score than those who had not yet been vaccinated. The differences are statistically significant.

**Table 2:**

<b>The respondents' vaccination status</b>	
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	<b>Not yet got vaccinated</b> (N = 444)	<b>Have received the first dose</b> (N = 134)	<b>Fully vaccinated</b> (N = 430)
<b>Mean</b> (Standard Deviation)	<b>4.75<sup>1</sup> (2.66)</b>	<b>5.25<sup>1</sup> (2.70)</b>	<b>5.76<sup>1</sup> (2.55)</b>

Notes:

1. The respondents were asked to rate the Hong Kong Government's anti-epidemic performance on a 10-point scale, where 0 means "very unsatisfactory", 10 means "very satisfactory", and 5 means "half-half".
2. Results of the analysis of variance:  $F = 16.144$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < 0.01$

Among the unvaccinated respondents, those who planned to get vaccinated gave a higher score for the Government's anti-epidemic performance than those who were considering vaccination and those who did not intend to be vaccinated. The differences are statistically significant.

**Table 3:**

<b>The unvaccinated respondents' intention to be vaccinated</b>			
	<b>Planning to get vaccinated</b> (N = 94)	<b>Considering getting vaccinated</b> (N = 153)	<b>Not planning to get vaccinated</b> (N = 187)
<b>Mean</b> (Standard Deviation)	<b>5.42<sup>1</sup> (2.34)</b>	<b>5.03<sup>1</sup> (2.33)</b>	<b>4.13<sup>1</sup> (2.87)</b>

Notes:

1. The respondents were asked to rate the Hong Kong Government's anti-epidemic performance on a 10-point scale, where 0 means "very unsatisfactory", 10 means "very satisfactory", and 5 means "half-half".
2. Results of the analysis of variance:  $F = 6.851$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < 0.01$

## 5) Citizens' anticipation of border reopening and travel bubbles

When being asked about their anticipation of border reopening between Hong Kong, the Mainland and Macau, 45.7% of the respondents said they were “very much looking forward to it”; and 28.5% were “a little looking forward to it”. 12.7% said they were “not really looking forward to it”, while 12.5% were “not looking forward to it at all”. In comparison, they had lower anticipation of border reopening with other countries/regions than that with the Mainland and Macau. The respondents who were “very much looking forward” and those who were “a little looking forward” to the implementation of travel bubbles between Hong Kong and other overseas regions or cities (e.g. Singapore) accounted for 26.3% and 38.1%, respectively.

## **Summary**

As citizens have a better understanding of the characteristics of COVID-19, their perceptions of the epidemic and vaccination will change accordingly. The survey results show that most citizens have a certain understanding of the vaccines’ mechanisms and side effects. However, there is still a long way to go from merely receiving information to actively getting vaccinated. The Government, business sector, and other non-governmental organisations have introduced plenty of vaccine incentives, but the effectiveness is affected by various factors, such as citizens’ confidence. It is found that Hong Kong citizens’ intention to be vaccinated is influenced by their confidence in local public health care system and their evaluation of the Government’s anti-epidemic performance. The subsequent vaccination publicity and promotion can be strengthened in these two aspects. Through public participation, the public can proactively understand the public health care system and relevant anti-epidemic measures. It will also shorten the distance between people’s cognition and emotion, so as to enhance their confidence.

There have been no locally transmitted COVID-19 cases recorded in Hong Kong for more than 50 days, which means the Government’s anti-pandemic measures, including COVID-19 tests and case tracking, are more rigorous and effective now. Concerning the global pandemic situation, Hong Kong is more likely to reopen its border between Macau and the Mainland in the future. Given Hong Kong’s close economic and livelihood bonds with the Mainland and Macau, more than 70% of the citizens are eagerly looking forward to border reopening between the three regions. It is

recommended that the Government should continue to use this as a substantial incentive to encourage vaccination for the public.

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!