

Social Media Misinformation on Covid-19 Vaccine Hesitancy: A South African Perspective

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Abstract

This study is timely and important. Covid-19 vaccine acceptance is crucial to protecting persons and vulnerable populations' health, reopening social and economic life and potentially achieving population health and safety through immunity. This study focuses on the contribution of social media misinformation on the Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in South Africa. The objectives of the study are to determine the Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy fuelled by social media, evaluate the type of Covid-19 vaccine misinformation shared on social media and propose solutions to prevent Covid-19 vaccine misinformation on social media. Protection motivation theory was adopted to help understand human responses to fear appeals caused by Covid-19 vaccine misinformation. The study used qualitative methodology to explore social media misinformation on the Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy. The study's data were collected from the previous literature. Descriptive analysis was adopted and used as a method to analyse data. It was revealed in this study that vaccine hesitancy causes a delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines uptake despite the availability of vaccination services as indicated by the World Health Organization (WHO). With this study, researchers aim to bring solutions to prevent social media misinformation on the Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in South Africa.

Keywords: Covid-19, hesitancy, misinformation, social media, vaccine

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