



National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport



Exploring the decision-making

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03-03-2021



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1. Background

- Earlier focus groups done for VITAL
- COVID-19
- Vaccination as the way out of this pandemic → High vaccination coverage is needed.
- Willingness to get vaccinated in the Netherlands from 66% in November 2020, to 75% in January 2021 (Ipsos 2021).



1. Background

- Important factors in decision-making process regarding vaccination: perceived susceptibility for the disease, perceived severity of the disease, the perceived effectiveness of the vaccine, and many more.
→ Little is known about important factors for COVID-19 specifically.

Aim of this study:

- To give a deeper understanding on the motives of people aged 50 years and older for whether or not to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and
- the impact of the COVID-pandemic on the perceptions of older adults on vaccination.



2. Methods

- In total 51 participants, geographically spread throughout the Netherlands
- Eight online focus groups (duration +- 2 hours)
- Focus groups performed between the 26th of November and the 10th of December 2020, the last in January 2021



2. Methods

- Semi-structured interview guide based on the guide used during the focus groups done earlier for VITAL.
- Questions about:
 - The diseases and vaccines against COVID-19 and influenza
 - The attitude of people towards vaccination in general
 - Which factors play an important role in the decision-making process for whether to receive vaccination or not
 - The trust people have in the authorities which are involved in developing and carrying out policy regarding vaccination.



3. Results

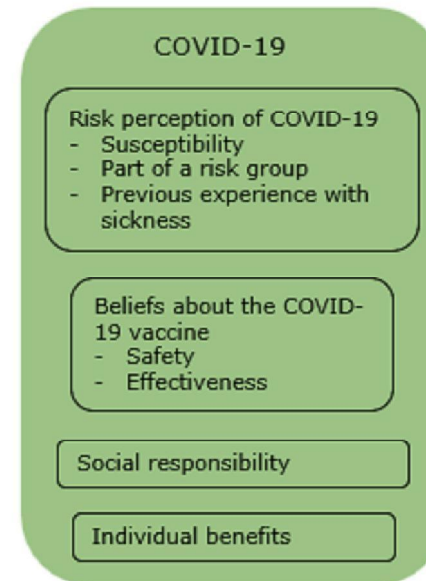
- In comparison with earlier focus groups done before COVID-19 outbreak:
 - Same perceptions and beliefs on the themes of:
 - › Susceptibility for influenza (co-morbidities and previous experience with influenza infection)
 - › Effectiveness of the influenza vaccine
 - › Perceived side-effects of the influenza vaccine
 - › Perceived severity of influenza
 - › Social responsibility



3. Results

Important themes in decision making process for COVID-19 vaccination:

- Risk perception of COVID-19
- Beliefs about COVID-19 vaccine
- Social responsibility
- Individual benefits

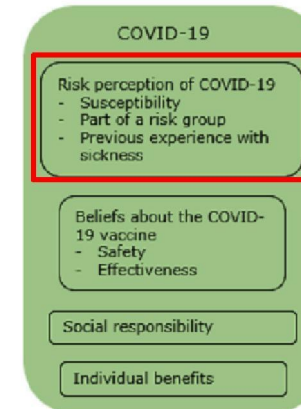




3. Results

Risk perception of COVID-19

- Susceptibility
- Part of a risk group



"Well, I think if I get COVID, then I won't survive. I think it's that serious. And I also keep to all agreements that have been made and I do not leave my house. I am not going to see my grandchildren, so I am very anxious. And I also hope that the vaccination will come very soon, because I'm the first in line to get it."

(Focus Group 3, male, living in rural area)



3. Results

Beliefs about the COVID-19 vaccine

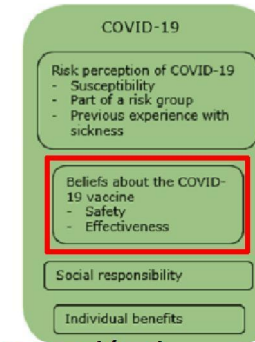
- Safety

"And the vaccine, well bring it on, because as I recently read or saw that, (...) of course it's not a vaccine which is coming out of the blue. They are all sequels to pre-existing vaccines. So, I am confident that they will work."

(Focus group 4, female, living in urban area)

"I really want to get vaccinated, but I just run into things that I find frightening in terms of consequences as an asthma patient. (...) Yes, I am afraid of the consequences [of a COVID-19 vaccination]."

(Focus group 8, female, living in urban area)

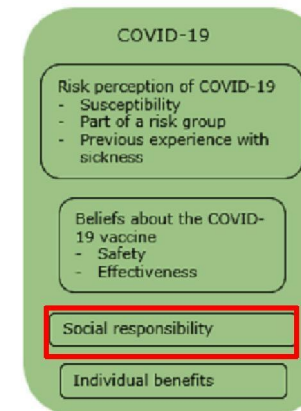




3. Results

Social responsibility

You receive vaccination in order to protect others.



"And I think I have to contribute to this society. To prevent myself from infecting others with this horribly dangerous disease. And even more, because I interact with older people. If I can contribute in preventing the transmission of the disease, then I think it is almost my duty to do so."

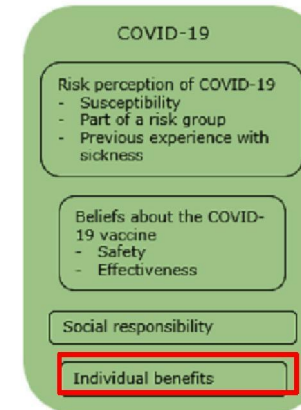
(Focus groep 4, male, living in urban area)



3. Results

Individual benefits

- Regain freedom
- Restart your social life



"Since March, I cannot cuddle my grandchildren or whatever, so in that respect, I'm at a loss about that. So, if a vaccination comes up, I'll be right there."

(focus group 8, male, living in a city)



3. Results

Differences in factors decision-making process for influenza and COVID-19 vaccination.

- Social responsibility COVID-19 ↔ Self-protection influenza
- Beliefs about COVID-19 vaccine ↔ influenza vaccine

"The influenza vaccination has to be done each year. The effectiveness of that vaccine is, of course, much less [than for the COVID-19 vaccine]. But you know, it does not bring any side-effects either, so it is easy. For this vaccine [the COVID-19 vaccine], it will be something else."

(Focus group 5, male, living in urban area)



3. Results

Impact COVID-19 pandemic on the willingness to receive a vaccination against influenza.

"Until now, I always thought well, the flu, then I will get the flu. I never have the flu, what does that once in a few years matter? And now I thought well, I should not get the flu and then COVID, because then you could be a lot worse off."

(Focus group 8, female, living urban area)



3. Results

Amount of trust in the authorities which are involved in developing and carrying out the vaccination policy.

- GP → High level of trust
- Government → Opinions were divided
- RIVM → In general perceived as trustworthy, some had decreased trust.
- GGD (municipal health service involved in testing, contact tracing and vaccinating) → In general decreased trust during pandemic.

→ Decreased trust no influence on willingness to receive vaccination against COVID-19.



3. Results

From whom do the participants want to receive the vaccination?

- No preference, as long as it is a professional
- GP
- Municipal health service (GGD)

"I do not have a preference. I would, given the speed at which they want to vaccinate, you need so many people that I do not, that I would not object to the fact that someone, let me say, is trained for that even if they are not a medical professional. So as far as I am concerned, it does not matter who I am going to get vaccinated by."

(Focus Group 4, male, living in urban area)



3. Results

From whom do the participants want to receive information on the COVID-19 vaccine?

- GP
- RIVM
- National government

Which information do they want to receive?

- Possible side-effects
- Which vaccine will they receive and why?
- How long and from when, after vaccination, will the vaccine be effective?



4. Conclusion

- Indicated themes that play a role in the decision-making process for vaccination do not differ much from the themes found in the previous focus groups done for VITAL.
 - Susceptibility for influenza
 - Effectiveness of the influenza vaccine
 - Perceived side-effects of the influenza vaccine
 - Perceived severity of influenza
 - Social responsibility
- For COVID-19, however, certain themes are perceived more important in the decision-making process than for influenza.
 - Risk perception of the disease, social responsibility, and safety vaccine



4. Conclusion

- The COVID-19 pandemic had influence on the willingness to receive vaccination against influenza for several participants, not for all.
- Decreased trust no influence on willingness to get vaccinated.
- GP is the most trusted authority and perceived as the person from who the participants want to receive information on the COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Do GPs also see this role for themselves?