



Framing COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy

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Abstract

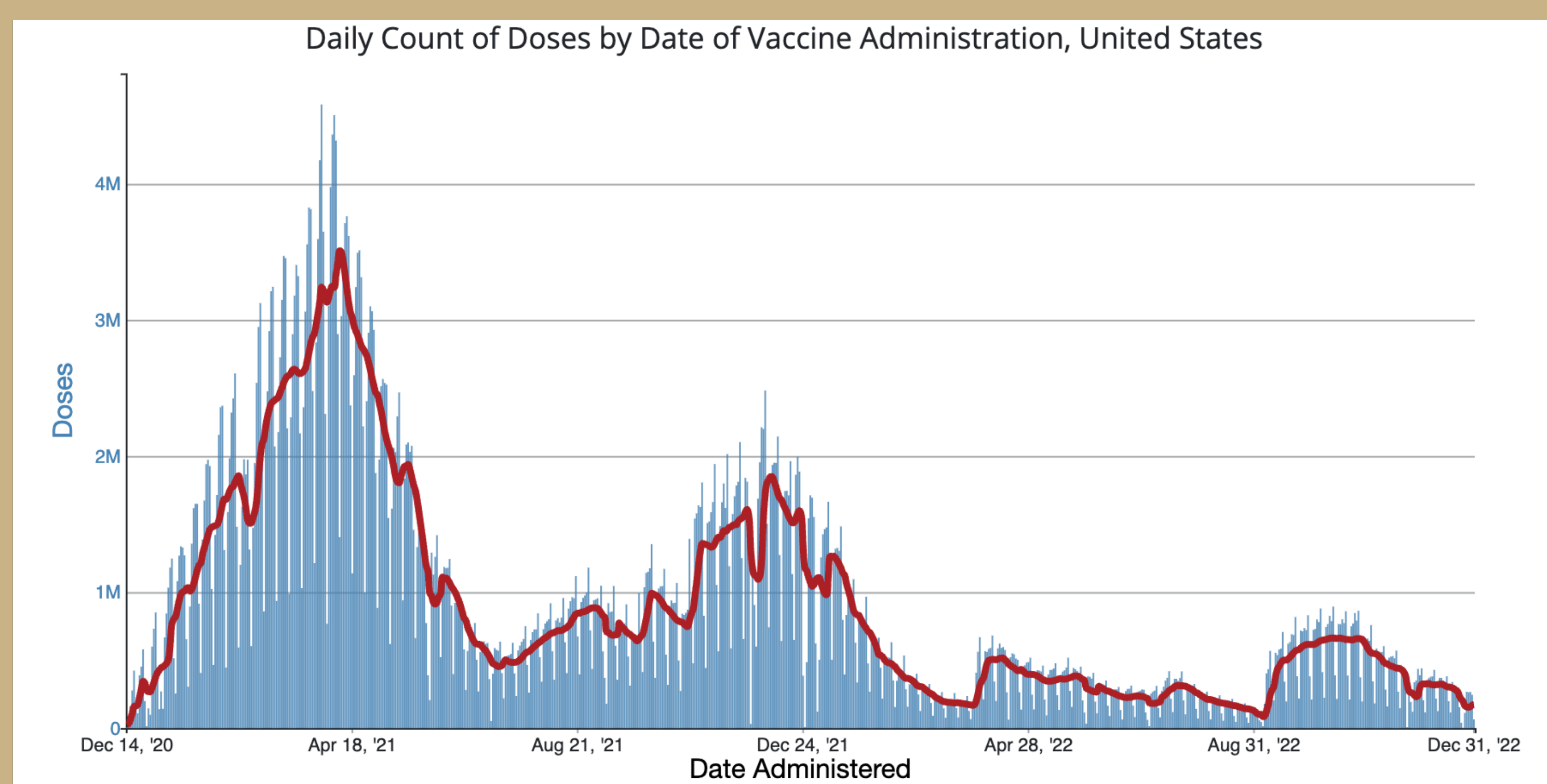
- COVID-19 is a respiratory sickness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, and a vaccine became available in December 2020.
- With the vaccine came a notable rise in vaccine hesitancy and anti-vaccine sentiments that limited the uptake of the vaccine in many groups. At its peak, vaccine hesitancy was prevalent in specific demographics, including populations of color, and several factors were identified as contributors to the lack of vaccine uptake.
- By looking at how academia and mass media framed the vaccine and comparing the outside perspective of “defined” social equity with the reality of individuals experiencing vaccine hesitancy, we hope to determine how public media influenced vaccine uptake and individual perspectives.
- To accurately analyze mass media that may have influenced public perspective on the vaccine and vaccine hesitancy, archival sources within the year 2020 from CNN, FOX, The New York Times, and NPR were analyzed.
- Collected data focused on groups with lower vaccine uptake, vaccine hesitancy, and the “above” public perspective on the “below” population.
- Collected data provided several causes behind vaccine hesitancy in the United States, including misinformation, lack of vaccine education and availability, varying social capital, and individual experiences.
- Further analyses continue, but current findings suggest that improved vaccine education and accessibility, as well as increased outreach and representation, may help decrease future vaccine hesitancy.

Results

- Final results have not yet been found for major factors and future methods for increasing vaccine uptake and decreasing vaccine hesitancy.
- A general theme has been found in reviewing archival data from NPR, CNN, The New York Times, and FOX News from 2020 pertaining to the COVID-19 vaccine, vaccine hesitancy, and demographics.
- Data indicates that most vaccine hesitancy has been found in minority populations and people of color.
- Major causes of this hesitancy include:
 - History of medical racism and abuse
 - Lack of accessibility and availability
 - Lack of education and representation
- Possible solutions sourced from the data include:
 - Increased outreach and representation among populations of color
 - Broader education strategies
 - Movements to increase trust and reliability in areas with increased vaccine hesitancy. (This includes physician and local leader outreach and minority representation in vaccine research.)
- Individual Source Analysis:
 - Set criteria were used to analyze sources based on tone, purpose, and focus. Tone analysis was limited to positive, neutral, or negative, and purpose analysis criteria included identification of the issue and causes, proposed solution, and/or call to action.
 - All sources commonly utilized a neutral tone, likely to exhibit an objective and informational stance.
 - All sources commonly identified an issue and its causes, while select articles proposed a solution or call to action.
 - Articles from CNN, NPR, and NYT followed similar patterns and frequently attributed vaccine hesitancy to mistrust and medical racism.
 - Articles from FOX frequently reported on vaccine hesitancy to be a bodily autonomy issue and stated mistrust and misinformation as common causes.

Discussion

- Although the main causes behind of vaccine hesitancy and methods of increasing vaccine uptake have not been finalized, the current analysis of artifacts point to historical and medical racism and mistrust towards the government as the main causes for vaccine hesitancy amongst minority groups.
- The tone that each artifact uses to portray vaccine hesitancy and solutions to the issue varies depending on the article, however, all news sources generally maintained a neutral tone.
- Studying the relationship between the media’s perspective on vaccine hesitancy and the personal experiences of anti-vaccine individuals provides insight into how to craft effective public health messaging.
- Analyzing trends in news source media regarding vaccine hesitancy helps frame how sociocultural and economic status can influence the portrayal of vaccine-related issues.
- Because of the scope of the research, the study only utilized four major news sources. The analysis presented in this poster only considers data from mainstream news media, not independent news media.
- Effort was made to avoid individual biases, but the possibility of the impact of subjective viewpoints on artifact analysis cannot be ruled out.
- Future studies could be conducted to analyze the effects of social networks and interpersonal relationships on COVID-19 vaccine outlooks.
 - More studies could also be conducted to expand on the knowledge of the extent to which medical racism plays a role in vaccine hesitancy.



Methods

- While a variety of sources have reported the phenomenon of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, our primary research artifacts encompassed four mass media companies: FOX News, The New York Times (NYT), CNN, and NPR.
- The time frame of the selected articles was restricted to only 2020, and a large range of articles were analyzed to gain a broader understanding of how mass media and the world of academia develop the causes of vaccine hesitancy.
- For the sake of obtaining a deeper analysis of the different perspectives surrounding vaccine hesitancy in our target demographic groups, keywords such as “vaccine hesitancy,” “vaccine rates,” and “people of color” were used to pick out relevant articles to analyze.
- Analysis includes notes on article tone, purpose, how it frames the problem of vaccine hesitancy, and if any solutions are offered.

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Demonstration of Source Analysis

	NPR	CNN	NYT	FOX
Focus	COVID-19 vaccine concerns from front line workers and people of color.	Interview with Dr. Fauci on the disproportionate impact that the pandemic and vaccine hesitancy have on Black Americans.	Prevalent vaccine hesitancy in Mississippi despite high accessibility. Most likely due to partisanship and larger POC population.	Mistrust and misinformation as major causes of vaccine hesitancy. Questions if vaccine is necessary due to COVID-19 recovery rate.
Purpose	- Identification of issue and causes	- Identification of issue and causes - Proposed solution	- Identification of issue and causes - Minor call to action	- Identification of issue and causes
Tone	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral