



Framing COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy

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Abstract

- COVID-19 is a respiratory sickness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that grew into a pandemic in 2020; a vaccine for the virus first became available in December 2020.
- The announcement of the vaccine came with a notable rise in vaccine hesitancy and anti-vaccine sentiments.
- At its peak, COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy was prevalent in certain demographics; several factors were identified as contributors to the lack of vaccine uptake.
- By looking at how academia and mass media framed the COVID-19 vaccine, and by comparing the outside perspective of “defined” social equity with the reality for the individuals experiencing vaccine hesitancy, we hope to determine how public media influenced vaccine uptake and perspectives of the vaccine on the individual level.
- To accurately analyze mass media and sources that may have influenced public perspective on the vaccine and those experiencing hesitancy, archival sources from CNN, FOX, The New York times, and NPR during the years of 2020 and 2022 were analyzed.
- Collected data focused on specific groups who had lower vaccine uptake, vaccine hesitancy, and the general “above” perspective on the “below” population.
- The collected data provided several causes behind vaccine hesitancy in the United States, including medical misinformation, varying social capital in different areas, and individual experiences regarding racism.
- Further analyses continue. However, these findings suggest that improved vaccine education techniques and accessibility, as well as increased outreach and representation, may help decrease future vaccine hesitancy.

Methods

- Since a variety of sources have reported the phenomenon of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, we narrowed down four mass media companies as our primary research artifacts for this paper: FOX News, The New York Times (NYT), CNN, and NPR.
- I specifically analyzed FOX News and The NYT.
- A large range of articles from 2020 to 2022 were analyzed to gain a broader understanding of how mass media and the world of academia develop the meaning and causes of vaccine hesitancy.
- Keywords such as “vaccine hesitancy,” “vaccine rates,” and “people of color” were used to pick out relevant articles to analyze.
- Our analysis included notes on the article’s tone, purpose, how it frames the problem of vaccine hesitancy, and if any solutions are offered.

Results

- Final results have not yet been found for major factors and future methods for increasing vaccine uptake and decreasing vaccine hesitancy.
- However, a general theme has been found in reviewing archival data from CNN, NPR, The New York Times, and FOX News from 2020 to 2022 pertaining to the COVID-19 vaccine, vaccine hesitancy, and demographic information.
- Data indicates that the majority of vaccine hesitancy has been found in minority populations and people of color.
- The root issue of this trend is explained differently in each news source.
- FOX News mainly centers its discussion on the concept of personal freedom found in the constitution and mistrust towards pharmaceutical companies.
- The NYT traces vaccine hesitancy amongst minorities to medical racism and mistrust towards the US government.
- There are a wide variety of tones used throughout the different news media artifacts.
- The most commonly used tone throughout the articles published by FOX news and the NYT is a neutral one.
- It is likely a neutral tone is used to maintain a factual and objective stance in the vaccine hesitancy issue.
- A notable aspect of most artifacts is that a solution to the issue is often included by the writer, with the most popular solutions being implementing socio-culturally conscious awareness campaigns, increasing transparency between doctors and patients, increasing access to vaccination centers, and having more POC hold leadership positions in the vaccine effort.

Discussion

- Although the research's main factors of vaccine hesitancy and methods of increasing vaccination have not been finalized, the analysis of artifacts points to historical and medical racism and mistrust towards the government as being the main drive for vaccine hesitancy amongst minorities.
- The tone that each artifact uses to portray vaccine hesitancy and solutions to the issue varies depending on the news media it is from.
- 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 more 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.
- Due to the scope of the research, the study only utilized four major new sources. As such, the analysis presented in this poster only takes into account data from mainstream news media, not independent news media.
- Although the best effort was made to avoid individual biases, the possibility of subjective viewpoints to have impacted 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.

Selected References

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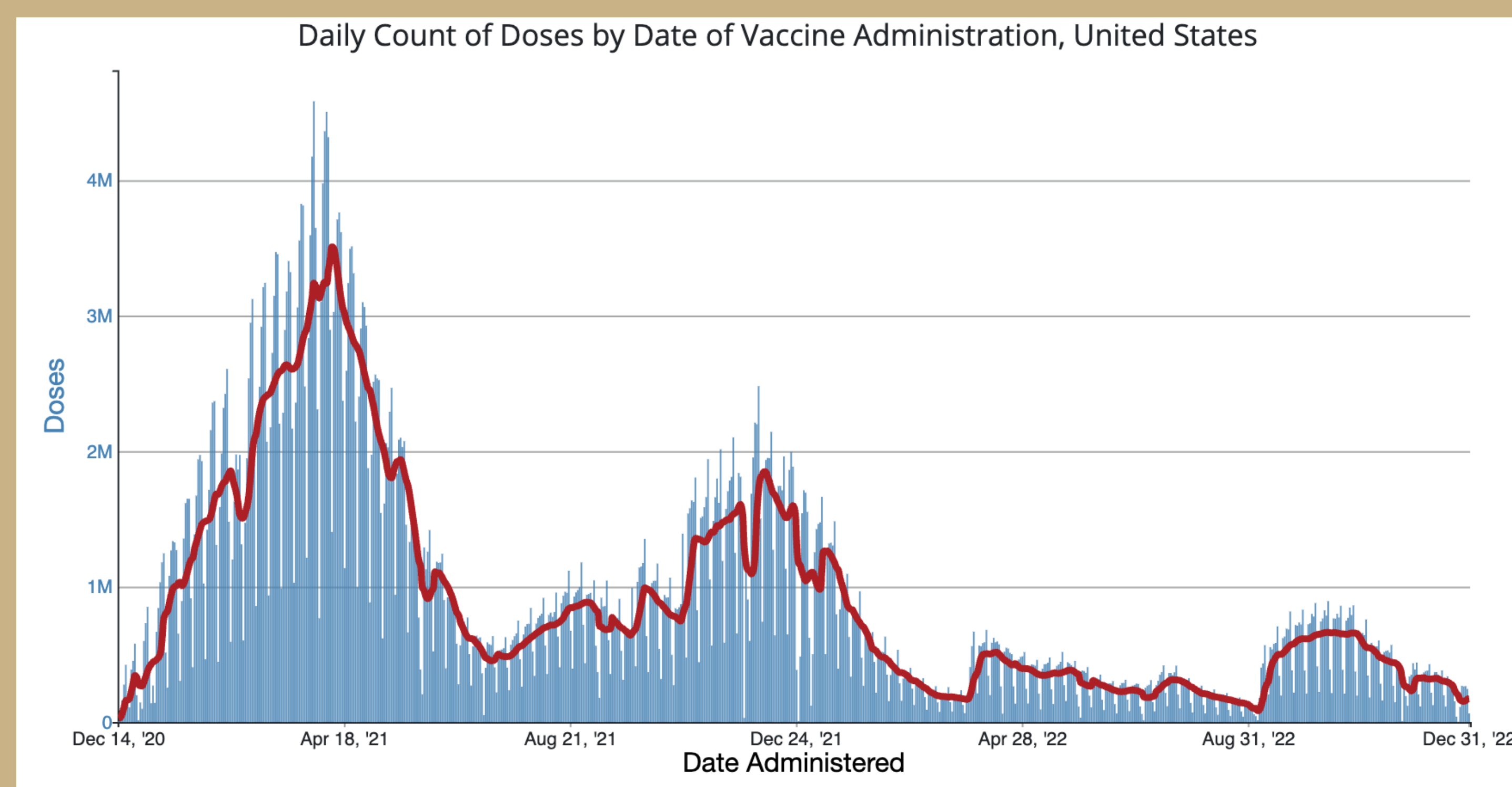
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Sample of Analysis of Four Artifacts

	NPR	CNN	NYT	FOX
Focus	Discussion on possible solutions to the growth of Covid-19 Vaccine hesitancy in rural towns. The most prominent one being using local farmers to educate others about the vaccine.	Presents reasons as to why Black Americans and Latinos still mistrust vaccines. This is likely because of fear of side effects and institutionalize racism.	Prevalent vaccine hesitancy in Mississippi despite high accessibility. Most likely due to partisanship and larger POC population.	Interview with a doctor on the topic of the CDC adding the COVID-19 vaccine to the recommended vaccine list for children and how that could impact trust in the vaccine.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issue and causes. • Propose solution and call to action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issue and causes. • Proposed solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of issue and causes. - Minor call to action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issue and causes. • Minor call to action. • Propose solution.
Tone	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

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