



Childhood Vaccination Advertising Campaign – Concept Testing

Health Canada

Executive Summary

July 2023

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

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This public opinion research report presents the results of 15 online focus groups conducted by Quorus Consulting Group on behalf of Health Canada in June 2023. The focus groups consisted of Canadians aged 18 years or older and were split based on the following segments: (a) Vaccine-hesitant parents of children 0-6 years old; (b) pregnant people and those planning on becoming pregnant in the next year; (c) vaccine confident parents of children 0-6 who may have missed a shot during the pandemic. Focus groups were conducted with participants from the following regions: Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario/Nunavut, the Prairies/NWT, and British Columbia/Yukon. The sessions were completed between June 20 and June 29, 2023. A total of 102 individuals participated in the focus groups.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Campagne publicitaire sur la vaccination des enfants - Test de concept

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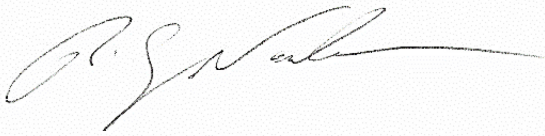


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Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Nadeau", is written over a light gray, textured rectangular background.

July 12, 2023
Rick Nadeau, President
Quorus Consulting Group Inc.

Executive summary

Background and research objectives

In Canada, vaccination is a shared responsibility. While vaccine recommendations are made at the federal level, provinces, and territories (PTs) are responsible for designing and implementing immunization programs for infants and children based on their unique circumstances.

Vaccination programs, including routine childhood vaccination programs for children ages zero to six years, are a critical public health intervention that have saved countless lives.¹

High vaccination coverage is essential in preventing the transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPD).² Infants and young children are particularly susceptible to VPDs because their immune systems are less mature and therefore less able to fight infection and, as a result, they require timely immunization.³ Vaccines can also protect children from the symptoms and possible complications of up to 15 serious diseases.⁴ For example, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella.⁵

Nationally, most parents and guardians of children agree that vaccines for children are safe and effective.^{6,7} However, at the same time, almost 50% of parents are concerned about possible vaccine side effects.⁸ The benefits of authorized vaccines outweigh documented, tracked, and acknowledged risks to vaccination.

Canada's provinces and territories have indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in disruptions, delays, and gaps in routine vaccinations for children. Some parents are opting not to vaccinate their kids against vaccine-preventable diseases due to vaccine hesitancy and some children have faced delays in receiving routine vaccinations due to school and doctor office closures during the pandemic.

Health Canada plans to execute a childhood vaccination social marketing and advertising campaign to help promote the importance, safety, and effectiveness of vaccinations. The messages are aimed at promoting the importance of routine childhood vaccinations, and to remind those with children that missed vaccinations over the last two years to get their vaccinations up to date.

¹ Health Canada (2022). [Canadian Adverse Events Following Immunization Surveillance System \(CAEFISS\)](#)

² PHAC (2022). [Vaccine hesitancy in Canadian parents](#)

³ Health Canada (2022). [Canadian Immunization Guide](#)

⁴ PHAC (2022). [Vaccines for children: Diseases that vaccine prevent](#)

⁵ PHAC (2022). [Vaccination coverage goals and vaccine preventable disease reduction targets by 2025](#)

⁶ Statistics Canada (2021). [Childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey, 2019](#)

⁷ PHAC (2022). [Highlights from the 2019 childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey \(cNICS\)](#)

⁸ PHAC (2022). [Highlights from the 2019 childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey \(cNICS\)](#)

Research objectives

The objective of the research is to test the creative concepts for the advertising campaign to determine, based on the following specific goals, which concept resonates most with the target audiences.

Specifically, the goals were to explore reactions to, and further the understanding of the impact of three draft health-related messages developed for possible display on childhood vaccination promotions, and to determine if the concepts are:

- clearly understood by the audiences;
- credible, relevant and of value to the audiences;
- appealing and appropriate to the audiences;
- memorable in the minds of the audiences;
- able to motivate the audiences to take intended actions.

The research also gathered feedback assessing a number of health-related messages on childhood vaccination promotions.

Methodology

The research methodology consisted of 15 online focus groups with people who are parents of at least one child zero to six years of age as well as parents-to-be (in other words, they are pregnant, planning on becoming pregnant within the next year or planning on adoption a child zero to six years of age within the next year). The focus groups were held between June 20 and June 29, 2023, and included individuals from across the country. Focus groups were segmented by parent group and vaccine status: vaccine-hesitant parents of children 0-6, pregnant people and those planning to become pregnant or adopt a child in the next year, and vaccine confident parents of children 0-6 years old who missed/delayed regular vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each focus group session lasted approximately 90 minutes. Participants were informed upfront that the research was being conducted on behalf of Health Canada and they each received an honorarium of \$125 for their participation. In total, 102 individuals participated in the research.

Research results

Three video ad concepts with an accompanying static social media post concept were presented (Concept C was removed from testing after the first six focus groups):

- A. “Unsolicited opinions,” featuring different situations where parents or soon-to-be parents receive unsolicited parenting advice.

- B. “Above and beyond,” featuring a family going above and beyond to protect their children as they prepare to visit a local park.
- C. “Reality show,” an ad about children in a daycare voicing their concerns about childhood diseases.

Overall, “**Unsolicited opinions**” was often chosen as the top concept and recommended for production. Participants felt this would be the most effective ad, as it was seen as relatable, inclusive, slightly humorous, and well-rounded, making it most likely to stand out and be remembered. Many participants saw themselves reflected in this concept, giving it a broad appeal and a wide target audience. Its main message of trusting the facts and vaccinating your child was generally easily identified and understood.

On the other hand, some of the criticisms of this concept included that the message about childhood vaccinations came too late in the ad, that it should include more information about the different diseases, and that there should be more of an emphasis (earlier on in the concept) on encouraging people to speak with a healthcare provider.

The social media post that accompanied this ad had mixed reviews. Those who liked the post noted that the message and call to action was straightforward. Those who liked it less felt that the visual impact was weak based on the mock-up and their perception of what the finished product may look like.

In general, “**Above and beyond**,” received more mixed reviews leaning towards the positive, and was also quite often chosen as the preferred concept. The idea of prevention and protection was clearly understood and appreciated by many participants. It was also seen as a relatable scenario with a feel-good and accurate message: that parents do everything to protect their children. The main critiques of this concept were that the tone was too light for the serious nature of the message and that it lacked basic information about vaccines. There was also a general sense that the overprepared parenting style idea might not work for a few main reasons: many parents or parents-to-be might not appreciate how the ad is intentionally exaggerating over-protection; how it highlights the ‘helicopter’ parenting style which may not connect with many parents; and, how it seems to convey that only these types of parents would be concerned with staying on top of childhood vaccinations.

The social media post for this concept received mixed reviews. Those who liked it mentioned that the message was clear and the image and text complimented each other. Those who liked it less felt that the images did not connect with the bolded text embedded in the image. The main point made in this context was that the images did not relate to vaccines; when looking for a theme, the images were more likely to convey “summer” or “summer products” to participants.

The concept “**Reality show**” was not well received. The concept was not something that would peak many participants’ interest. One of its strengths was that it mentioned specific diseases. While the main message was mostly clear, it was also often said that the idea was too basic, not relatable, and too humorous. The daycare setting was also questioned by participants who either could not relate because their children don’t go to daycare, that the ad might cast daycares in a negative light, or that children will get sick at daycare no matter what they do.

The social media post also received mostly negative reviews. As was the case with the overall concept, the idea of the fake TV show with “episodes” did not strike a chord. A few participants appreciated the clear message conveyed in the text, despite the lack of information about the 14 preventable diseases.

Reactions to alternate healthcare provider statement

Participants were presented with an alternate healthcare provider statement: “We know you might have more questions and that’s okay, talk to your healthcare provider.”

Some participants preferred the longer version. Those who liked it noted how inclusive, relatable, empathetic, and compassionate it was, despite often initially being seen as too wordy. Those who preferred the status quo statement mentioned the new statement could be seen as condescending in nature, it was just generally too long without adding any new information or value.

Feedback on message testing

Participants were asked to rate potential messages that Health Canada is considering for online and social media advertising. General reactions to all the statements were mostly positive. Participants preferred statements that were short, conveyed specific facts and/or a clear demonstration that vaccines have a track record. There was a keen interest in statements that were backed up by statistics or data. Participants had lower ratings for statements that were too vague, broad, used technical or ambiguous language, or called into question their own beliefs or (anecdotal) evidence they had seen or heard about.

Qualitative Research Disclaimer

Qualitative research seeks to develop insight and direction rather than quantitatively projectable measures. The purpose is not to generate “statistics” but to hear the full range of opinions on a topic, understand the language participants use, gauge degrees of passion and engagement and to leverage the power of the group to inspire ideas. Participants are encouraged to voice their opinions, irrespective of whether or not that view is shared by others.

Due to the sample size, the special recruitment methods used, and the study objectives themselves, it is clearly understood that the work under discussion is exploratory in nature. The findings are not, nor were they intended to be, projectable to a larger population.

Specifically, it is inappropriate to suggest or to infer that few (or many) real world users would behave in one way simply because few (or many) participants behaved in this way during the sessions. This kind of projection is strictly the prerogative of quantitative research.

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