

COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy: The Role of Existential Concerns in Individual's Decisions Regarding the Vaccine Uptake

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Abstract : This study examines the relationships between existential concerns (ECs), basic psychological needs (BPNs), vaccine hesitancy (VH), and the mediating role of negative attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccines. A cross-sectional survey was carried out on a sample of two-hundred eighty-seven adults (Mage = 36.04 (\pm 12.07); 59.9% females). Participants were recruited online through clickworker and filled in measures on existential concerns, basic psychological needs, attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccines, and vaccine hesitancy for Pfizer-BioNTech and Astrazeneca vaccines separately. Structural equation modelling showed that existential concerns were related to Pfizer-BioNTech and Astrazeneca vaccine hesitancy both directly and indirectly through negative attitudes toward possible side effects of COVID-19 vaccines. The present study has identified several predictive factors relating to the intention to uptake vaccination to protect against COVID-19 in Italy. Specifically, these findings suggest a causal link between existential concerns, attitudes, and vaccine hesitancy.

Keywords : COVID-19, existential concerns, Pfizer-BioNTech and Astrazeneca vaccines, vaccine hesitancy

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