

Letters

Pre-COVID-19 and associations of opportunistic immunisation

We would like to discuss the article, ‘Immunising older Australians: Pre-COVID-19 associations of opportunistic immunisation in general practice registrar consultations’ (*AJGP* October 2022).¹ The goal of Fielding et al was to explore the associations of opportunistic older person immunisation in the practice of general practice registrars.¹ Fielding et al reported that while general practice registrars are proactively assisting with immunisation in new patients, vaccination disparities exist.¹ In our local context of Southeast Asia, local COVID-19 control attempts have faced support or opposition for a variety of reasons. Vaccine anxiety has been connected to trust in the local healthcare system.^{2,3} Islam et al showed that rumours and conspiracy theories may lead to mistrust, contributing to vaccine hesitancy.⁴ In the event of a crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, a person’s level of faith in their local public health administration influences their willingness to implement public health measures.³ Improving public trust in authorities, specialists and scientists is critical for increasing immunisation rates and providing correct information to sceptics. Because COVID-19 vaccination acceptance varies from report to report, long-term research can provide a fuller picture of how acceptance has altered over time. It is imperative to increase confidence in public health administration. The question of how to do this is intriguing. Regular dissemination of public health information is required, and it must adhere to the principles of

accountability and transparency. Local mistrust is frequently associated with a lack of transparency.⁶ Ongoing situational monitoring can aid in early problem detection and management in the event that a scenario of mistrust arises.

Finally, it is important to emphasise the elaborate conceptual framework of vaccination. If a vaccine is not easily accessible in the area, this must be the first issue to be solved before confidence can begin to grow. Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors have an impact, thus it is important to regularly update information to adapt current vaccination policy to any changes. Exchange of knowledge and global collaborative consensus recommendations (such as those of the Strategic Advisory Group of Immunization Experts at www.who.int/groups) can be a useful information source for putting policy into practice in the field.

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