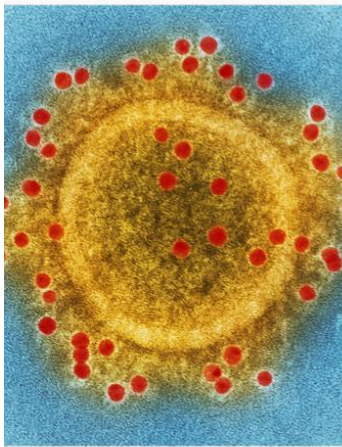


# Aotearoa-New Zealand Public Attitudes to COVID-19 Vaccine

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# Introduction

## Aotearoa New Zealand Public Attitudes to COVID-19 Vaccine

This report is based on findings from a national survey conducted by the School of Communication, Journalism & Marketing—Te Pou Aro Kōrero, Massey University and fielded by Qualtrics. Interview dates: June 26 to July 13, 2020. Interviews: 1040 adults (18+). Average margin of error: +/- 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The research was funded by Massey University.

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## Executive Summary

Vaccination has made enormous contribution to public health (Greenwood, 2014). With the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, and countries implementing social distancing measures and nonpharmaceutical interventions, there has been a push to develop a vaccine for coronavirus (Bartsch et al., 2020). As of July 2020, more than 150 countries are engaged in COVID-19 vaccine global access facility, with a goal to deliver two billion doses of safe and effective vaccines by the end of 2021 (WHO, 2020). However, there has been a trend of public concern about safety and benefits of vaccines (Yaquib, Castle-Clark, Sevdalis, & Chataway, 2014). Drawing on a national survey ( $N = 1040$ ), this report describes the attitudes of the New Zealand public towards vaccination in general and coronavirus vaccine in particular.

## **1. A Minority of New Zealanders Expect a Coronavirus Vaccine by the end of 2020; Most Expect at Some Point in 2021**

- Only one in nine New Zealanders expect a vaccine against the coronavirus to be available by the end of 2020 (11%)
- Almost five in ten New Zealanders expect a coronavirus vaccine at some point in 2021 (47%)
- Almost a quarter of them expect the vaccine to be available by 2022 or later (21%), and a small minority, one in fifteen, think that the vaccine for coronavirus will never be available (5%). Around 16% of the New Zealanders don't know when to expect a coronavirus vaccine

## **2. Three in Four New Zealanders Intend to Get Vaccinated Against Coronavirus**

- Three in four New Zealanders say they would get vaccinated against coronavirus when one becomes available (74%)
- Māori (36%) have lower intentions to get vaccinated against coronavirus when one becomes available compared to the European New Zealanders (a census term) (24%) and Asians and Others ethnicities (19%)
- Men are more likely (78%) to say they will get vaccinated against the coronavirus than women (70%). New Zealanders with bachelor's degree and above (82%) are more likely to say they intend to get vaccinated compared to others (71%). Older respondents (66 years and above) (81%) are slightly more likely to say they intend to get the coronavirus vaccine when available than young (18-25 years, 72%) and adult (26-35 years, 70%) New Zealanders
- Almost two in three New Zealanders say they strongly agree (40%) or somewhat agree (25%) that they intend to get vaccinated against coronavirus. One in ten say they do not intend to get vaccinated (13%). About two in nine remain neutral (22%)
- Half of New Zealanders agree that they would get vaccinated against coronavirus even if they have to pay for the vaccine (52%), while 22% disagree. More than one in four remain neutral (26%)
- More than half of the New Zealanders are willing to put their name on the list to get vaccinated against coronavirus (56%), while 19% disagree, and a quarter remain neutral (24%)

## **3. Protecting Family and Self Are the Most Often Reported Reasons to Get Vaccinated Against Coronavirus**

- The two most often reported reasons for most New Zealanders to get vaccinated against coronavirus were to protect their family (62%) and to protect themselves (62%)
- Half of New Zealanders want to get vaccinated against coronavirus because they feel a vaccine is the best way to avoid getting seriously ill (52%), feel safe around other people (51%), and to protect their community (49%)

- Four in ten people want to get vaccinated because they think that their life won't go back to normal until most people are vaccinated (43%)
- Two in ten New Zealanders want to get vaccinated because their doctor recommends vaccination (23%) and because they have a chronic health condition such as asthma or diabetes (21%)

#### **4. Vaccine Safety and Side Effects are Top Concerns Against Coronavirus Vaccination**

- About two in ten New Zealanders say they need more time to assess the safety of the vaccine (18%). They are also concerned about the possible side effects from the vaccine (16%), and fear getting infected with coronavirus from the vaccine (10%)
- Other reasons include concern about getting seriously ill from coronavirus (8%), fear of needles (6%), lack of faith in vaccines (6%), feel the outbreak is not as serious as others claim (3%), allergic to vaccines (2%), and do not have time to get vaccinated (1%). Other open comments regarding reasons to not get a coronavirus vaccine include lack of trust, belief in conspiracy theories, and a feeling that the testing is rushed

#### **5. A Majority of New Zealanders Support Imposing Restrictions Against Individuals Who Refuse Coronavirus Vaccine**

- Three in five (61%) New Zealanders strongly support (36%) or somewhat support (25%) imposing international travel ban on people who refuse to get vaccinated against coronavirus. One in five oppose this measure (21%), while 18% remain neutral
- Almost three in five (57%) New Zealanders support restricted entry to public places such as beaches, parks, and swimming pools for people who refuse the coronavirus vaccine while 23% oppose it. One in five remain neutral (20%)
- Half of New Zealanders strongly support (26%) or somewhat support (24%) restriction on children from attending school for individuals who refuse the coronavirus vaccine. Almost three in ten oppose this restriction (28%), while 22% remain neutral
- More than a quarter of New Zealanders strongly support (13%) or somewhat support (15%) imposing higher tax rate on people who refuse coronavirus vaccine while almost half of New Zealanders somewhat oppose (14%) or strongly oppose (34%) this. Almost a quarter remain neutral (24%)
- Three in ten New Zealanders support reduced pay (30%) for people who refuse the coronavirus vaccine while 44% oppose such a measure. Slightly more than a quarter of New Zealanders remain neutral (26%)

#### **6. A Majority of New Zealanders Express Positive Attitudes Towards Vaccines**

- Almost four in five New Zealanders agree that vaccines are effective (79%) and being vaccinated is important for the health of others in their community (79%)
- Three quarters of New Zealanders agree that getting vaccinated is a good way to protect themselves from diseases (75%), and agree that vaccines are important for their health

- Seven in ten agree that all vaccines offered by the government in their community are beneficial (72%), and that they go with the advice of their doctor or healthcare provider when it comes to vaccines (72%)
- Three in five New Zealanders strongly agree (29%) or somewhat agree (33%) that the information they receive about vaccines from the government is reliable and trustworthy
- More than half agree that getting vaccinated is their civic duty (54%)

### **7. A Significant Minority of New Zealanders Say They Have Previously Refused Vaccination and Refused Vaccination for Their Children**

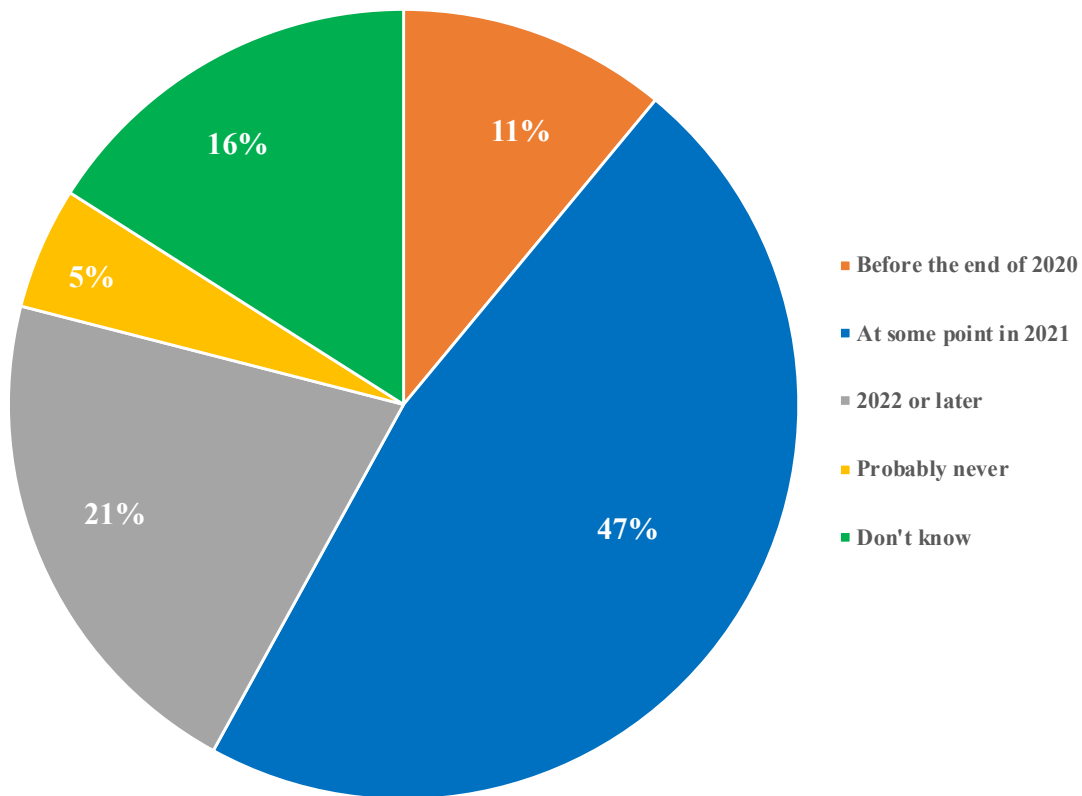
- Almost one in six New Zealanders say that they have previously refused to get vaccinated (16%)
- One in ten of New Zealanders say that they have previously refused to get their child vaccinated (10%)

### **8. A Substantial Proportion of New Zealanders Harbour Concerns About Vaccination**

- More than half of New Zealanders say they are uncomfortable getting a vaccine that was rushed into production (57%). A third say that new vaccines carry more risks than older ones (29%)
- Almost half say that the corporations manufacturing vaccines only care about profit (43%)
- New Zealanders are divided over adverse effect of vaccines: About two in five agree (37%) and disagree (37%) that they are concerned about serious adverse effects of vaccines
- Almost three in ten New Zealanders are uncomfortable getting vaccinated (29%)
- More than a quarter of New Zealanders say that the government overhypes the need for vaccines (26%)
- A significant minority (16%) say that vaccines cause diseases

# 1. Coronavirus Vaccine Availability

**A Majority of New Zealanders Expect a Vaccine Against Coronavirus to be Available by the End of 2021**



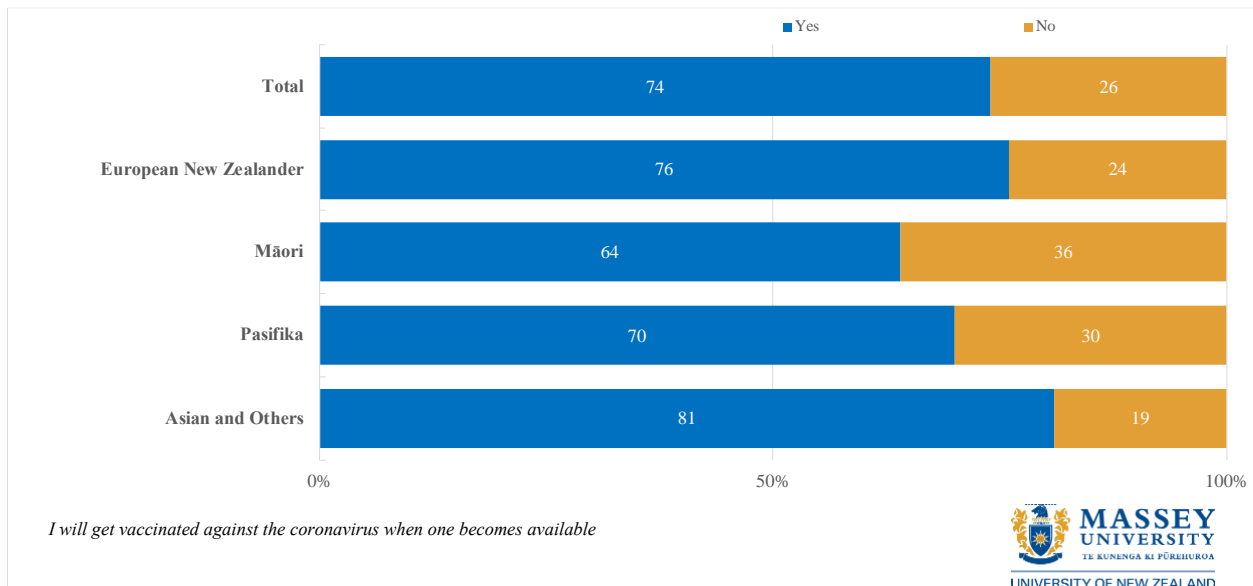
*When do you expect a vaccine against the coronavirus to be available to the public?*

N = 1037 New Zealand adults (18 years and older)

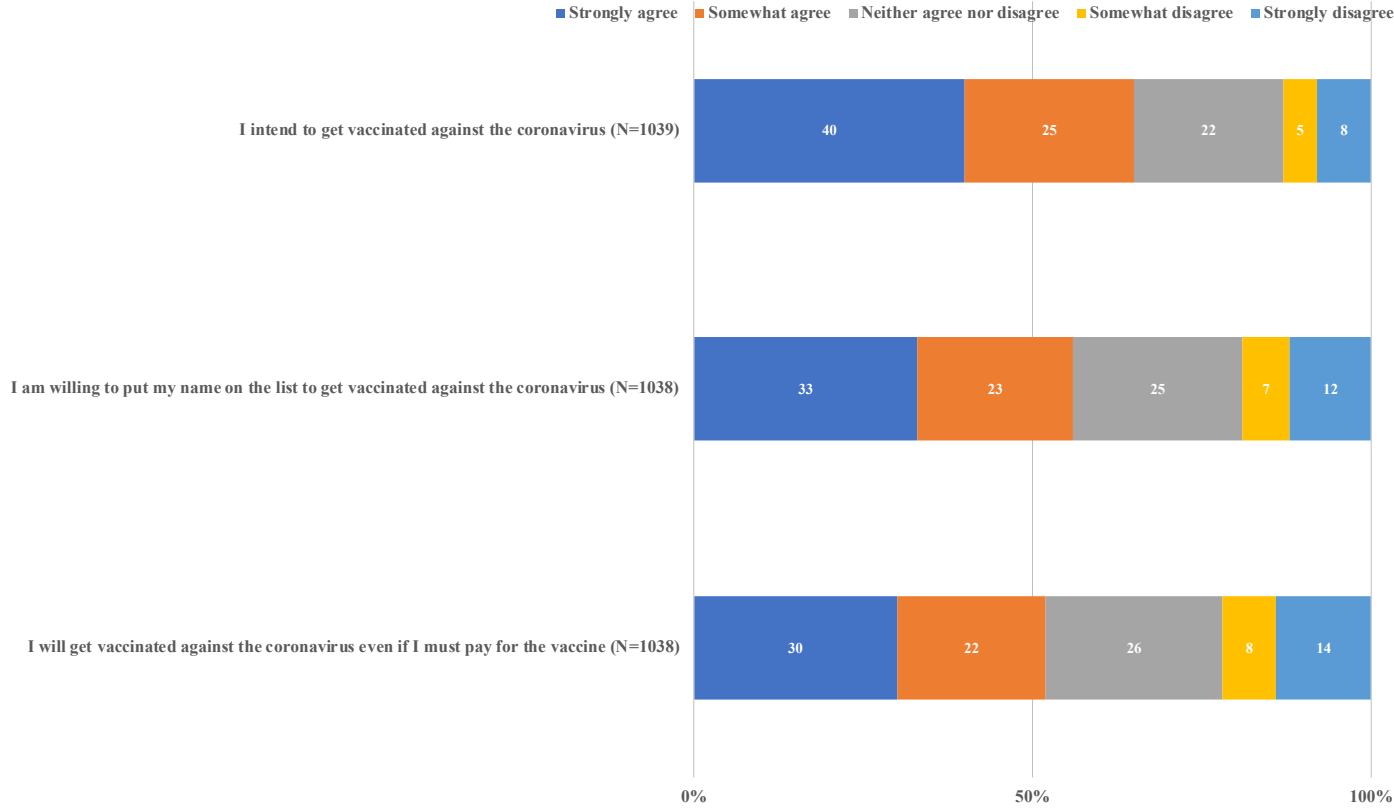


## 2. Intention to Get Vaccinated Against Coronavirus

More than seven in ten New Zealanders are willing to get vaccinated for coronavirus when one becomes available (74%). Men were more likely (78%) to say they will get vaccinated against the coronavirus than women (70%). Māori (36%) have lower intention to get vaccinated against coronavirus when one becomes available compared to the European New Zealanders (24%) and Asians and Others (19%)



Almost two in three New Zealanders intend to get vaccinated against coronavirus (65%), while 13% said they do not intend to do so. More than half of New Zealanders say they will get vaccinated against coronavirus even if they have to pay for the vaccine (52%), and similar proportion are willing to put their name on the list to get vaccinated against coronavirus (56%).

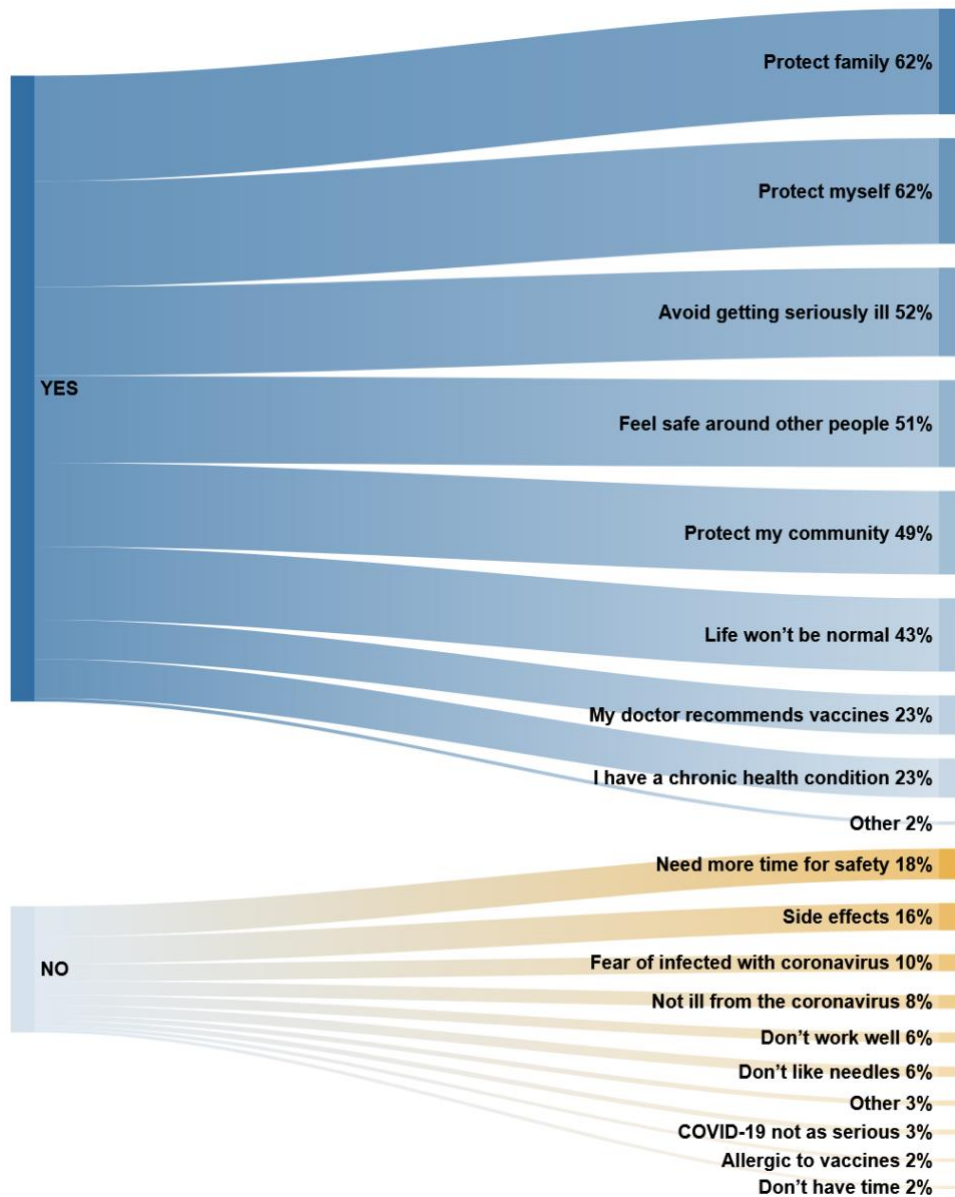


Regarding vaccines, how much to you agree or disagree with the following statements?

### 3. Reasons to Get/Not Get Vaccinated Against Coronavirus

**Protecting the Family and Self are the Biggest Reasons to Get Vaccinated Against Coronavirus**

**Need for Additional Time to Ensure the Safety of the Vaccine and Possible Side Effects are the Biggest Reasons to Not Get Vaccinated Against the Coronavirus**

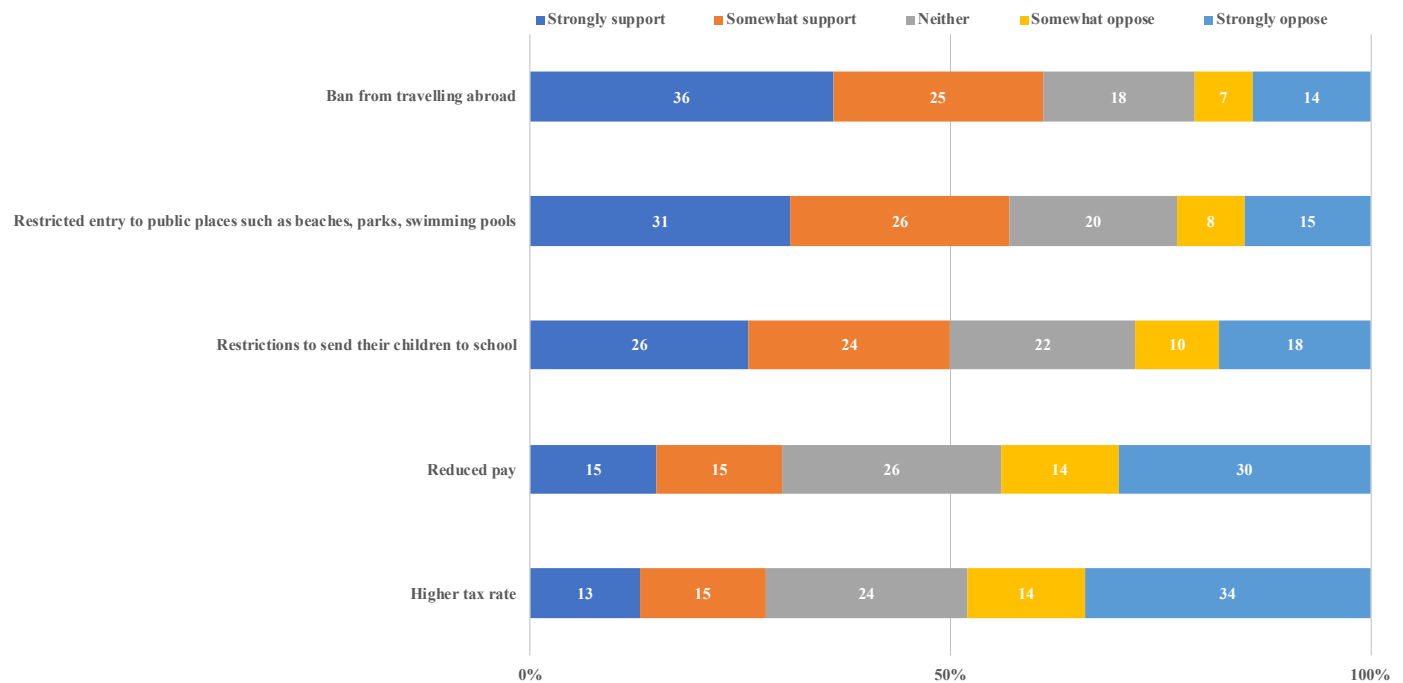


*Which of the following are reasons you would get (not get) a coronavirus vaccine? (Multiple choices allowed)*

## 4. Support for Restrictions Against Individuals who Refuse Coronavirus Vaccine

### A Large Proportion of New Zealanders Support Imposing Restrictions Against Individuals Who Refuse to Get the Coronavirus Vaccine

Three in five New Zealanders support imposing international travel ban (61%) and restricted entry to public places (57%) for individuals who refuse to get vaccinated against coronavirus. Half of New Zealanders support imposing restrictions on children of those who have not been vaccinated against coronavirus from attending school (50%). There was less support for financial restriction such as reduced pay (30%), and higher tax rate (28%).



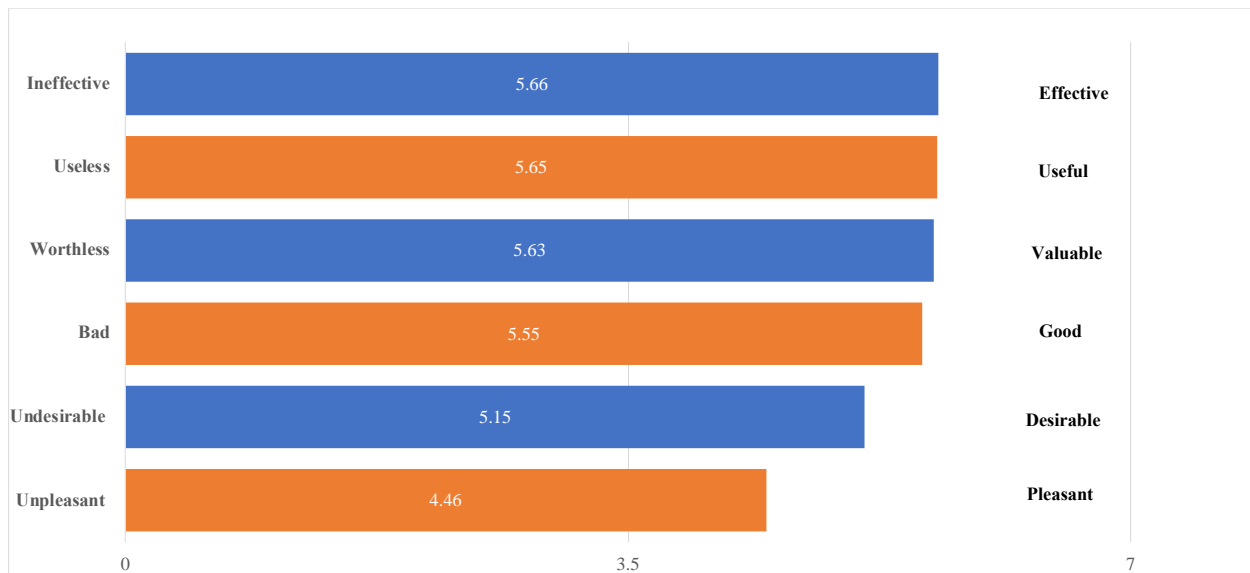
*Some people say that vaccination against coronavirus, when available, should be mandatory to all, while others say it should be a personal choice. If the vaccine becomes mandatory, how much do you support or oppose the following proposed government actions for people who refuse to get vaccinated?*

*N* = 1039 New Zealand adults (18 years and older)

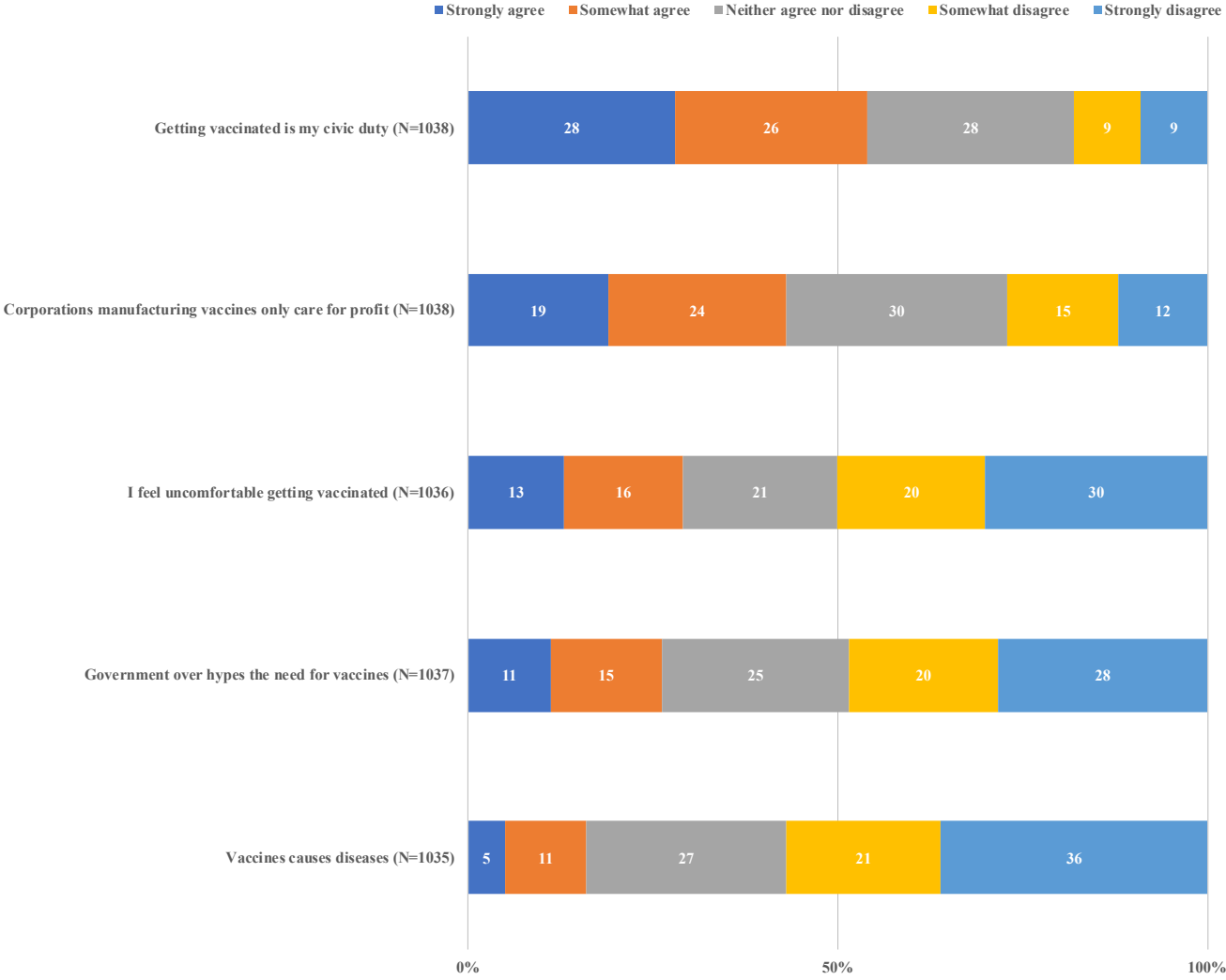
## 5. Attitudes Towards Vaccination in General

### A Majority of New Zealanders Express Positive Attitudes Towards Vaccines

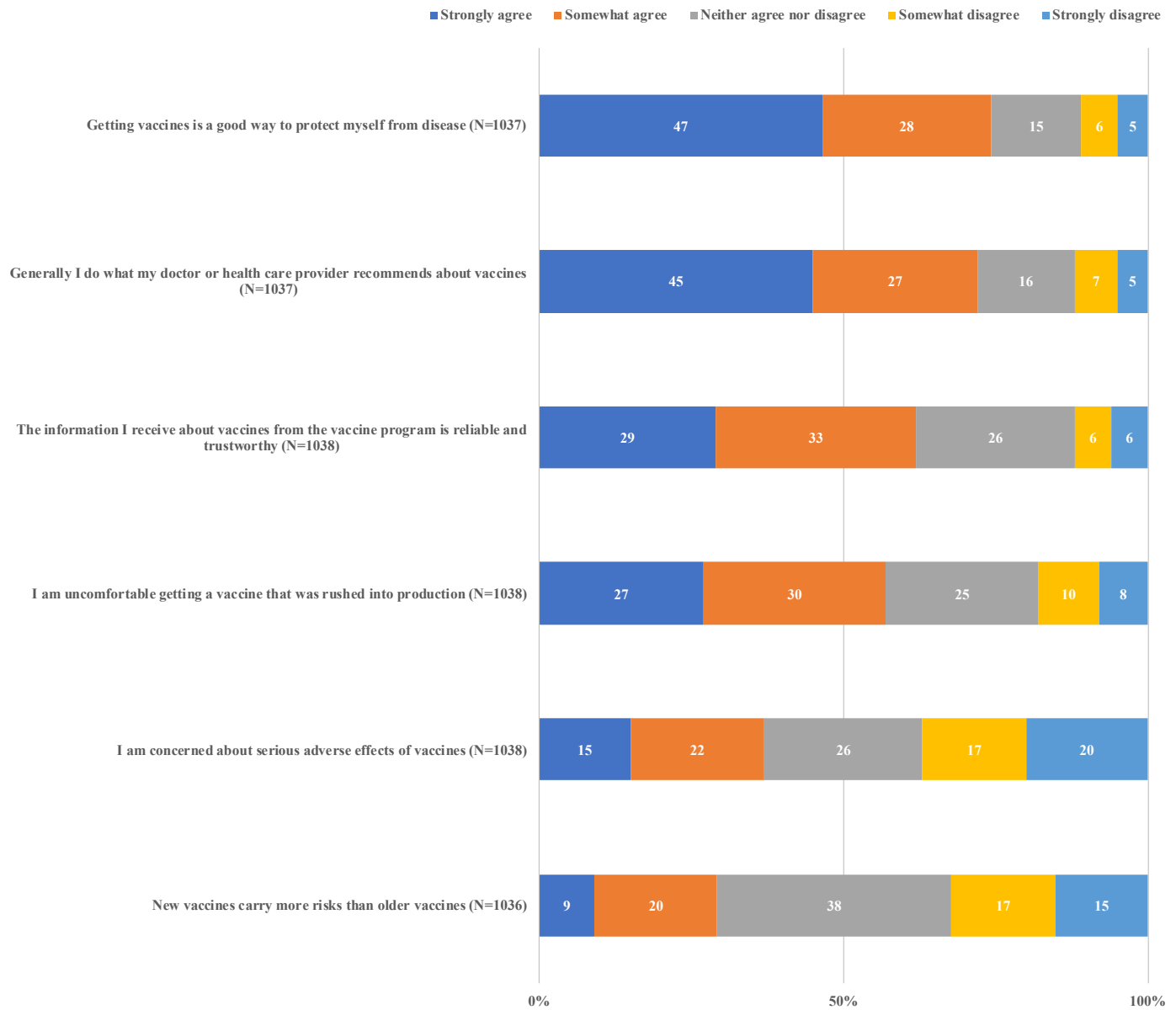
When asked about their feelings towards vaccination on a seven-point bipolar scale, a majority of New Zealanders expressed positive attitudes towards vaccination. Specifically, they feel that the vaccines are effective ( $M = 5.66$ ), Useful ( $M = 5.65$ ), Valuable ( $M = 5.63$ ), Good ( $M = 5.55$ ), desirable ( $M = 5.15$ ), and pleasant (4.46).



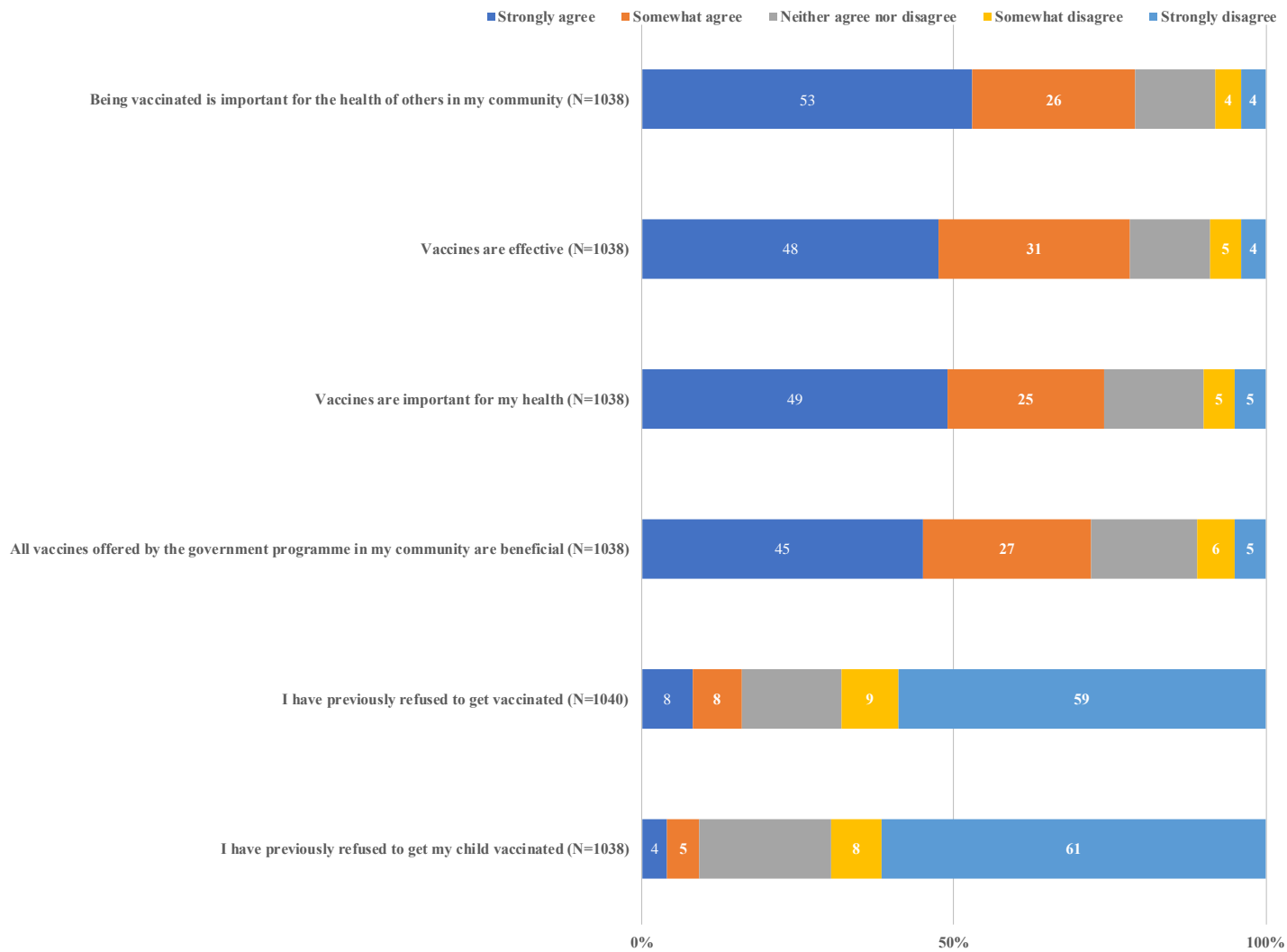
Almost four in five New Zealanders agree that vaccines are effective and being vaccinated is important for the health of others in their community (79%). Seven in ten or more New Zealanders agree that getting vaccinated is a good way to protect themselves from diseases (75%) and important for their health (74%). They also agree that vaccines offered by government in their community are beneficial (72%), and that they follow the advice of their doctor or healthcare provider in relation to vaccines (72%). However, more than half of New Zealanders express concern in a vaccine that was rushed into production (57%).



Regarding vaccines, how much to you agree or disagree with the following statements?



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## Survey Method

The data in this report are based on a scientific online poll of 1040 New Zealand adults, aged 18 and older, conducted by the School of Communication, Journalism & Marketing—Te Pou Aro Kōrero. Data was collected by Qualtrics. The survey was conducted between June 26 to July 13, 2020. All questionnaires were self-administered by respondents in a web-based environment. The survey took about 22 minutes on average to complete. The data were weighted, post survey, on gender, age, education, and ethnicity to match the New Zealand census estimates. Weights ranged from 0.47 to 3.30, with a mean of 1.21, median of 0.98, and standard deviation of 0.63. 95% of the weights fall between 0.58 and 2.15.

The survey instrument was designed by Drs. Jagadish Thaker (JT) and Vishnu Menon. We acknowledge the help from Dr. Esther Jaspers and Dr. Elena Maydell from Massey University in preparing the questionnaire. John Hilbert helped with the design of the cover page.

Average margins of error, at the 95% confidence level, are plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Percentages in a given chart may total slightly higher or lower than 100% due to rounding error.

## Sample Demographics

	<i>N</i> (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	<i>N</i> (weighted)	% (weighted)
Total	1040	100	1040	100
Female	609	58.6	530	51
Male	431	41.4	510	49
<i>Age</i>				
18-25	189	18.2	146	14
26-35	220	21.2	187	18
36-45	175	16.8	166	16
46-55	163	15.7	187	18
56-65	127	12.2	156	15
66 and above	166	16	198	19
<i>Education</i>				
No qualification	96	9.2	199	19
Level 1 to Level 6 diploma	577	55.5	564	54
Bachelor's degree or higher	367	35.3	277	27
<i>Ethnicity</i>				
European New Zealander	648	62.3	640	61.5
Māori	139	13.4	170	16.3
Pasifika	50	4.8	80	7.7
Asian or Another Category	203	19.5	150	14.4
<i>Annual personal income</i>				
Less than \$19,999	280	26.9	286	27.5
\$20,000 to \$39,999	254	24.4	273	26.2
\$40,000 to \$59,999	182	17.5	188	18
\$60,000 to \$79,999	138	13.3	130	12.5
\$80,000 to \$99,999	68	6.5	59	5.6
\$100,000 to \$119,999	64	6.2	55	5.3
\$120,000 or above	50	4.8	46	4.4

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