



# **MONARCH MUN 2024**

Committee: WHO

Issue: Managing the threat  
to global health caused by  
vaccine hesitancy

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# INTRODUCTION

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- Vaccine hesitancy poses a significant and growing threat to global health. Despite the overwhelming evidence supporting the effectiveness and safety of vaccines, many individuals remain reluctant or refuse to vaccinate.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) identified vaccine hesitancy as one of the top ten threats to global health, jeopardizing decades of progress in controlling vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, polio, and influenza.
- The reasons behind vaccine hesitancy are complex and multifaceted that involves:
  1. Misinformation
  2. Mistrust in governments/pharmaceutical companies
  3. Cultural beliefs and personal freedoms
- Low vaccination rates increase the risk of disease outbreaks, affecting health systems and economies.

# Background Information

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## Root Causes of Vaccine Hesitancy

### 1. Confidence:

1. **Mistrust in vaccines or healthcare providers:** Concerns about vaccine safety, fueled by misinformation or past negative experiences, lead to skepticism.
2. **Religious and cultural beliefs:** In some communities, religious teachings or cultural practices conflict with vaccination programs.

### 2. Complacency:

1. **Perception of low disease risk:** In areas where diseases like polio or measles have been largely eradicated, the perceived need for vaccination may decline.
2. **Socioeconomic factors:** Those who are not directly affected by diseases may feel that vaccines are unnecessary or irrelevant to their daily lives.

### 3. Convenience:

1. **Access to vaccines:** Poor access to healthcare services, including vaccination centers, can contribute to hesitancy, particularly in rural or underserved areas.
2. **Complexity of vaccine schedules:** The perceived inconvenience of getting multiple doses or dealing with side effects may discourage people from following through with vaccinations.

# Background Information

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**Regional Variations in Vaccine Hesitancy:** Vaccine hesitancy is not uniform across the globe and can vary based on geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic factors:

1. **Low-income countries:** Hesitancy is often linked to issues of access, poor healthcare infrastructure, and lack of education. In these regions, vaccine hesitancy may also stem from political instability or conflict, where rumors and fear can spread rapidly.
2. **High-income countries:** In more affluent societies, hesitancy often arises from a combination of complacency and distrust. Paradoxically, the success of vaccination programs has led some to believe that vaccines are no longer necessary, as the diseases they prevent are now rare.
3. **Political and ideological influence:** Certain political groups may also oppose vaccines on the grounds of personal freedom and individual rights, further complicating efforts to achieve widespread coverage.

# Relevant Treaties or Past Solutions

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- International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005)
- Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP, 2011-2020)
- European Vaccine Action Plan (EVAP, 2015-2020)
- COVAX Initiative (2020-Present)
- UNICEF Immunization Programs
- International Conference on Primary Health Care (Alma-Ata Declaration) (1978)

# POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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## **1. Public Education and Awareness Campaigns**

One of the most effective ways to combat vaccine hesitancy is through targeted public education campaigns. These initiatives should aim to dispel myths and misinformation surrounding vaccines by providing accurate, science-based information. Engaging trusted figures such as healthcare professionals, community leaders, and celebrities to promote vaccination can significantly enhance credibility. Campaigns should also leverage social media platforms to reach a broader audience, especially younger generations, who are often exposed to vaccine misinformation online.

## **2. Strengthening Healthcare Provider Communication**

Healthcare providers play a pivotal role in influencing patient decisions. Training programs that improve healthcare professionals' communication skills regarding vaccines can enhance trust between patients and providers. By addressing patient concerns with empathy and clear, fact-based explanations, healthcare providers can guide hesitant individuals towards making informed decisions about vaccinations. Offering transparent information on vaccine safety, side effects, and effectiveness can reduce fear and uncertainty.

# APPENDICE

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1. <https://www.ccjm.org/content/91/9/565>

- *This website explains how vaccine hesitancy threatens the life-saving benefits of vaccines in preventing disease and deaths.*

2. <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-08-2015-vaccine-hesitancy-a-growing-challenge-for-immunization-programmes>

- *This website provides how vaccine hesitancy is driven by factors like misinformation, safety concerns, and mistrust and is a growing global challenge, hindering efforts to close the immunization gap.*