

# WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS ON COVID-19 VACCINES IN FIJI

This rapid assessment report was developed on the basis of the findings of an online survey which comprised 22 questions that were designed by Fiji Women's Rights Movement. This survey was carried out in the months of May-June 2021 during Fiji's second wave of COVID-19. A total of 574 respondents helped shape the key findings. 93.8% of respondents were women with non-binary women accounting for 1.41% of respondents. Fiji Women's Rights Movement acknowledges the limitations of this rapid assessment report.



# 83.7%

Fijian women were **POSITIVE** about the vaccinations in general. Less than 5% of respondents were negative about vaccinations.



## HERBAL & TRADITIONAL MEDICINE



69% of respondents saw herbal & traditional medicine as not being a better substitute for the COVID-19 vaccine.



51.5% of respondents considered taking herbal & traditional medicine if they developed any COVID-19 symptoms.

Note: 360 participants skipped this question



## REASONS FOR VACCINE HESITANCY



58% of respondents shared that nothing would stop them from having the COVID-19 vaccine



35.6% of the respondents stated below reasons which would prevent them:

- Lack of confidence in the safety & efficacy
- Long queues + no 2 meter social distancing at a vaccination site
- Constitutional right to refuse vaccination
- Negative message of the vaccine on social media platforms
- Distrust in the Government which was triggered by the inconsistent and unreliable information shared by Government

## DOES BEING A CAREGIVER, HAVING A DISABILITY OR HAVING A LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITION INFLUENCE THE PERCEPTION



58% of respondents did not consider themselves as a carer, having a disability or having a long-term health condition

28.5% of respondents considered themselves a carer

7.4% noted they had a long-term health condition

## ROLE OF TWO SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

### EDUCATION

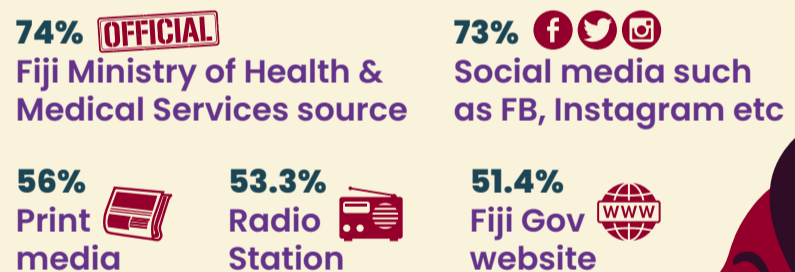


### INCOME LEVELS



Of note is that 54% of respondents earned \$15,000 or below despite having one of the listed education level which can be attributed to unemployment, reduced pay and or reduced working hours across a range of sectors in Fiji. Given that it falls outside the remit of this Report, a deeper dive is necessary to better understand this significant finding.

## THE INFORMATION SOURCES THAT INFLUENCE THE PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN



3.4% of respondents stated **RELIGIOUS BELIEFS** as a reason to prevent them from taking the COVID vaccine



## RECOMMENDATIONS

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE CRAFTED AS KEY EVIDENCE-BASED CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE REVISION AND DESIGN OF ONGOING, EVOLVING SOLUTIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS:

### OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATION

1. FWRM strongly encourages front liner workers who are manning vaccination stations to ensure that the COVID-19 measures such as mask wearing and maintaining a 2 metre distance is adhered to as this would allay the real fears of Fijian women as to why they are hesitant about not getting vaccinated.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

2. FWRM recommends that the Ministry of Health consider publicly disseminating sex disaggregated data on the recipients of the COVID-19 vaccine to provide a big picture in terms of vaccine uptake by the Fijian population.
3. FWRM recommends that the Ministry of Health work with the Ministry of Women and the women's NGO community, faith-based organisations in developing evidence-based messages to counter anti-vaccine messages.
4. FWRM recommends that the Ministry of Health revise its Data Policy, specifically in areas relating to COVID-19 infections, recoveries and mortalities to reflect gender, age, non-specific but geographical areas or locales, and ethnicity to aid the design and implementation of an appropriate Communications Strategy and Plan that factors these core cultural nuances that greatly impact Behavioural Change in Fiji.

5. FWRM recommends that MoH develops a clear Communications policy which is led by nationals who are experts and or have knowledge in public health crisis management and understand the cultural nuances of the Fijian population to, inter alia, prepare all public messages issued by the MoH.

### Potential areas for research and further collaboration between academic institutions, the women's NGO community and any relevant stakeholders

6. FWRM recommends that collaborative efforts be made by both academic institutions and the women NGO community in undertaking research about matters related to the complex health seeking behaviours of women as it concerns herbal and traditional medicine in the context of the COVID-19 vaccination programme as well as a deeper dive into understanding the high number of educated women who earn \$15,000 and how this can be effectively addressed through policy solutions as ways to rebuild Fiji in a better way.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [WWW.FWRM.ORG.FJ](http://WWW.FWRM.ORG.FJ)

SUPPORTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE WE RISE COALITION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PACIFIC WOMEN SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT.

