

Countries with lower-than-expected vaccination rates show unusually negative attitudes to vaccines on Twitter | The Conversation

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In countries with lower-than-expected COVID-19 vaccination rates, mentions of side effects and negative emotions dominated overall social media discourses on COVID-19 vaccines, according to our new research published in the journal *Vaccines*.

Our team wanted to understand whether the tone of social media conversations around the world matched differing country-level vaccination rates. To do this, we analyzed more than 21.3 million tweets in 33 languages from 192 countries posted between November 2020 and August 2021, searching any tweet that mentioned “COVID-19” and “vaccine” or “vaccination.” We then calculated percentages of these tweets that mentioned keywords signifying adverse events of vaccination, such as side effects, blood clots or death.

In addition, we used an artificial intelligence algorithm to analyze the sentiment and emotional tone of tweets. This algorithm can identify positive and negative sentiment as well as emotions in language – such as joy, fear, sadness or anger. We applied the algorithm to tweets mentioning COVID-19 vaccines, allowing us to measure the general emotional trends of different countries on Twitter.

Prior research has shown that emotions toward vaccines may influence whether a person decides to get a COVID-19 vaccination. Our study allowed us to examine this theory at national scales.

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