

How to convince skeptics to trust a COVID vaccine. | Slate

By Mary Harris

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A vaccine—or vaccines—for COVID-19 could arrive soon, with Pfizer and Moderna among the first drugmakers to seek emergency use authorization for their candidates. But with so many people already skeptical of vaccines, how will we ensure that enough people take them when they're available? To answer that question, I talked to Heidi Larson, an anthropologist and the founding director of the Vaccine Confidence Project, which monitors public concerns about vaccines. She's been [suggested by public health experts](#) as an addition to President-elect Joe Biden's COVID-19 advisory board. Larson says the way the scientific community handles the next few weeks will be critical. On [Thursday's episode of What Next](#), we discussed where the conversation around vaccines has fallen short, and what politicians and public health experts need to do to build trust for a COVID-19 vaccine.

Mary Harris: I've noticed you're really precise in how you speak about vaccines and the way people feel about them. You never talk about "the public" as a monolith. Instead, you refer to "publics," as in more than one—a collection of communities who have to make decisions about their health together. You dislike phrases like *herd immunity* and *anti-vaxxers*. Can you explain why?

[...]

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