

WHITEPAPER

The Race to Conquer COVID-19

Vaccine Safety, Efficacy, and Popularity
- a Sentiment Analysis



SGA discovers some interesting facts from the global population in 2021

The world is facing COVID-19 waves one after another with no end in sight. Last year, the world was focused on saving lives and enhancing the healthcare infrastructure, while this year, it is focused on getting everyone vaccinated and preventing the re-transmission of different variants in circulation. What's interesting is that contrary to the tall claims made by world leaders, it has been observed that developing nations have taken the lead over the developed ones in vaccine administration.

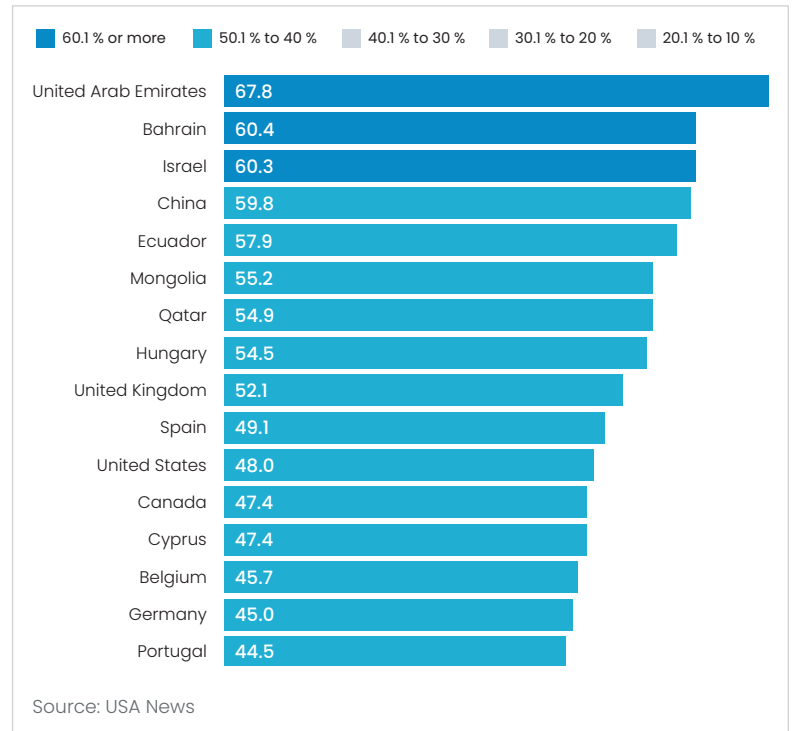


“Keep reminding patients that a short period of discomfort is a whole lot better than a visit to the ICU.”

William Schaffner, MD

The path to recovery is long and somewhat unclear. Healthcare institutions across the globe constantly alter their statements. Scientific reports contradict each other. In this era of dilemma, where do you stand?

Individuals vaccinated fully per 100 people



Are you willing to get vaccinated? What happens to those who are fully vaccinated? Will they remain safe forever?

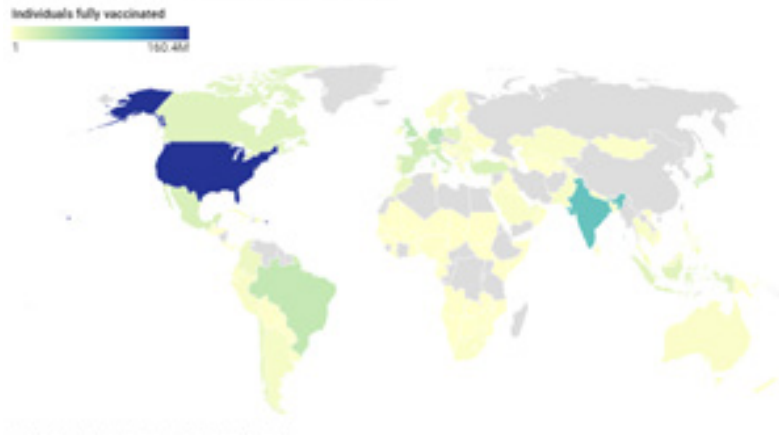
Globally, the picture looks very different, as reported by USA news, recently.

There are almost 20 pharmaceutical companies in the vaccine rat race. The prominent ones come from Russia, China, the UK, and the US – each claiming that its product is efficacious and vying to find you and get you jabbed.

What do you think? Are vaccines really effective? Will you still drive down to your favorite restaurant or take a vacation with your loved ones? Should you be taking jabs at all?

SG Analytics spoke to people from different countries belonging to different age groups. The sentiment analysis from this study shows interesting results.

Fully Vaccinated People Per Country



SGA conducted a dipstick study in June 2021 to tap the pulse of public sentiment around vaccine safety, effectiveness, and long-term immunity amid the dearth of sufficient data, the infodemic, and the emergence of new variants.

The participants were adults who were either vaccinated or eligible for vaccination (with or without comorbidities) and were from the US, Europe, India, and the Middle East.

The study explored many crucial conundrums floating in the public consciousness today – Should they get vaccinated? If yes, then which vaccine should be taken? Is it safe to be vaccinated? How long will its immunity last? – and other questions that constitute their uncertainty.



Should they get vaccinated?

97% respondents admitted that they would like to get vaccinated

Given the mass hysteria around the infection and the urge to lead a normal life again, a resounding majority of 97% respondents admitted that they would like to get vaccinated. Of that majority, 74% were aged between 18 and 45, while only 9% were aged above 61.

So, which vaccine might they prefer?



The respondents' most preferred vaccine turned out to be the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, popularly known as Covishield, preferred by 38% respondents. It was followed by Pfizer-BioNTech's BNT162b2, preferred by 33% respondents, and Sinovac's CoronaVac, preferred by 19% of them. Then came Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, Moderna's mRNA-1273, and Johnson & Johnson's vaccine, preferred by 10%, 6%, and 3% of the respondents, respectively.

In recent memory, this was the first time that vaccines were debated upon at such a large scale. Along with global scientists and medical organizations, the pandemic sparked immense interest in the global population to learn more about viruses and vaccines.

Social media played a crucial role in their investigation. The pandemic drove a majority of the global population to study vaccines and their efficacy, and social media played a crucial role in their investigation.

In fact, the investigation was far from superficial. Respondents were not only aware of vaccine brands, but also their different types – Chinese or Russian? American or European? Messenger RNA (mRNA) or viral vector? Paid or free? Across all age groups and nationalities, more than 50% of respondents were aware of all the types of vaccines available in the market.

However, in the chaos and the infodemic that ensued, the line between what's true and what's not became increasingly blurred. Two questions were paramount – "Are vaccines safe?" and "Can we let go of masks and distancing norms once we have been vaccinated?"

Of all the respondents, 68% agreed that vaccines offer protection against COVID-19, while 30% were uncertain. Respondents who said "yes" didn't belong to one age group; 66% of them were in the age group 18–45, 77% were in the age group 46–60, and 73% were above 61. Moreover, the sentiment analysis could identify differences between age groups and regions.

The data raises the questions – Why the younger respondents were more uncertain than the older ones? Was it really the infodemic, their exposure to social media? Was there more misinformation than information? However, the answers should be clear once the dust settles.

Further, the question remains, "Once vaccinated, should masks and distancing norms be renounced?" It would be fair to expect the respondents to answer in affirmative, especially with the UK's "Freedom Day" making the rounds, when Prime Minister Boris Johnson on July 19, 2021 planned to lift almost all restrictions. **Will perceptions or evidence-based research that will drive the market, especially with 3rd wave knocking the door in the US, Australia and India?**

However, a majority of 74% respondents disagreed, while only 6% of them responded "yes", most of whom were aged between 18 and 45 years.

The age group, once again, was found clashing with the consensus. While we could attribute their ignorance to social media, deeper questions arise – What drives it? Is it distrust in government authorities, a yearning for freedom, escaping isolation, or simply denial? Or is it the lack of consolidated data? Perhaps, the lack of access to verified, trustworthy sources of data.

In fact, far from lifting restrictions, countries such as Thailand are bolstering them in the wake of infections from the Delta variant. Emerging evidence suggests that an additional third dose of Covishield, for instance, may be required to trigger an immune response that is strong enough to neutralize the new variant, which is found to be more contagious.

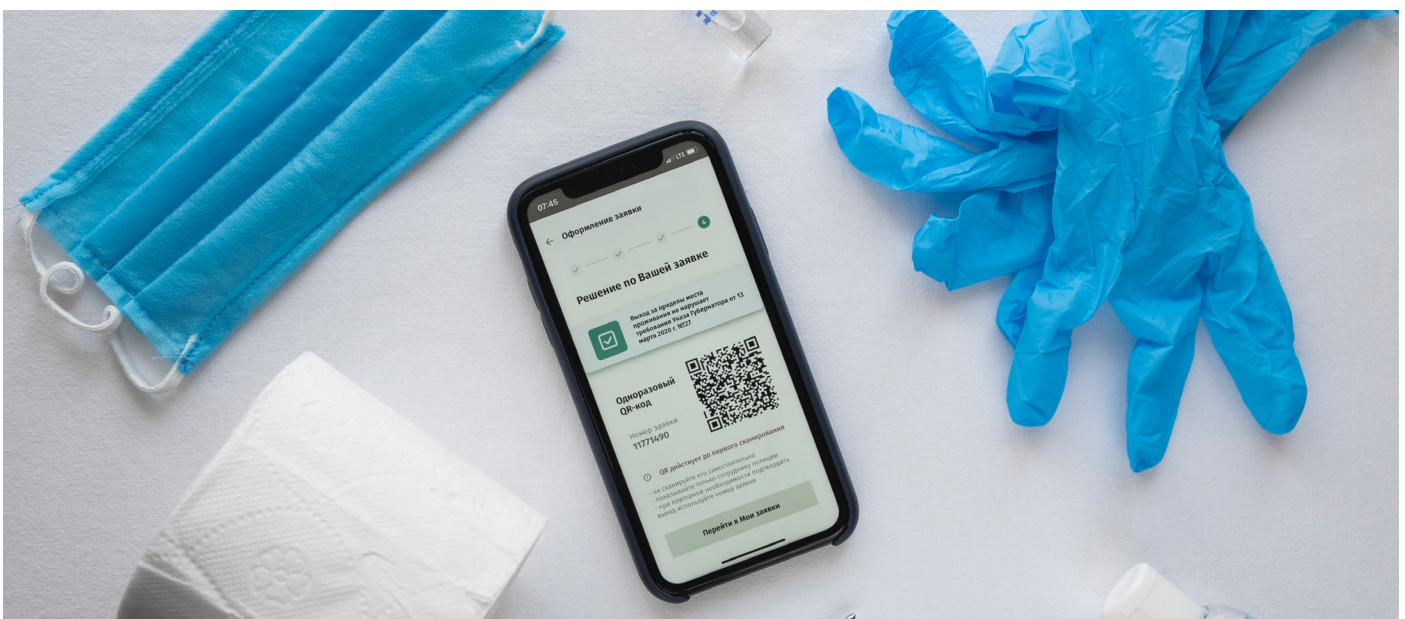
However, only 28% of respondents were aware of “boosters”, while 31% of them were aware, but uncertain.

Other than social media, however, the respondents’ decisions could also be informed by word-of-mouth, family and friends, news, and medical literature. Still, 77% of respondents said they would rather trust and consult their physician, unlike the 17% who relied on news and medical literature.

However, all said and done, what most influenced the respondents’ decision to get a vaccine? According to 98% of respondents, it was effectiveness, while according to the rest, it was price.

The message is clear – **Darwin’s theory is still indeed relevant today; survival matters, whatever the cost may be.**

Though the questions remain – Was the hysteria and fear caused by the pandemic alone? Or were the flames fanned by the infodemic that ensued? Do public sentiments impact the vaccine seller’s market share? Money or Life: What would you choose?



In an era of abundant data, where everyday voices and choices drive the vaccine market, SGA conducted a sentiment analysis to understand what drives them to choose one vaccine over another, and why. While each pharmaceutical company claimed that their product was the best of the lot, the torrent of data pushed the end user to a corner where the survival for life trumped the uncertainty for efficacy.

SG Analytics conducted online surveys (largely) and F2F interviews with a large group of participants to understand the pulse of the market. The analysis helped assess the moods and dispositions between voices and choices in the US, Europe, India, and the Middle East.

SG Analytics uses NLP, text analysis, and other analytics tools to conduct sentiment analysis for its healthcare clients. The analysis usually involves the collection and

comprehension of subjective information from public opinions and emotions, such as fear, confidence, apprehensions, toward a subject in key markets. The results are classified as positive, negative, or neutral, and in this case, we had segmented the insights based on geography, age group, and gender.

In the coming days, more than 17-18 different types of vaccines are expected to hit the market. Who will come out on top? Who will prescribe which vaccine and which market will favor which brand? Only a “sentiment analysis” could tell.

If your product or vaccine is expected to enter the market in 2021, connect with us for a detailed discussion of its prospects. Please write to us at marketing@sganalytics.com.

About the Authors



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Dr. Siddhartha Dutta has been working in the healthcare industry for the last 22 years. He has been involved with clinical trials, medical research, planning, and various roles in public and private healthcare domains.

He has extensively worked in South East Asia (including Japan), and key markets such as Europe and the US. As a medical microbiologist, he began his career in hospital reference laboratories in the US & India, and has been helping industry clients since 2007. He is a writer, blogger and strategist and has represented his industry on various platforms of international repute. His current areas of interest are AI in Healthcare, vaccines, femtech, info-products, patient data convergence and market access.

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