

Peer Review

Review of: "Erosion of Trust, Polarization, and Changing Public Perceptions of Vaccines"

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This is an interesting, thoughtful, and important article addressing the history and development of public distrust in vaccinations. The PDF I downloaded did not have an introduction and went right into describing the figures. I wasn't sure if that was an accidental omission. The abstract was well-written, but a brief introduction before the description of the figures may be warranted. Also, it wasn't clear to me whether the article's (commentary's) topic of discussion pertained only to the US or was also globally applicable, and perhaps that should be made clearer.

There were statements that I thought should have references attached unless the references at the end are considered sufficient. Such as:

"Parental behavior underscores this shift: 17% now report delaying or skipping some childhood vaccines, almost doubling since 2023."

Where did this data come from? Is it in one of the listed references at the end? Does it require a footnote?

For Figure 2 comments, is a reference required for "...endorsing the myth that COVID-19 vaccines caused more deaths than the virus itself surged from 25% to 40%"? Again, I am not sure if this is covered by the list of references at the end, and if it is, that's fine.

I have the same comment in Section 3 for the statement which begins "Trust in the CDC has fallen from 66% in June 2023 to 61% in 2025, while trust in the FDA...."

Sections 4 and 5 are very good. In Section 4, depending on the target audience, the term "herd immunity" may need to be more explicitly defined. The comment "relieving them of guilt for undermining herd immunity" is brilliant.

Section 6 is entitled “Case studies,” but only two, that I can tell, are specifically referred to, i.e., Samoa's 2019 measles outbreak and the Radiothor era, both of which may need a little more background/historical information.

Section 7 is very short, which is fine if that is the intent, but the title makes it seem that there might be more information.

The Conclusion is excellent and well-worded.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this valuable and much-needed commentary.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.