

Peer Review

Review of: "Evolution of Perceived Vulnerability to Infection in Japan During the COVID-19 Pandemic"

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Dear Authors,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the updated manuscript titled "*Evolution of Perceived Vulnerability to Infection in Japan During the COVID-19 Pandemic*." This study provides valuable insights into the longitudinal changes in perceived vulnerability to disease (PVD) in Japan, particularly in the context of a global health crisis. The updated version demonstrates improvements in clarity and contextualization; however, I believe there are still areas that could be refined to further enhance the manuscript's comprehensiveness. Below, I outline my suggestions for minor revisions.

Minor Revisions

COVID-19 Vaccination Trends

- While the manuscript mentions vaccination rollouts and their potential influence on PVD, it does not include specific vaccination rate trends across the study period. Incorporating detailed vaccination rate data (e.g., first, second, and booster dose uptake) would provide stronger support for the observed changes in PVD, particularly the decline in perceived infectability.

Absence of Data on Japan's Border Policies

- The manuscript does not discuss Japan's strict border control measures during the pandemic, which effectively isolated the country for extended periods. These policies likely influenced public perceptions of disease vulnerability and may have contributed to PVD trends. A brief discussion of this context would add depth to the analysis.

This manuscript offers a valuable perspective on the evolution of PVD in Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic. I look forward to reviewing the revised manuscript.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.