



## DUNEDIN STUDY CONCEPT PAPER FORM

**Provisional Paper Title:** Who Australasians trusted during the COVID-19 pandemic: Implications for future pandemics

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### **Objective of the study:**

Global research shows that trust is important for public compliance with protective measures during a pandemic (Algan et al., 2021; Bargain & Aminjonov, 2020; Devine et al., 2021), including the recent COVID-19 pandemic (Helliwell et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2022). For example, greater trust in government was associated with better adherence to COVID-19 guidelines (Devine et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2022), reduced COVID-19 death rates (Helliwell et al., 2021), and higher rates of vaccination (Jiang et al., 2022). Evidence suggests that trust in scientists is particularly important for compliance with public health measures and positive attitudes toward vaccination (Algan et al., 2021).

However, trust in unwarranted sources could be damaging to a pandemic response (Devine et al., 2021), making it important to understand public trust in different information sources. Institutional trust is related to greater compliance with pandemic protective measures globally and a decrease in COVID-19 deaths (Algan et al., 2021; Bargain & Aminjonov, 2020; Devine et al., 2021; Helliwell et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2022). Trust in the general public, however, is potentially detrimental to a pandemic response, associated with lower compliance (Algan et al., 2021) and an increase in COVID-19 deaths (Reiersen et al., 2022).

The relationship between trust and compliance with COVID-19 protective measures may depend on individual factors (Devine et al., 2021), such as sex, education, and socioeconomic status (Berentson-Shaw & Green, 2021).

Although existing research shows that individuals trust pandemic-related information from some sources more than others (Funk et al., 2019), more information is needed on which sources are most trusted in the Australasian context. The purpose of this study is to investigate which sources of COVID-19 information are most trusted by individuals living in Australasia, and to examine differences by sex, socioeconomic status (SES), and education.

### **Data analysis methods:**

We will be using descriptive statistics to compare what percentage of respondents trust COVID-19 advice from different sources of information, two sample proportion tests to test for statistically significant differences in trust between sources, and chi-square analyses to assess whether the proportion of respondents that trusted each source differed significantly across sex, education, or SES.

### **Variables needed at which ages:**

- Responses to question 3 of the Vaccine Intention Survey (trusted sources for information on COVID-19) – age 48-49
- Educational attainment by age 45
- SES (age 45)
- Sex (birth)

### **Significance of the Study (for theory, research methods or clinical practice):**

Trust during a pandemic is related to greater compliance with pandemic-related restriction policies, reduced deaths, and higher rates of vaccination (Algan et al., 2021; Bargain & Aminjonov, 2020; Devine et al., 2021; Helliwell et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2022). It is therefore important to understand which sources are trusted and by whom (Algan et al., 2021; Reiersen et al., 2022; Berentson-Shaw & Green, 2021; Devine et al., 2021). However, more information is needed on which sources are most trusted in the Australasian context. This study will investigate which sources of COVID-19 information are most trusted by individuals living in Australia and New Zealand, and examine differences by sex, SES, and education. Our conclusions will discuss the implications for the New Zealand COVID-19 response and future pandemic responses.

## **References**

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