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Hesitancy towards the use of new Covid-19 vaccines and drug treatments developed for children: Are immigrants different?

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Abstract

Despite widespread interest in Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy found in previous research, few studies have examined how immigrants have responded to the new drugs developed to combat the spread of the virus. Consequently, this study examines the relationship between immigrants' exposure to the United States and hesitancy towards the new Covid-19 vaccines and drug treatments developed for children. Using data from the 2022 Covid-19 in American Communities -2 survey, the analysis shows that, while vaccine hesitancy is less of a problem for immigrants than for U.S. natives, hesitancy towards the new drug treatments between both groups is not statistically different. Moreover, it finds contrasting relationships between immigrant level of exposure and the two outcomes of interest. On one hand, immigrants' willingness to have their children vaccinated for Covid-19 declines with increased time in the U.S. increased. On the other hand, after accounting for other factors, no declines in hesitancy about the use of the new Covid-19 drug treatments for infected children are observed with increasing time in the U.S. The analysis further shows that the relationship between exposure and both measures of hesitancy is partially shaped by mistrust. Thus, it suggests that mistrust of the Covid-19 vaccines has negative spillover effects on the possible use of the new drugs used for treating the virus among children. These findings have implications for efforts to prevent children from being infected with Covid-19 (i.e., by using vaccines) and treating those infected with the disease (i.e., by using the new drug treatments).

Biography

Kevin Thomas is a Professor of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. He obtained his Ph.D. in Demography at the University of Pennsylvania and has a Masters degree from the same institution. After completing his doctoral work, he served as a post-doctoral fellow at both the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies and the Harvard Initiative for Global Health. Dr. Thomas was also a faculty member at the Pennsylvania State University. His research focuses on international migration, global health, racial and ethnic inequality, children and families, as well as development and social change.

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