

Objective

Pregnancy predisposes women and their offspring to adverse health outcomes while reported rates of vaccination uptake remain low internationally. Our study objective was to quantify the uptake of COVID-19 vaccination in pregnant women, and to assess their attitudes and motives for and against vaccination in pregnancy.

Design

This was a short voluntary survey of pregnant women attending for antenatal care at the Royal Women's Hospital (RWH), Melbourne, Australia's largest quaternary level maternity centre.

Method

Pregnant women were invited to complete an anonymous, online survey with 17 questions exploring their attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy.

Results

At the time of the survey Melbourne had just come out of the world's "longest and strictest lockdown". Victoria recorded a 90% double-vaccination rate in the general adult population with rising rates (up to 1,600) of new SARS-CoV-2 infections recorded each day. While vaccination of pregnant women was not endorsed in the first half of the year, a strong public health campaign started in June 2021 with various official bodies (Department of Health, RANZCOG, ATAGI) recommending vaccination in pregnancy. This is reflected in the vaccination uptake of pregnant women attending RWH which increased from 1.3% in July to 85% in December 2021.

Out of 351 respondents:

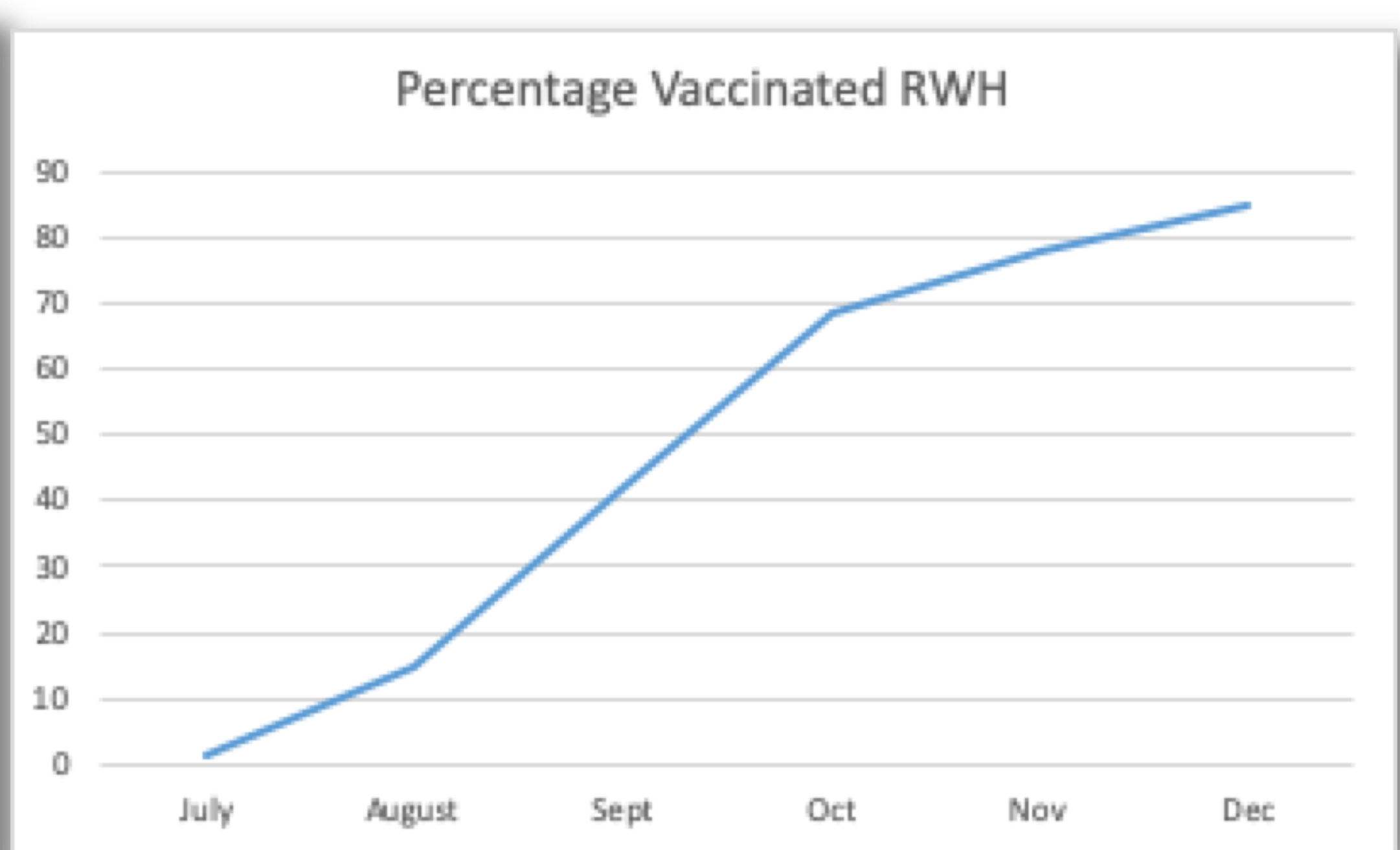
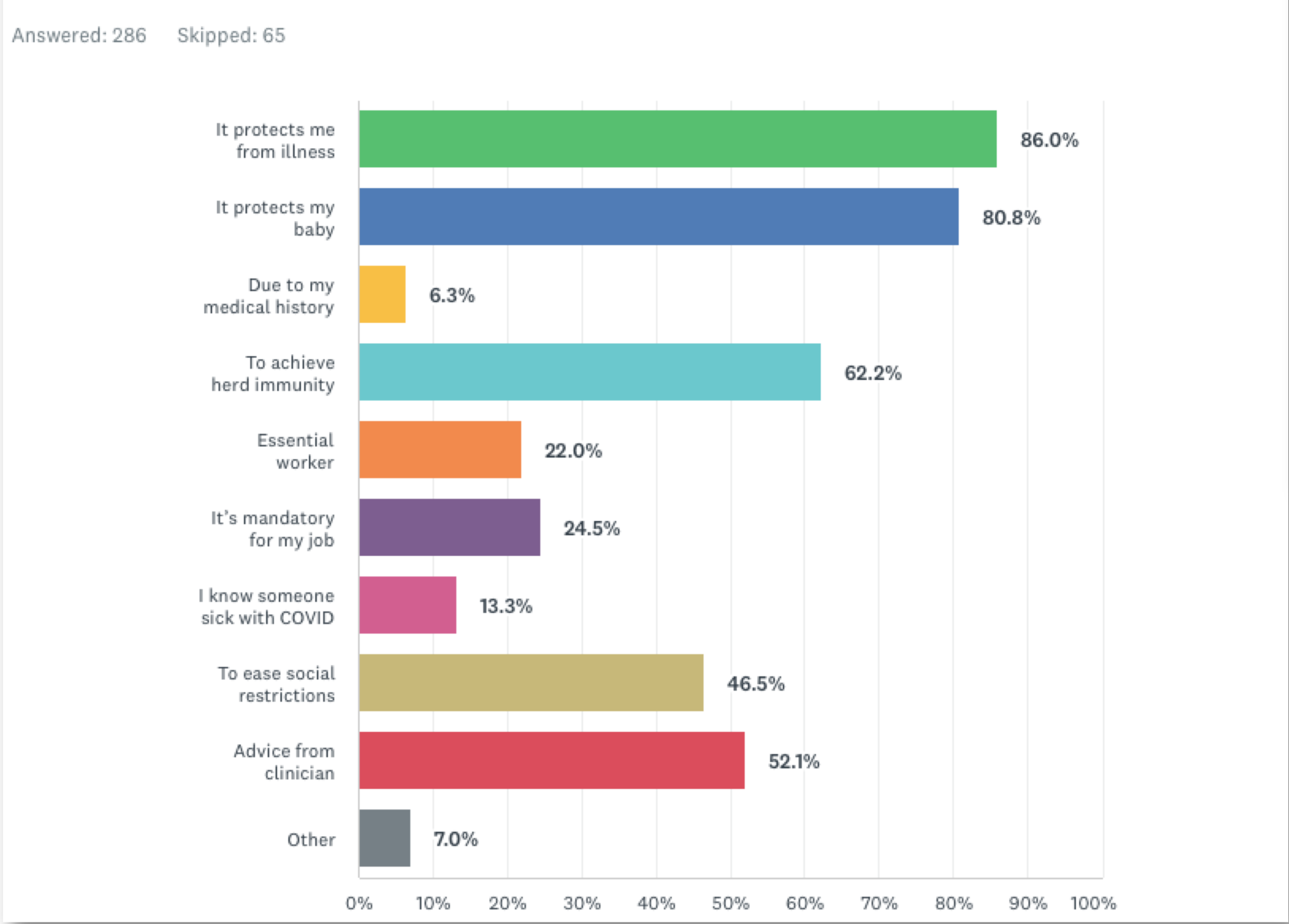
- 82% - Vaccinated
- 84%- Became vaccinated during pregnancy
- 81-86% acknowledged benefit of vaccine in pregnancy
- 85% of those unvaccinated reported concerns re. safety in pregnancy
- 50% of those unvaccinated did not want to "jeopardize their pregnancy"

Participants had an opportunity to give feedback/ leave comments

"As soon as the advice changed that pregnant women should be vaccinated, I booked in... I feel safer knowing I'm fully vaccinated when attending the hospital and out in the community."

"The stats on unvaccinated pregnant women getting COVID-19 are pretty scary. It took quite a while for the media to report this. At first I was thinking of waiting until the end of the first trimester to get the vaccine but I'm glad I didn't wait."

If you have had the Covid vaccination, why? (multiple answers possible)



↑ **Figure 1.**
Percentage of patients who delivered at RWH and had at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine from July – Dec 2021.

← **Figure 2.**
Percentage of participants who identified reasons for getting the COVID-19 vaccination

Conclusions

Our survey demonstrated that a strong public health campaign with a clear, consistent message regarding the beneficial effects of COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy dramatically increased vaccination uptake rates in pregnancy.