

VAX-ACTION

Tackling Effectively Vaccine Hesitancy in Europe

NEWSLETTER

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TOP NEWS

Vax-Action Events

Publication: Filling the gap to address vaccine hesitancy, PHR

Webinar Universidade do Minho

Consortium regular meeting

Evaluators training week

Beginning of Vax-Action interventions in the targeted regions

Filling the Gap to Address Vaccine Hesitancy in Europe

In January 2025, the Public Health Reviews journal published a commentary by the VAX-ACTION Consortium titled "Filling the Gap to Address Vaccine Hesitancy in Europe." The article outlines strategic gaps, ethical dimensions, and the need for evidence-based interventions. It also introduces VAX-ACTION as a collaborative EU initiative targeting vaccine hesitancy through research, training, and community interventions.



Public Health Reviews
COMMENTARY
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Filling the Gap to Address Vaccine Hesitancy in Europe

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INTRODUCTION

Vaccine hesitancy (VH) is a state of indecision regarding vaccination, marked by doubts despite vaccine availability [1].

Its relationship with vaccine uptake has been widely debated, though the cause-effect relationship remains unclear. Nevertheless, VH likely threatens the control of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles and hepatitis B, imposing unnecessary burdens on health systems.

Inappropriate access to information, inadequate vaccine offers, and administration have been identified as primary contributors to reluctance and doubts surrounding vaccine uptake. However, social and individual factors related to knowledge and attitudes further prolong this psychological state of indecision, leading to delayed vaccinations and even refusal. Despite extensive efforts to promote vaccination across European countries, VH persists, affecting vaccine uptake across various demographic groups and settings. Hesitancy varies by country, type of vaccine (whether recently approved or longstanding), and target populations, including children, vulnerable groups, or the general population.

Assessing the frequency, determinants, and impact of vaccine hesitancy presents a significant global and regional challenge [2]. Variations in definitions, data gaps regarding vaccine acceptance, and population coverage hinder precise evaluation. These discrepancies make it more difficult to develop targeted interventions and allocate resources to promote vaccination in a targeted manner and thus effectively improve vaccine acceptance on a large scale.

External Evaluators' Training Week – Lisbon, 24–28 March 2025

We are pleased to announce the launch of the VAX-ACTION Evaluators' Training Week, hosted by IHMT NOVA in Lisbon. The training gathered participants from all consortium regions to prepare for the upcoming implementation phase of the project.

As VAX-ACTION interventions are set to begin across five European countries, evaluators will play a key role in monitoring and assessing their impact, helping to generate robust evidence and support knowledge dissemination.

The programme featured contributions from Paulo Ferrinho, Daniela Alba Nickel, Tiago Correia, Anabela Pereira (GHTM), and was led by trainers Rita Morais and Isabel Craveiro.

Participating institutions included: EHESP, Institut Pasteur, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, INMSS, IPVZ, ISPUP, and ASPHER.

Sessions focused on evaluation methods, intervention design, and collaborative planning across target regions—laying the groundwork for the next phase of VAX-ACTION.

Spreading the Word Webinar at University of Minho – 5 March 2025

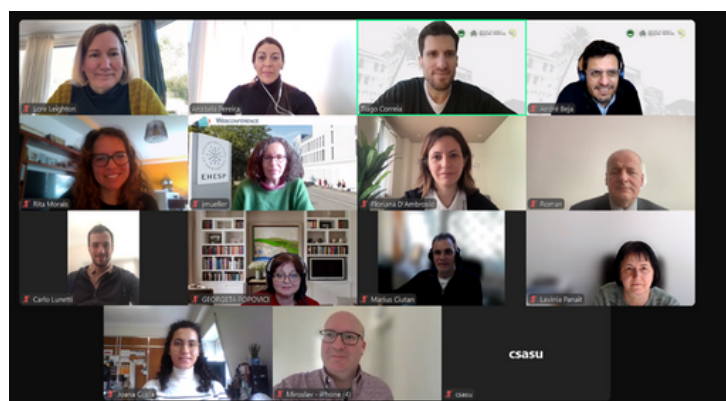


Anabela Pereira presented the VAX-ACTION project during the course 'Community Intervention and Infodemic Management', organized by the Portuguese Ministry of Health and the University of Minho. The session, held on March 5th, 2025, was part of the EU4Health-funded initiatives and focused on methodological questions, strategic approaches, and good practices to combat vaccine hesitancy, as highlighted by evidence emerging from the project.



Vax-Action Partners Meeting

The VAX-ACTION consortium met online on 18 March for a regular coordination meeting, chaired by Project Coordinator Tiago Correia (UNL). The session gathered representatives from all partner institutions and focused on preparing the intervention phase.



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Key topics included:

- WP6: Updates on the project website and LinkedIn page by Carlo Lunetti (UniSR/ASPHER), with plans to enhance stakeholder engagement across countries.

- WP2: Carlo Lunetti also presented the status of the review publication, with discussions on suitable journals for submission.
- WP3: Isabel Craveiro and Rita Morais (UNL) introduced the Evaluators' Training Week and the finalized D3.2 manual.
- WP4 & WP5: Each region reported on their implementation plans and ethical approval processes, sharing timelines and local adaptations.

The meeting concluded with planning for upcoming deliverables and the decision to hold the next consortium meeting online on 3 June 2025.

About Vax-Action

The main objective of Vax-Action is to support EU Member States and relevant stakeholders to implement a combination of tailored, evidence-based interventions aimed to reduce vaccine hesitancy. The combination will be based on evaluation of effectiveness of interventions that build on the existing evidence with interventions to be conducted in selected target regions in five EU member states (Portugal, Italy, France, Romania, and Czechia).



Vax-Action interventions and recommendations are designed to build on sound theory, existing evidence, and best practice in application of evaluation using a co-design model to engage Frontline Healthcare Workers (FHWs), specific vulnerable population groups (e.g., newly arrived migrants, hesitant parents, people of low socio-economic status) to tailor interventions to their requirements and the specific issues raised by recently approved vaccines for emergent diseases/infections/virus such as Covid-19 and mpox, mass vaccination and loss of trust in long-standing vaccines included in national vaccination programmes.

Learn more about Vax-Action at <https://vax-action.eu>.

