

Anti-vaxxers get retweeted more

Negative messages about coronavirus vaccines are retweeted six times more than positive ones.

PhD candidate Jasmina Ruger of Business Management & Organization discovered this in a study last month of over 50,000 tweets and retweets about the coronavirus vaccines. 'Anti-vax messages are retweeted much more often,' says Ruger. 'There is a small group that is very active on Twitter. They reach just as many people as the large group sending pro-vaccination messages. Their messages spread like wildfire, even to people who aren't necessarily against vaccination but might still be influenced by the tweets.'

Emotion

Ruger found differences in the sentiment and communication style of the two groups. 'Pro-vaxxers mainly use facts and scientific information. Anti-vaxxers focus more on emotion.' She says this is important in communication. 'You can't respond with facts if someone tells you their child has

become severely ill after a vaccination.'

A small proportion of the Dutch population doesn't want to be vaccinated. Ruger: 'I don't think

'Anti-vaxxers focus more on emotion'

you can persuade that group. But there is also a large grey area of people with doubts. Each group has their own concerns so the message will need to be tailored to those worries. Once we've finished the complete analysis, we hope to have a better understanding of how best to reach the various groups.' TL

