

Timeline

2020

Study Type

Randomized Evaluation

Research Implemented by IPA

Yes

The Impact of a Quiz-Style Information Campaign on COVID-19 Prevention in Ghana

Researchers

Susan Athey; Angela Duckworth; Dean Karlan; Erika Kirgios; Michael Luca; Katherine Milkman; Molly Offer Westort; Christopher Udry

Abstract

As of January 2021, COVID-19 has infected approximately 85.2 million people and killed more than 1.84 million people worldwide. Given the importance of individual behavior change in containing the spread of a pandemic, individuals must learn, trust, and apply various recommended health behaviors. In Ghana, researchers are measuring the impact of a quiz-style information strategy on people's learning and adherence to COVID-19 health protocols. This study is part of a three-country research program aiming to find evidence on the best strategies to communicate health measures.

Researchers are testing the impact of a quiz-style information strategy on people's learning and adherence to COVID-19 health protocols. The study consists of 20,000 adults who will be randomly assigned to receive quiz-style text messages or a text message with direct statements. Both groups will receive the same information related to: COVID-19 contagion and symptoms; avoiding unnecessary outings and crowded places; use of protective equipment; at-risk populations; and myths about COVID-19 and how to treat it. Those in the direct statements group will receive a text message with a simple fact, such as: "Some people with COVID-19 don't show any symptoms, but they can still spread the virus." Those in the quiz-style group will receive a question-based text message like: "Does everyone with COVID-19 have symptoms?" Upon responding to this message, they will receive the text: "Some people with COVID-19 don't show any symptoms, but they can still spread the virus." Text message exchanges will occur twice per week for four weeks.

Researchers will test whether the quiz strategy is more effective based on the hypothesis

that the questions stimulate curiosity and therefore attention. The quiz style and stimulated curiosity could raise the likelihood that the recipient will remember the information and then act on it. Researchers will measure participants' knowledge, adherence to health measures, and desire for additional COVID-19 information on a weekly basis. This intervention is being tested in the United States as well, to examine the effectiveness of the information strategy across different economic, political, and cultural contexts. Because the strategies rely on text messages, they have the potential to support a scalable, cost-effective information dissemination strategy.

Project Outcomes of Interest

Adherence to COVID-19 health protection behaviors

Impact Goals

- Reduce COVID-19 transmission rates

Project Data Collection Mode

- SMS

Results Status

No Results Yet