



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

# LESSONS FROM COVID19 VACCINE INTRODUCTION THE CURRENT STATE OF BEHAVIORAL & SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF VACCINATION

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# VACCINE HESITANCY

- “When its harmful, better be on the safe side”
- “Any doctor is perceived as an expert by the public”
- “The HPV experience”
- “MMR and autism”
- “Dengvaxia circus”
- Tetanus toxoid and Manila



# BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

- Mostly influenced by the face of the infection
- Proof that the virus/ infectious disease is deadly
- Actors and actresses and powerful people being the face of vaccination
- Has to be a requirement for social activities rather than an issue of protecting themselves, their families and the community

# DENGUE VACCINATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

- Philippines is ground zero for dengue but many people do not know
- Dengue became a Philippine export
- Dengue has no cure, deadly and congests hospitals
- Dengue vaccination was initially seen as a life saving measure of the government
- In continuity of the government's target "vaccines available for the rich should be made available for the poor"

# THE COVID EXPERIENCE

- Low immunization coverage
- Vaccine from China
- Conspiracy theory
- Face of the infection
- Strong social media presence of non-experts
- Bad science versus good science
- Challenge of COVID vaccination in a government that tolerated fake news and government investigations and cases being filed by the Public Attorney's Office

# COVID-19 IN THE PHILIPPINES

- In a population of more than 110 million, the latest data from the DOH reveals that a total of **177 million COVID-19 doses have been administered in the Philippines.**
  - 75 million individuals who have received their first dose
  - 78 million with complete doses
  - 23 million who have received booster shots.
- Based on the health department's latest inventory, there were about **44 million covid 19 vaccine doses that had been wasted**
- **Fear of the unknown and fear of litigation**

# COVID-19 IN THE PHILIPPINES

- A significant factor contributing to low vaccine uptake is **delayed decision-making**. In the Philippines, the Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC) offers recommendations on vaccine and medicine use for specific populations. However, its rigidity, especially during the pandemic, has raised concerns. The council's tendency to await clinical trials, despite ample real-world data has caused delays. To effectively address evolving situations, HTAC must exhibit greater adaptability and responsiveness.
- The observed vaccine hesitancy for COVID-19 vaccines is attributed to factors such as the **novelty of the virus, mixed messages** about disease severity, **concerns about rapid vaccine development, perceived politicization, reduced vaccine confidence** due to distrust in traditional health sources, and the rapid spread of **misinformation and disinformation** online.

# COVID-19 IN THE PHILIPPINES

- The DELTA variant and deaths among the unvaccinated caused scare among the unvaxxed
- The issue of 20% symptomatics among those infected has been lost in translation
- Aggressive testing led to many asymptomatic testifying that even without the vaccine, they were not harmed by the virus
- IVERMECTIN stole the show
- Breakthrough infections stirred confusion



# HOW TO COMBAT AND DEVELOP RESILIENCE:

- Experts should speak up.
- Governments and media should have regular vaccine literacy programs
- Questions and fears should be answered. Regular presence needed.
- Re awaken the faces of vaccine hesitancy
- Put a face to infectious diseases
- Vaccination should be a government's obligation

# HOW TO COMBAT HESITANCY:

- **In combating infectious diseases, vaccination is always effective when you see the face of the infection. You take advantage when many people want to get it. If you miss that window, the enthusiasm of the people to get vaccinated fades away.**
- **We can't separate prior issues. Continuous stories of how anti vaxxers ruined public health programs and economy should be continuously told.**