



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION OF THE POPULATION  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

State Institution “Republican Center for Immunoprophylaxis”

# “Solving the challenge of COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in Tajikistan”

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- “RCI” - the only institution of the MOHSP that ensures implementation of the state policy in the field of immunoprophylaxis in the country.

## About the State Institution “Republican Center for Immunoprophylaxis” (“RCI”)

- “RCI” - a significant component of the healthcare system established in **1996** to meet the needs of population in immunization.
- The structure of the “RCI” consists of **6** affiliates (in GBAO, Sughd Province, Bokhtar zone, Kulyab zone, Rasht zone, and in Dushanbe) and **65** immunization centers in the cities and regions of the republic.

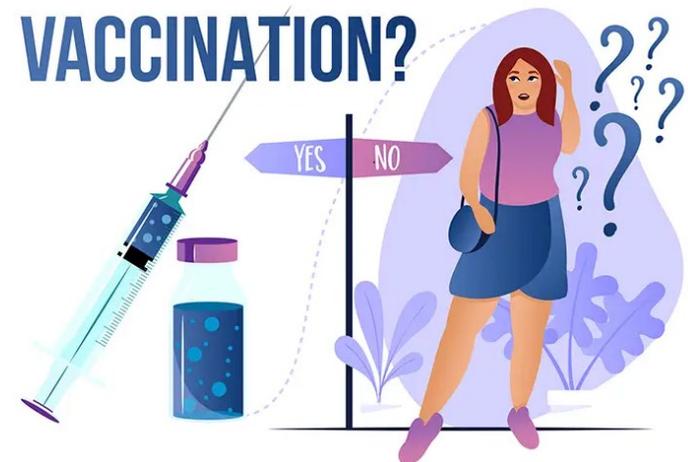
# Main factors influencing COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy



**1** – The outbreak of new infection and development of **COVID-19** vaccines in the shortest possible time generated mistrust among some segments of the population on the quality of **COVID-19** vaccines as well as fear of post-vaccination complications.

**2** – Religious beliefs has contributed to the lack of public trust in the **COVID-19** vaccines.

**3** - The wide access of the population to various social networks has also contributed to the belief that vaccines against **COVID-19** have a detrimental effect on the reproductive system of women (might be a cause infertility), and can also cause a fatal reaction.



# Social Behaviour Change Communication Strategies

**1** – Production of informational and educational materials (booklets, banners, brochures, videos) on the importance of immunization against **COVID-19** and making them widely available to the public in accessible languages.

**2** – Organization of open discussions with the representatives of Jamoats, religious leaders and public figures to settle doubts about the safety of **COVID-19** vaccines through provision of scientific evidence-based information about the effectiveness of vaccines. **The Center for Religious Studies issued a “fatwa” to accept the use of vaccines against COVID-19 available in the country among Muslims.**

**3** – Delivery of the keynote addresses by distinguished professors and doctors on national television and social media about the quality and safety of **COVID-19** vaccines, and on the importance of timely vaccination against this infection to prevent severe cases and fatal consequences.



# Success story to counteract COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy

- In most circumstances, the **quality and safety** of new vaccines developed in the shortest possible time provoked suspicion and mistrust among the population.
- To dispel their doubts and call for active participation in **COVID-19** vaccination, the following activities were carried out:
  1. Immunization was organized among senior officials of the MOHSP, including the Minister of Health, Deputy ministers, members of Government and other state agencies.
  2. Immunization was also arranged for the Heads of the WHO and UNICEF Representative Offices in Tajikistan.

This demonstration event was broadcast by all national television channels. As a result, people began actively and without fear to be engaged in immunization activities.



# Assistance required to support in country Social Behaviour Change Communication activities



**1** – Development and delivery of educational modules / training courses for medical professionals on the following topics (offline and online / using classical to modern teaching methods):

- Side effects of **COVID-19** vaccination (**common, rare, long-term**).
- Vaccination against **COVID-19 and Children**.
- Vaccination against **COVID-19 and Pregnancy**.
- Vaccination against **COVID-19 and Geriatrics**.
- Vaccination against **COVID-19 and People with chronic and autoimmune diseases**.

**2** – Making Videos:

- Safety of **COVID-19** vaccines and their role in reducing the consequences of post-COVID conditions and mortality.
- **Answers to Frequently Asked Questions** about the Safety of **COVID-19** Vaccines by internationally recognized professors and doctors.



*Thank you for kind  
attention!*