

Final Project Part 2

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(Note, this is late, and I used up two 24-hour late extensions already!)

1 Abstract

Is there a significant relationship between the age of a person, and their COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy? When we look at the pressing world today, it is perhaps essential to understand what are the underlying causes for why people are unwilling to get vaccines, if it were our objective to improve vaccine turnouts. In this paper, I explore more deeply one of these potential variables: age. Is it the case that younger people are less likely to be hesitant or more hesitant to COVID-19 vaccines? Or, do we see that there is no significant evidence imply such a relationship. Understanding this may allow us to understand more about why people hesitate to, and thus perhaps also give insight into what demographics social programs can focus on if they were to try to improve vaccine acceptance, if it is the case that there is a relationship.

2 Description

The data I chose comes from OpenICPSR, a repository for covid-related data. A formal citation is included at the end of this document. The data comes from a COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Survey study that was conducted and updated from March 2020 to June 2021. Notice that this survey study includes times before and after vaccine roll outs, as its original intention is to assess change in attitude towards issues related to COVID-19, but we will readopt this data for our purposes of examining the relationship between age and hesitancy. One thing to note is that this data used Internet-based samples, since it was an opt-in internet based sampling; the authors admit limitations, stating—on quote—“This survey used Internet-based samples, which allowed us to rapidly collect information and to avoid person-to-person contact. However, internet samples may have inherent biases. There is sampling bias in that individuals who participate need to have access to the internet, so individuals of lower socioeconomic status will be less likely to participate”. This is a limitation in the data collection that we should take into account in our analysis later. This study was also surveyed in many different countries, including the United States, mainland China, Taiwan, Indonesia, India, and Malaysia. These data were collected in waves (mainly, 4 for Taiwan, Indonesia, India, and Malaysia, but 5 for China and 9 for the United States). This data was collected by researchers in the schools of medicine, routinely collected in waves, and funded by funded by organizations such as, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Science Foundation, and Division of Social and Economic Sciences. Furthermore, the ethical protocol for the conducting of this research project was approved by committees including University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, the Fudan University School of Public Health ethical review committee, the National Taiwan University Hospital Research Ethics Committee, the Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Institutional Review Board at Universitas Syiah Kuala/Dr. Zaionel Abidin Hospita, Indonesia, and the Sigma-IRB in New Delhi, India. Overall, we can trust that our data was reliably collected, and thus perform analysis on said data.

One thing to note is that our data includes many waves for six countries. To make analyzing data more manageable, I have chosen a subset of this data. Namely, there are four subsets we are concerned with: 1.

the China sample before the vaccine rollout, on the first wave, which was collected on March 2020. 2. the China sample after the vaccine rollout, on the last wave to date, which was collected on June 2021. 3. the US sample before the vaccine rollout, on the first wave, which was collected on March 2020. 4. the US sample after the vaccine rollout, on the last wave to date, which was collected on June 2021.

The surveyed data is rather dense with descriptions and information, and not all will be used for our intended purposes, but here are what some of the observations in our data is, and what they mean. Note, each of these observations describe a person's survey response:

1. **ctry**: the country the sample was taken from (*for our purposes, we will be looking at China (CN) and United States (US)*)
2. **waveno**: the wave number representing which wave the data was collected from (*for our purposes, we will be looking at the first and last waves*)
3. **d_age_yr**: the self-reported age of the participant (how many years old), which will be the main focus of our research.
4. **d_age_cat**: the self-reported age of the participant, but in categories, rather than a specific number
5. **v_profile** : this is a statistic that is geared towards pre-vaccine rollout. This survey data is based on the following question (I will copy and paste from the code book). Note that, people were surveyed with two varying variables, the effectiveness, and how safe they are, which are the next two variables in this list:
 - A vaccine is currently not available for the new coronavirus strain (called SARS-CoV-2 and which causes COVID-19). Imagine that a new coronavirus vaccine has just been developed. It has received the same testing as the adult influenza vaccine. The government is offering it as a free and optional vaccine.
 - Would you accept a coronavirus vaccine which is 95% effective, with a 5% (or 20%) chance of a side effect like fever?
 - 95% effective means that there is a 95% (or 50%) reduction in disease among those vaccinated compared to those unvaccinated.
6. **v_eff** : either 50% effectiveness or 95% effectiveness
6. **v_saf** : either 5% change of side effect, or 20% change of side effect
7. **v** : this is a statistic that is based on the previous question (the past 3 stats), in which answer yes if they would take the vaccine.
8. **v1_plan** : this is geared towards post-vaccine rollout. This asks, about the participant's vaccination intent by asking how much they would agree/disagree with the following statement: "i plan on getting the COVID-19 vaccine"
9. **vaxed** : whether a participant has gotten the vaccine or not.
10. **vax_hes** : this is a dummy categorical variable (0 or 1), and is based on a set of 10 items from Akl (included in the bibliography section below), to determine whether a person is in general more hesitant than not in getting the vaccine.
11. **lr2_1** : the participant's perceived risk of death: what do they think their risk of dying from covid is on a scale from 1-10?
12. **lr7** : the participant's confidence in scientists in how much they know about coronavirus.
13. **ld_politics**: the political affiliation of the participant. is it the case that younger people are more likely to be a part of one affiliation than another? this is a possible confounding variable we may want to take into consideration.

These are only a few out of the 58 different variables collected in this data set. However, I have filtered out, and presented the data that I think might potentially be useful in our analysis of how age might contribute to vaccination hesitancy. One thing to notice is that in numbers 12 to 14, there are exclamation points in the front of the variables. This is to indicate that I believe these are potential confounders, which is why I did not exclude them from our list of relevant data points. For example, young people are probably in less risk to die, is the fact that they feel less at risk to die a contributor to them also being less or more hesitant to vaccines? Or, older people might be more likely to be skeptical about scientists (or less likely), is this possibly a confounder for why they are more or less hesitant towards vaccines? Finally, young people are

more likely to be in a particular political affiliation than another, is this a possible reason for more or less hesitancy towards vaccines because they are part of that political affiliation, and not actually because they are young? These are questions I want to consider moving forward.

Looking at this data, we also should consider what population this data is actually representing. According to the researchers, the required sample size is around 800 for most country at each wave, and we see that each of our data sets, per wave, reach that threshold. The one exception is the US March 2020 wave, which only has 691 observations. The other dataset waves, have 971, 1070, and 954 samples, in the order of China June 2021, China March 2020, and US June 2021 in that order. One thing we might have to note is that these samples are slightly more geared towards the young adult population, and does not include as many elderly as we would like, or younger teens and kids, but other than that, we would expect that this sample is a solid representation of the actual population we want to make conclusions or do social science inquiry on (which is, the Chinese and US population).

Let us look at how the data is formatted, and how we can make sense of it:

The data is split into 30 different .sasb7dat files, 4 waves for each of the countries India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Taiwan, 5 waves for China, and 9 waves for US. To reduce the complexity of all the data we have to analyze, and I broke it down into four of these files that I think would give us the most insight, while also limiting the number of confounders we would have to take into consideration. The four are the four I mentioned before, but to reiterate, they are China 2020 March, US 2020 March, China 2021 June, and US 2021 June. The reason for choosing two different countries is to be able to compare the data we found in each to see if there is anything to suggest that the patterns we see in our data are abstractable to the world in general. The reason for choosing one before vaccine rollout, and one after vaccine rollout is to see how people are hesitant in hindsight of the vaccine, but also in pre-sight. With that being said, I selected the 14 data (columns) I mentioned previously and filtered out the other 44 variables (columns).

Let us dig more into what our data actually looks like:

Our data is a mixture of characters, describing things in categories (for this reason, even though these columns are “characters”, I would consider this categorical in nature), ordinal numeric representing range of categories (for instance, in R7 (confidence in scientists), 1 represents not confident, 2 represents somewhat confident, and 3 represents very confident), or numeric ranges scales such as R2_1 (perceived risk of death), where participants rate on a scale from 0 to 100. Overall, our data is ranging in data types and data representations, some categorical, some ordinal, some qualitative, etc. One thing to also note is that depending on whether we are working with before or after vaccine rollout, there are missing variables (like v_eff, v_saf, and v_profile, which were questions asked before there was a vaccine). Or, depending on the countries, different questions are asked, so the question on political affiliation is not found in the China data, and the question on perceived risk of death is not found in the US data. These are things we will need to account for later on.

To detail more into what the data looks like, I have included below the what the some of the presentable stats from the summary statistic looks like for China 2021 June:

1. **ctry**: CN (meaning china)
2. **waveno**: 9 (meaning the 9th wave, or the most recent one)
3. **d_age_yr**: mean: 44.63, minimum: 18, maximum: 78 (meaning that the average age of the surveyor is 44)
4. **v1_plan** : mean: 2.124 (1 being strongly agreeing with getting the covid vaccine, and 5 being strongly disagreeing)
5. **vaxed** : mean: 0.892 (meaning 89% have gotten covid vaccine)
6. **vax_hes** : mean: 0.229 (meaning 22.9 percent are hesitant)
7. **r2_1** : mean: 34.67 (meaning on a scale of 100, the average person feels like their risk of death is 34%)
8. **r7** : mean: 2.688 (1 being not confident, 3 being very confident in scientists’ knowledge in covid)

3 Visualization

The two variables I will be analyzing will be:

1. d_age_yr (the self-reported age of the participant in the survey)
2. vax_hes (the hesitancy of the participant in getting a vaccine)

I will be including the statistic for all four of the groups (namely, China 2021 June, China 2020 March, US 2021 June, US 2020 March):

Here are the means and standard errors of the means for the two variables in question for the four data sets, and they are self-explanatory

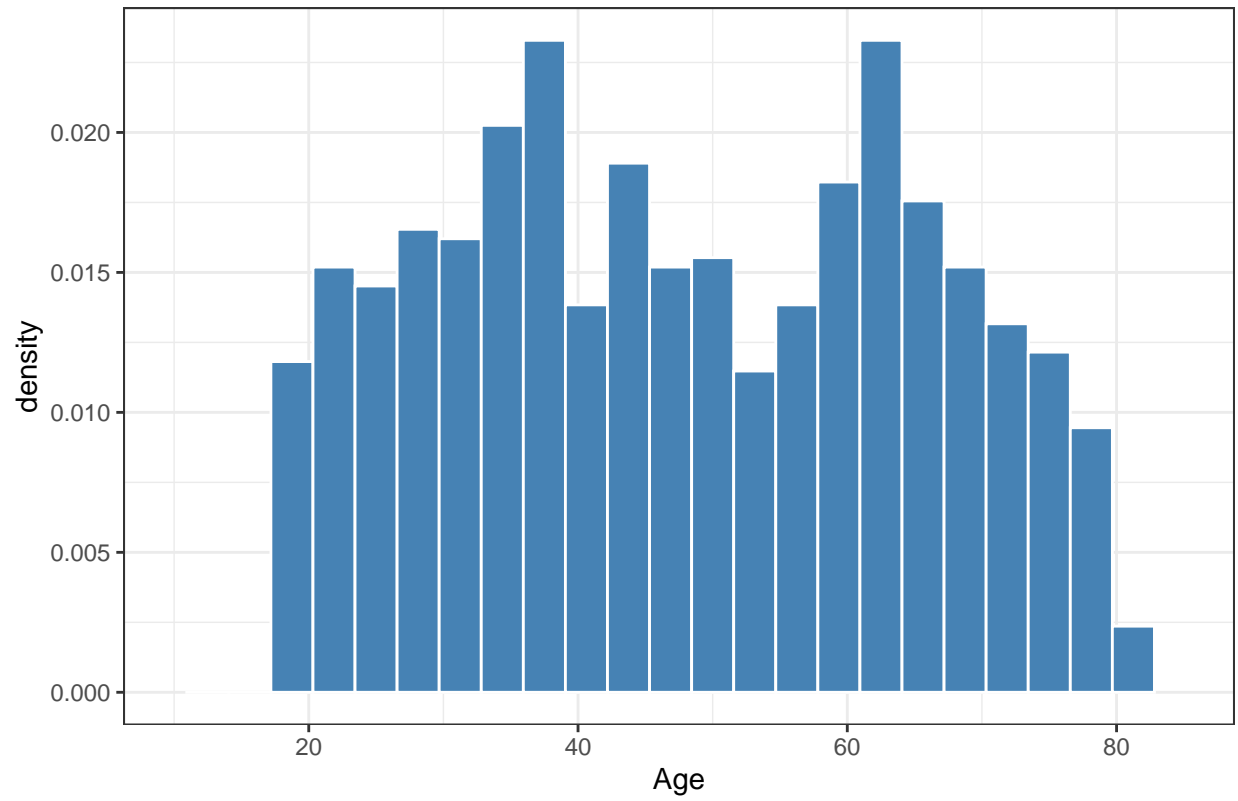
Before Vaccine Rollout		
March 2020		
	Mean	Standard Error
China Age	41.4672897	0.45123855
China Vax Hes	0.2293307	0.01319569
US Age	47.4413893	0.63055310
US Vax Hes	0.3303835	0.01807706

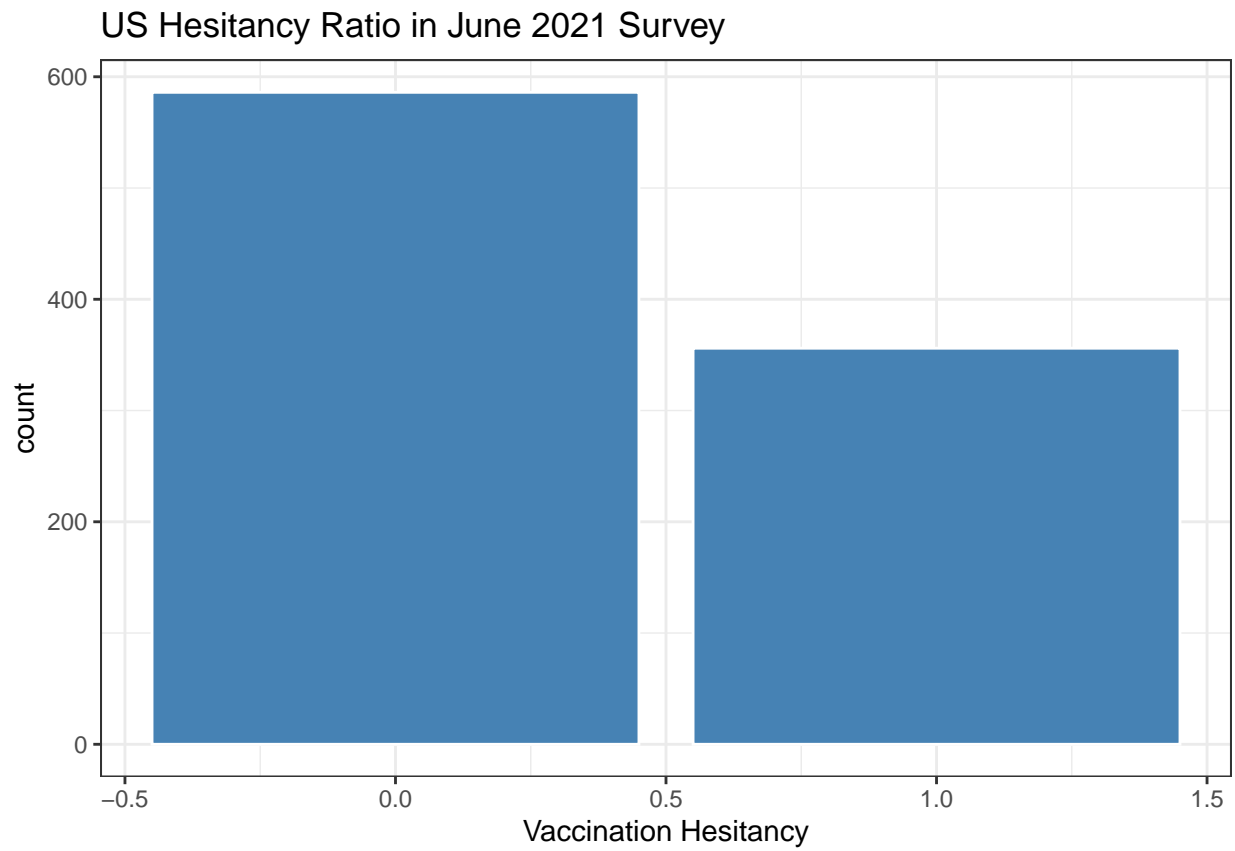
After Vaccine Rollout		
June 2021		
	Mean	Standard Error
China Age	44.6292482	0.48803464
China Vax Hes	0.2296601	0.01350511
US Age	48.4297694	0.57442020
US Vax Hes	0.3779193	0.01580622

Temporarily, I will only be doing the visualization for one of these datasets (namely, the US 2021 June dataset), but will consider doing visualization for all of them in the future if I find it to be useful to do so.

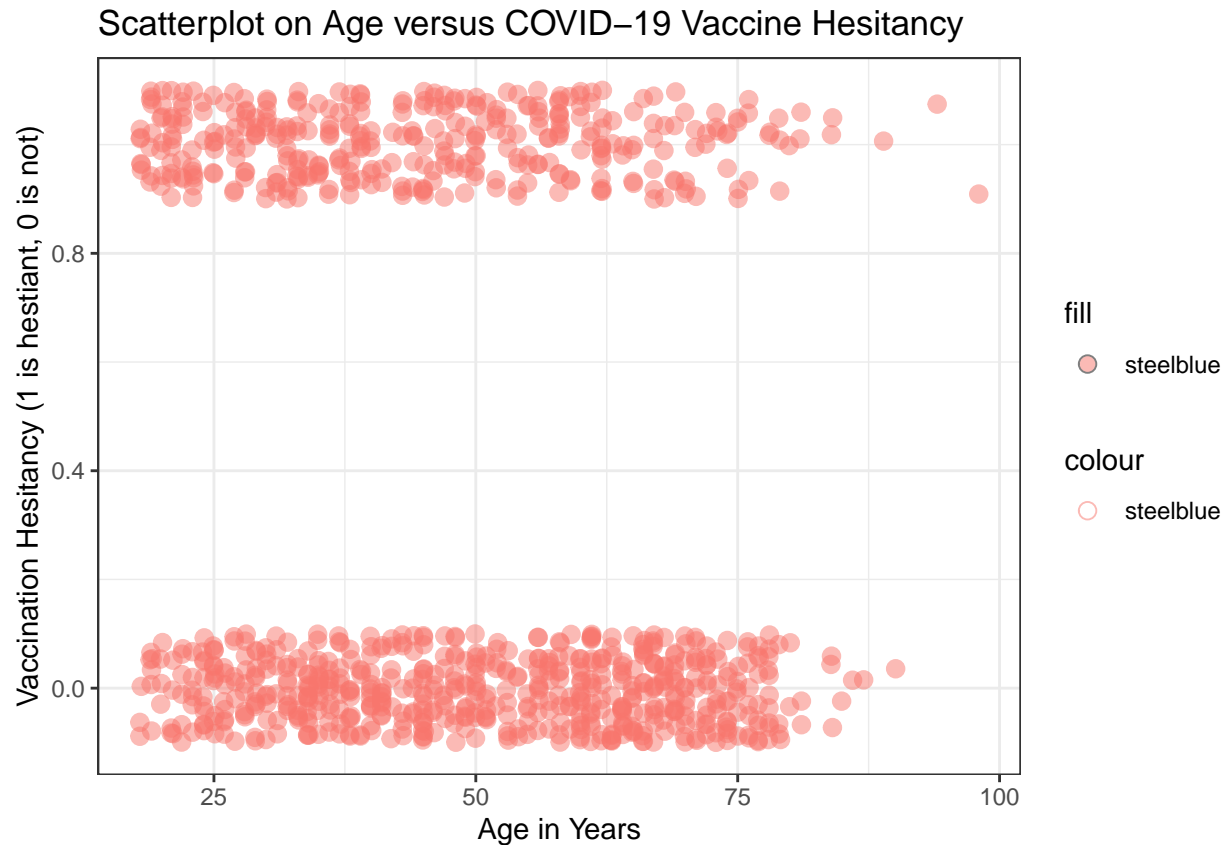
Below are visualizations of the distribution of our two variables

US Age Distribution in June 2021 Survey





Below is a visualization of the distribution of our two variables plotted against each other



It is subtle, but notice that it seems like the older someone is, there is a less likely hood that they are hesitant against vaccine, as in our hitter scatterplot above, it seems to become more dense in the 0 the older someone is, and also less dense in the 1 the older someone is as well. However, perhaps a scatterplot is not the best metric for truly finding substantiative evidence for what we want.

4 Bilbiography

Wagner, Abram. COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Surveys. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2021-11-29. <https://doi.org/10.3886/E130422V3>

Akel et al. Modification of a vaccine hesitancy scale for use in adult vaccinations in the United States and China. Hum Vaccin Immunother. 2021. doi: 10.1080/21645515.2021.1884476