

# Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on caregiving behaviors and vaccine perceptions

1. Study overview

2. Analysis per research question

3. Recommendations

### **About this research**

### Who

- Commissioned by UNICEF Lebanon
- Designed and analysed by MAGENTA Consulting
- Collected by Balamand University

### What

- Aimed to investigate changes in children's lives as a result of COVID-19
- Aimed to investigate behavioural drivers of protective measures (mask wearing and physical distancing)
- Aimed to investigate perceptions of the vaccine and attitudes towards its use



### **Lines of inquiry**

- 1. Why are individuals not continuing to abide by social distancing and mask wearing recommendations, despite high understanding of their benefits and the risks for not engaging in them?
- 2. Which are the reasons and drivers who led/are leading some people to abide to preventive measures (physical distancing and mask wearing) despite of facing the same challenges of those who are not abiding?
- 3. What are the COVID-19 narratives and information sources that are most potent in influencing individuals' behaviour?
- 4. What are the most significant impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of children?
- 5. How does caregiver behaviour influence children's experiences and outcomes during the pandemic?
- 6. What concerns, if any, do people have about the COVID-19 vaccines?



# To answer the research questions, two waves of data collection were conducted with caregivers and with adolescents, with a diversity of cohorts and geographical areas

### Wave 1

- Remotely collected focus group discussions (FGDs).
- Women and men caregivers across Lebanon.
- Covering all governorates and nationalities.

### **FGD Sampling Plan**

Nationality	Governorate	Gender	Number of FGDs
_		Men	1
	Akkar	Women	1
	Doolbok Hormol	Men	1
	Baalbek-Hermel	Women	1
	Beirut	Men	1
	Bonat	Women	1
	Bekaa	Men	1
Lebanese	Бекаа	Women	1
	Mount Lebanon	Men	1
	Would Lebanon	Women	1
	Nabatieh	Men	1
		Women	1
	North	Men	1
	North	Women	1
	South	Men	1
	South	Women	1
Syrian	_	Men	1
Syrian	_	Women	1
Palestinian	_	Men	1
raiesiillaii		Women	1
Total			20

### Wave 2

- Remotely collected Key Informants Interviews (KIIs).
- Women and men caregivers of children with disabilities and adolescents with disabilities
- Across Lebanon, covering all governorates and nationalities.

### **KII Sampling Plan**

Nationality	Governorate			Caregivers wi	Grand Total	
		Boys	Girls	Men	Women	
	Akkar	1			1	2
	Baalback Hermel		1	1		2
	Beirut	1			1	2
Lobonoso	Bekaa	1			1	2
Lebanese	Mount Lebanon		1	1		2
	Nabatiyieh		1	1		2
	North		1	1		2
	South	1			1	2
Syrian	-	1			1	2
Palestinian	-		1	1		2
Total		5	5	5	5	20

### Organization of the report

### A. Report structure

- The report as per the six lines of inquiry / Research questions detailed in slide 4:
  - 1. Why are individuals not continuing to abide by social distancing and mask wearing recommendations, despite high understanding of their benefits and the risks for not engaging in them?
  - Which are the reasons and drivers who led/are leading some people to abide to preventive measures (physical distancing and mask wearing) despite of facing the same challenges of those who are not abiding?
  - 3. What are the COVID-19 narratives and information sources that are most potent in influencing individuals' behaviour?
  - 4. What are the most significant impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of children?
  - 5. How does caregiver behaviour influence children's experiences and outcomes during the pandemic?
  - 6. What concerns, if any, do people have about the COVID-19 vaccines?

### **B.** Disaggregation levels

On each research question, the report considered several layers of disaggregation.

When a difference between groups was visible and relevant, it is systematically indicated in the slides. If a breakdown is not mentioned in the analysis, it means that no variation was actually visible on this particular point.

Results were systematically analyzed with a comparison between:

- Nationality: between Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian.
- Geography: between governorates of residence.
- Gender: between women and men.
- Type of tools and respondents' profiles: between caregivers interviewed during FGDs, caregivers of children with disabilities interviewed during KIIs and adolescents with disabilities during KIIs.

On this specific breakdown, results between FGDs and KIIs with caregivers were often similar, while gaps were more visible between caregivers and adolescents. Therefore, findings for adolescents are detailed on specific slides. Alternatively, when findings are specific to caregivers of children with disabilities, the information is detailed on a slide about caregivers in general.

Other factors when visible: such as economic factors.

**RQ1:** Why are individuals not continuing to abide by social distancing and mask wearing recommendations, despite high understanding of their benefits and the risks for not engaging in them?

RQ2: Which are the reasons and drivers who led/are leading some people to abide to preventive measures (physical distancing and mask wearing) despite of facing the same challenges of those who are not abiding?

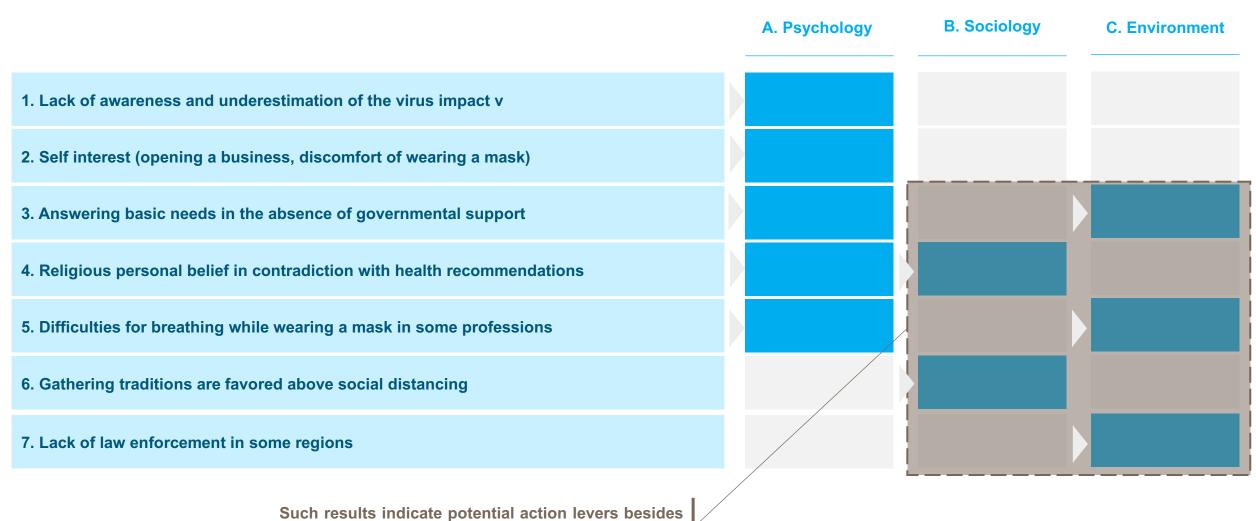
**Personal drivers for abiding by preventive measures:** The most stated driver is sociological followed by psychological drivers. Environmental drivers are marginally cited.

	A. Psychology	B. Sociology	C. Environment
1. Concern for others (collective self-efficacy)			
"I protect myself when I go out because I don't want to catch the virus and bring it back to my employer because she is old, I can take the consequences of the virus, but she cannot"			
2. Personal interest, and potential gains (health and economic)			
"I have to wear the mask first to protect myself, to care for myself"			
3. Personal experience, and perceived risks			
"after we lost people we love, we have more awareness and more fear for our health"			
4. Weak infrastructure			
"Also, after the drugs were cut off from pharmacies and due to the lack of medical equipment, we became afraid that to contract the virus because we are unable to cure it in this case"			
5. Enforcement measures			
"Every day there is a security checkpoint that I must pass to come to work"			

**Abiding by preventive measures:** While psychological and sociological factors were mentioned by a majority, environmental factors were mentioned in specific regions and communities

1. Psychological and sociological reasons were largely cited in all FGDs regardless of geography, gender, and community types **B. Sociology** A. Psychology C. Environment 1. Concern for others (collective self-efficacy) "I protect myself when I go out because I don't want to catch the virus and bring it back to my employer because she is old. I can take the consequences of the virus, but she cannot" 2. Personal interest, and potential gains (health and economic) "I have to wear the mask first to protect myself, to care for myself" 3. Personal experience, and perceived risks "after we lost people we love, we have more awareness and more fear for our health" 4. Weak infrastructure "Also, after the drugs were cut off from pharmacies and due to the lack of medical equipment, we became afraid that to contract the virus because we are unable to cure it in this case' 5. Enforcement measures ""Every day there is a security checkpoint that I must pass to come to work" 2. On the contrary, environmental factors were not systematically cited. In regions such are the South, Begaa and BML, individuals did not cite such factors as a reason for abiding. Gender and communities are less of an explanatory factors with only no mention of these in the Male Palestinian, and Migrants FGDs.

Perceived drivers for not abiding by preventive measures: key reasons for not abiding to measures are perceived to stem from psychological drivers, often combined with environmental or sociological elements



individual communications

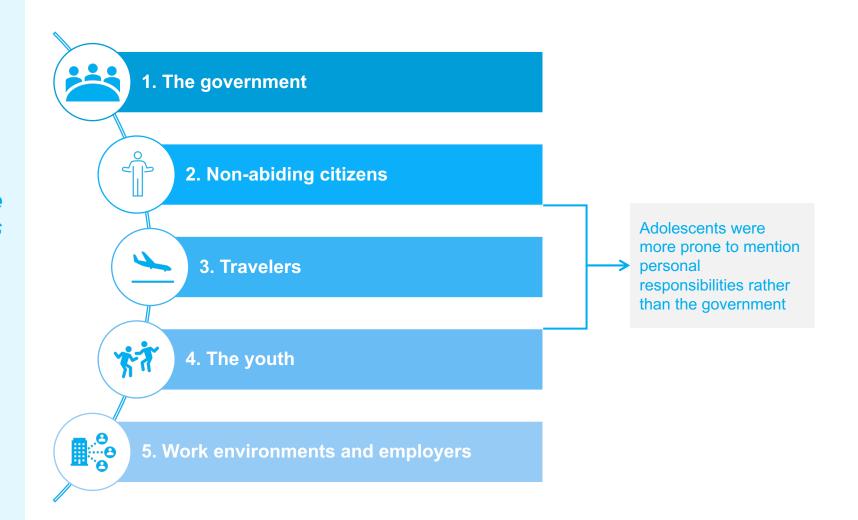
RQ3: What are the COVID-19 narratives and information sources that are most potent in influencing individuals' behaviour?

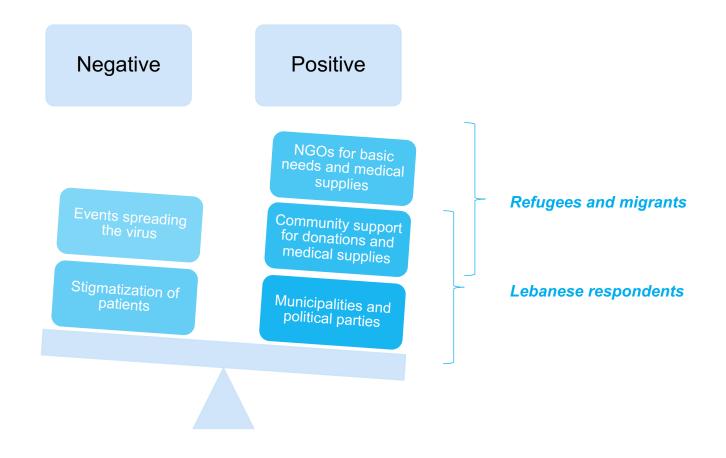
# Sources of information for decision making are technical experts from the health sector followed by word of mouth. Other sources are less mentioned

_#_	Source	Specific audience
1	Health workers: doctors and nurses	Most
2	Television and media: especially on talk shows that host doctors such as Dr. Nasnas on local television channels, Dr. Bizri and Dr. Mokhbat	Most
3	Word of mouth and personal exposure	Mostly men
4	NGO, INGO or International organisations: the world health organisation was mentioned the most, followed by the red cross and then UNICEF.	-
5	State sources: Ministry of health	-
6	Social media	Mostly women
7	Political and religious leaders: notably men from non-Lebanese nationalities	Mostly non-Lebanese men

As per FGDs and KIIs, the responsibility for the spread is shared between;

- 1. the government chiefly; and
- 2. non-abiding individuals.



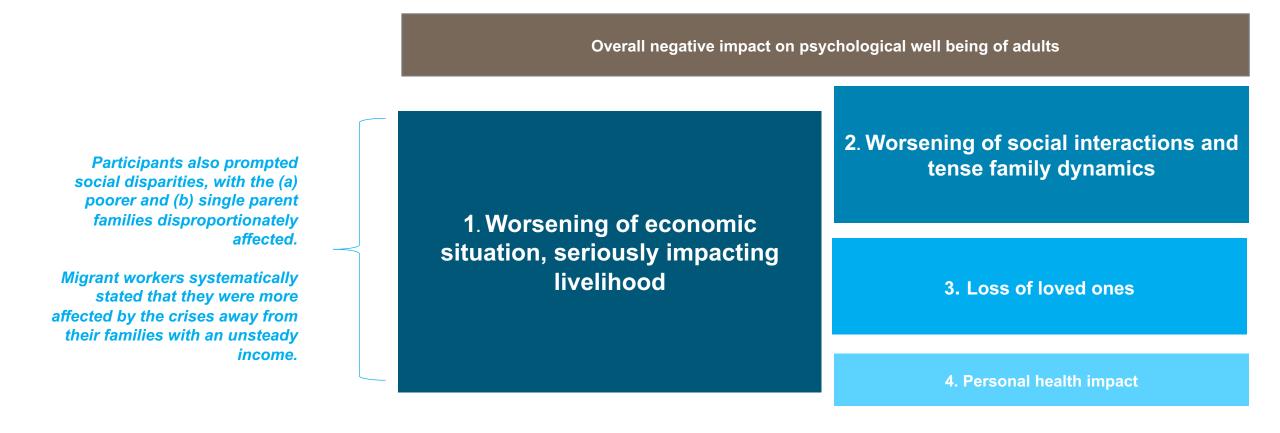


# The role of the community is positively perceived, but with a different understanding depending on respondents' nationalities

According to participants, the community plays a positive role in fighting the pandemic. Although some participants stated the negative impacts the community has been playing in spreading the virus and in stigmatising patients, many praised its efforts.

**RQ4:** What are the most significant impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of children?

When prompted about themselves as caregivers, the most significant impact cited by most respondents was the negative impact on their personal well being, mostly for economic issues rather than health concerns



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# When it comes to their children, all caregivers (FGDs and Klls alike) noted several specific impacts beyond a general effect on their personal well-being

Overall negative impact on psychological well being of children 2. Health risk 1.Psychological Well-Being 4. Communication skills "They developed fear, they are always angry" "The became more anxious and tensed" 5. Internet addiction "It has become extremely difficult for parents to focus on children in terms of strengthening their personality" 3. Education

Health risk was the second top concerns for both FGDs and KIIs.

Caregivers of disabled child were particularly concerned about their ability to take care of their child if they were to catch Covid-19

Education, communication and internet addiction were expressed globally by Lebanese women caregivers.

On the contrary, livelihood was mentioned by refugees

Caregivers of disabled children interviewed during KIIs prompted differences between families depending on economic capital rather than children disabilities

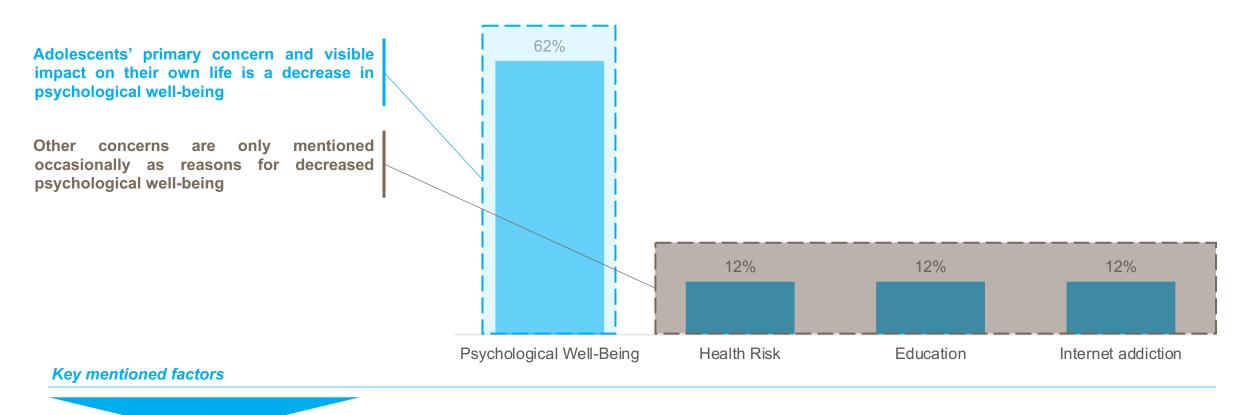
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# Previously mentioned impacts translate into specific concerns for the future of the children

<i>Impact</i>	Related concerns
1. Psychological Well-Being	Living in fear – Routine loss – Aggressiveness – Anxiousness – Tension
2. Health risk	Sitting all day – Unhealthy eating – Catching the virus
3. Education	Lagging performance – Unable to understand online – Losing an education year and future potential
4. Communication skills	Autism – Isolation – Social cues – Lack of creativity and interaction
5. Internet addiction	Living in the virtual world: schools, entertainment, social interactions
6. Livelihood and future	Lack of food, protection risk outside of school, inability to provide for basic needs and distance learning

## When asked directly, adolescent are mostly self aware of the direct impact of Covid-19 on their psychological well-being due to their lack of contact with people outside of the household

% of adolescent mentioning each types of impact mentioned by caregivers



No more interactions with friends

**Smaller family circle** 

"There used to be events like weddings but now we stopped, or now it is a limited amount of people without doing a party and even the funerals became on the phones. We became like people stuck in a bottle"

Adolescent woman, Baalbeck

"Us as refugees, we are living in a house made up of a room, a kitchen, and a bathroom. If one person gets corona, the whole family gets it and as I told you we are very scared for my father"

- Male Syrian Adolescent

# Besides visible impacts, interviewed adolescents mentioned several fears related to health, with specific concerns for their older relatives rather than themselves.

### Verbatim Concerns "After Umm Muhammad died, I fear for my grandfather. He is 1. For older relatives' health our source of survival. I don't want him to get sick. Children do not get corona. I am not afraid for myself. I only care for my grandfather." Adolescent woman. Palestinian 2. For their own physical "I am concerned for my health because of corona, because I health heard that the immunity wanes after 6 months (...) and according to what people are saying, it is going to be more painful, and some girls lose their hair and many bad things." Adolescent woman, Lebanese, Mount Lebanon 3. For their own mental health "We are becoming very introverted, because it has been almost a year and we are not going out."

Adolescent man, Syrian

### Steps to remain healthy

Steps to remain healthy mentioned by adolescents were limited to one or two topics. They were focusing on precautionary measures to avoid infections, with disregard or lack of awareness for measures related to psychological well-being.

1. Preventive measures to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 (masks, confinement), mentioned by 6 participants out of 8

**2. Diet**Mentioned by 3 participants out of 8

3. Exercise
Mentioned by 2 participants out of 8

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# Outside of health concerns, adolescents are also fearing for their livelihood and education similarly to their caregivers

# 1. Livelihood 2. Education

### Verbatim

"I am fearful if the economic situation stayed like this, I would be forced to travel and continue my work and far away from my family. For me, it is very important to stay by the people I love."

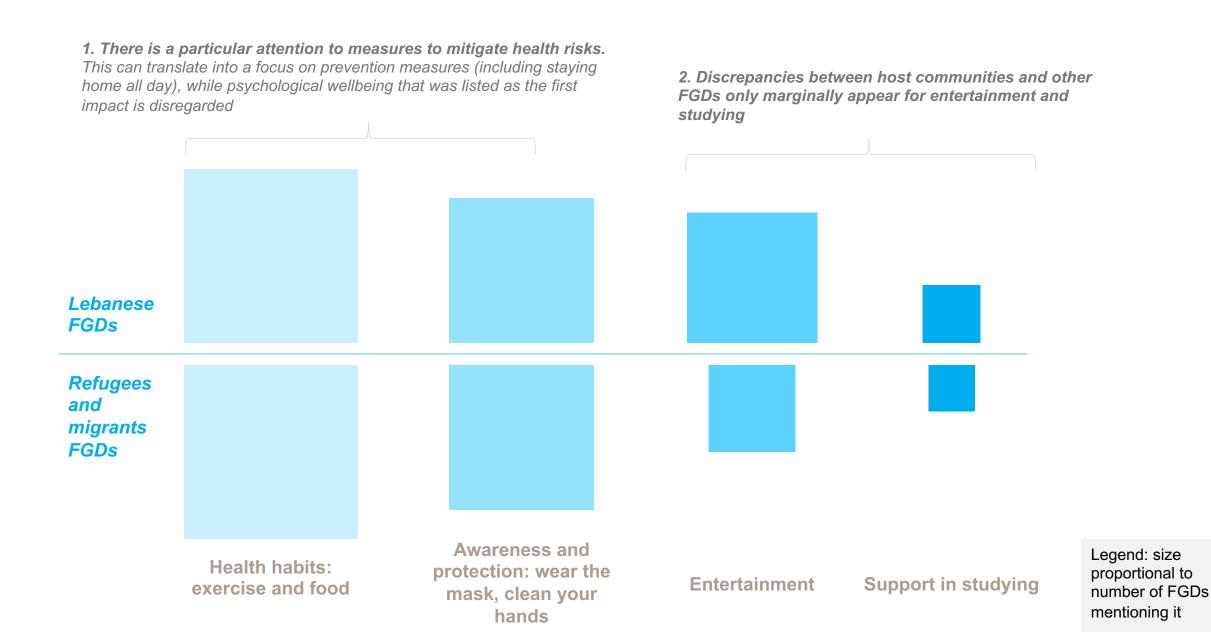
Adolescent man, Lebanese, Beega.

"I am also worried about my studies. I must sit for an official exam this year. Half of the year has already passed, and I feel like I do not understand anything. This is keeping me in a state of anger, where whoever talks to me gets me screaming, and slamming doors."

Adolescent woman, Lebanese, Mount Lebanon

RQ5: How does caregiver behaviour influence children's experiences and outcomes during the pandemic?

# Most FGDs and KIIs with caregivers mentioned four key mitigation measures to tackle concerns mentioned in RQ3



# Zoom in on the "specific concern for health measures and disregard for psychological wellbeing" among caregivers of disabled children

**75%** 

Percentage of respondents indicating that the first impact of Covid-19 is their personal and their children wellbeing



100%

Percentage of respondents indicating medical and confinement measures as priorities for their children's health this year

This is also representing a challenge as a majority of KII respondents faced issues to finance and find the relevant health support

**25%** 

Percentage of respondents indicating other ways to keep their children healthy during the pandemic. Options cited by parents were limited to providing video games.

**50%** 

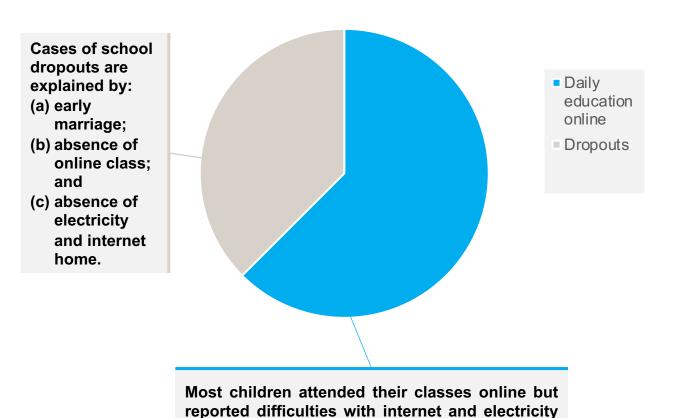
Percentage of respondents indicating that their disabled children had no interaction with the outside world because of Covid-19

"COVID-19 affected us a lot specially [my son] because his resistance to change and resilience level is lower than others due to his critical mental health."

- Male Caregiver of Child with Disability

# While support in studying is the least mentioned activity among caregivers, adolescents are reportedly facing difficulties with online class and look for mitigation measures

1. While a majority of adolescents are still in school, all mentioned difficulties and several school dropouts were observed



cuts.

2. Most adolescents reportedly engaged in proactive measures to complement their online classes

"I am trying to look on the internet for studies and resolved exams for me to keep up with the explanation and understand. For me, who wants to study is able to study, the internet is filled with information but the important thing is we choose the information that will benefit us."

Adolescent man, Lebanese, Beega.

"I asked my friend who lives in Beirut who goes to school in Notre Dame, to send me what her teacher is sending her because their teachers are explaining the lessons and sending them to students. (...) schools in Beirut explain in a much better way and they send supplementary material."

Adolescent woman, Lebanese, Mount Lebanon.

Concerns for children mentioned in RQ3 did not necessarily translate into negative relationships between parents and caregivers: almost half of FGD and KIIs participants mention the positive impacts of the confinement on their relationship with their children

Positive Negative

- Less work time
- Quality time with children

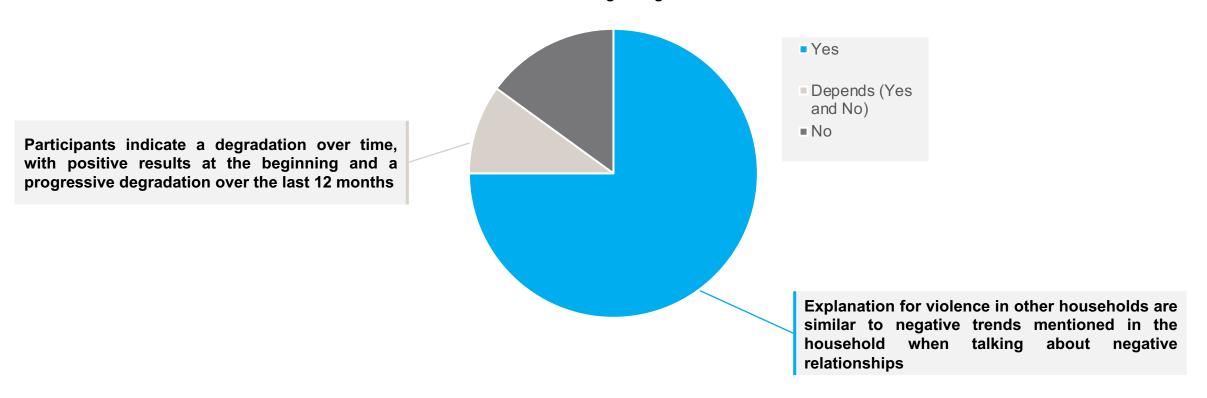
**Consequences:** closer relationships, better communication

- Excess activity of children
- High pressure on the parents due to economic and health concerns
- Full-time presence of children adding on caregivers' responsibilities and chores
- Parents systematically giving in to children's requests
- Limited spaces for poorer households

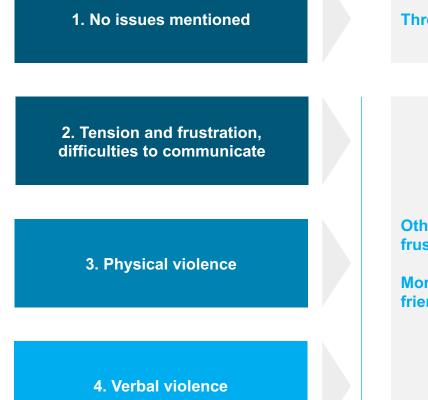
**Consequences:** Frustration, raised voices, increased disputes, arguing over minor issues, high temper, couples dispute impacting children, and verbal violence

# However, when prompted about violence in other families, caregivers stated with an overwhelming majority that violence against children has increased

Share of respondents stating they observed or did not observe violence in other households since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis



### This raise in violence was also visible among adolescents with similar features

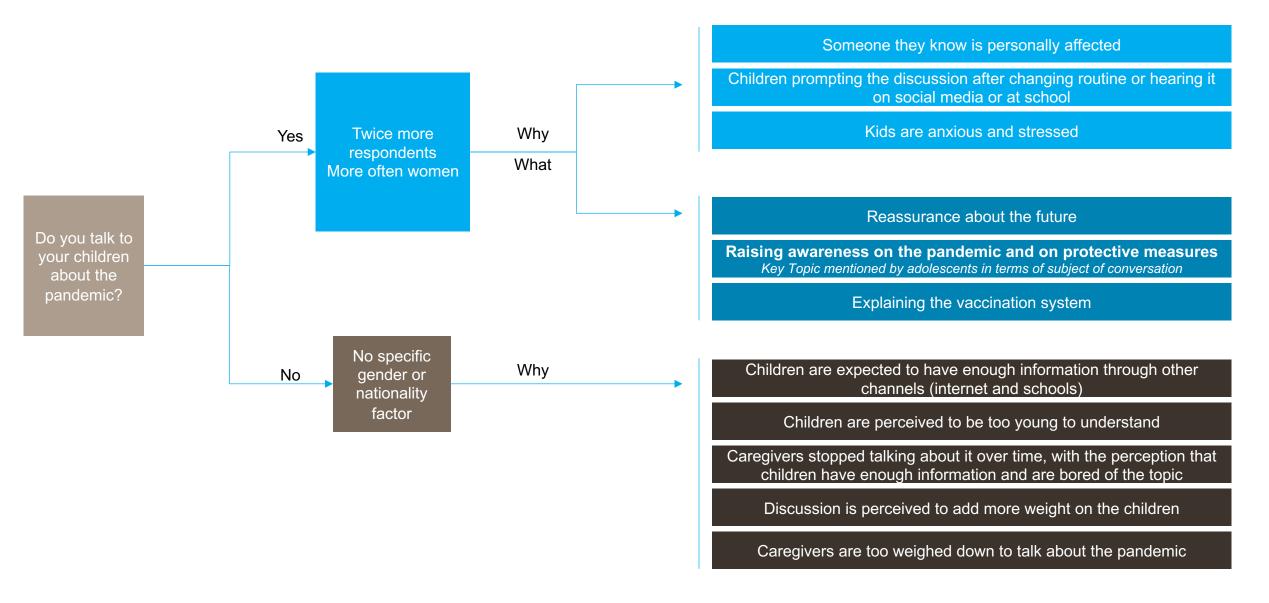


Three Respondents mentioned no issues with parents and an increase of positive relations

Other respondents mentioned issues, mostly of communications generating tensions and frustration (3/8), followed by physical violence (2/8), and verbal violence (1/8).

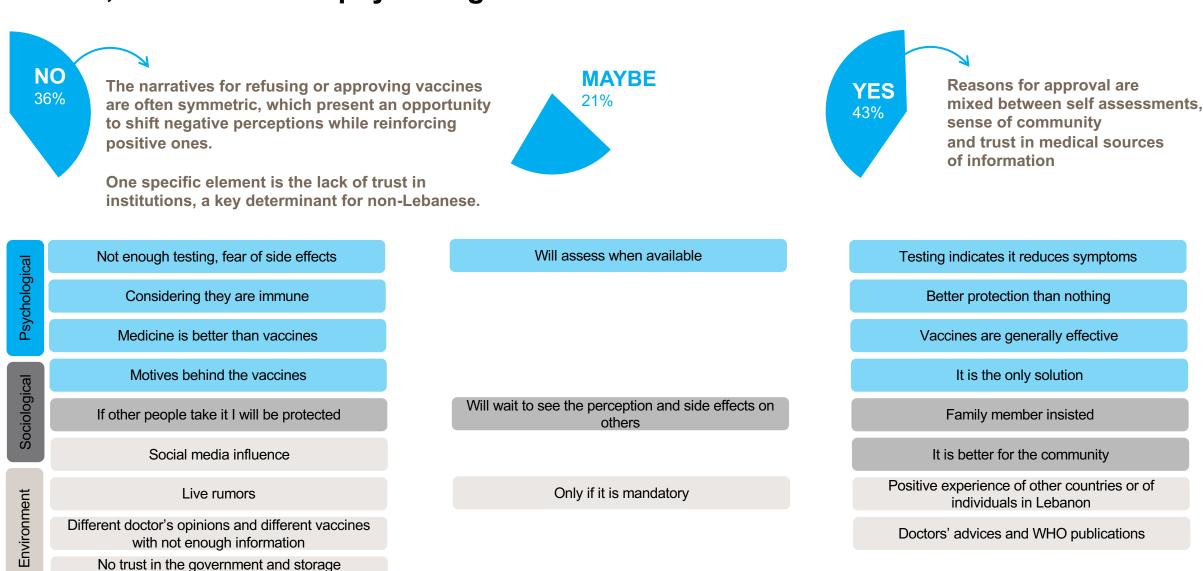
More that half of them mentioned an increase in violence, and all but one agree that their friends are all facing the same issues.

# A majority of caregivers, especially women, mentioned talking about COVID-19 with their children; generally to mitigate expected children anxiety and fears



RQ6: What concerns, if any, do people have about the COVID-19 vaccines?

# Almost half of the caregivers participating to FGDs were sure they would not take the vaccines, due to a mix of psychological and environmental factors



compliance

# Preferred sources for information related to vaccines for caregivers:

To support their point of view on vaccines, responses indicate a preference for technical workers, followed by authorities and traditional media ahead of informal sources.

There are clear differences between Lebanese and non-Lebanese respondents: Lebanese name local technical or state authorities while other nationalities tend to rely more on NGOs and UN agencies.

# When asked about having to convince others to take the vaccine, caregivers mostly rely on narratives based on environmental and sociological drivers

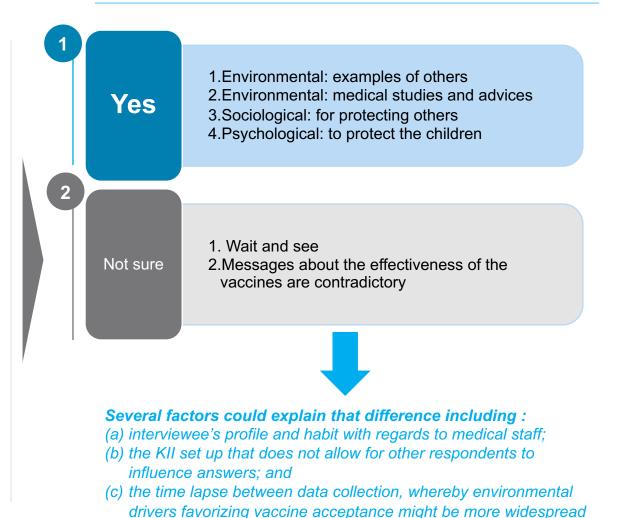
#	Narrative
1	It will solve health concerns (community safety and return to normal)
2	It is working in other countries and for other individuals locally
3	It is endorsed by doctors and health references
4	It is safe
5	It is not a conspiracy

# However, respondents were mostly unsure whether or not they would get their children vaccinated with a visible variation between FGDs and KIIs

1. Reasons by order of occurrences given during FGDs (February) indicated a concern for their children's protection

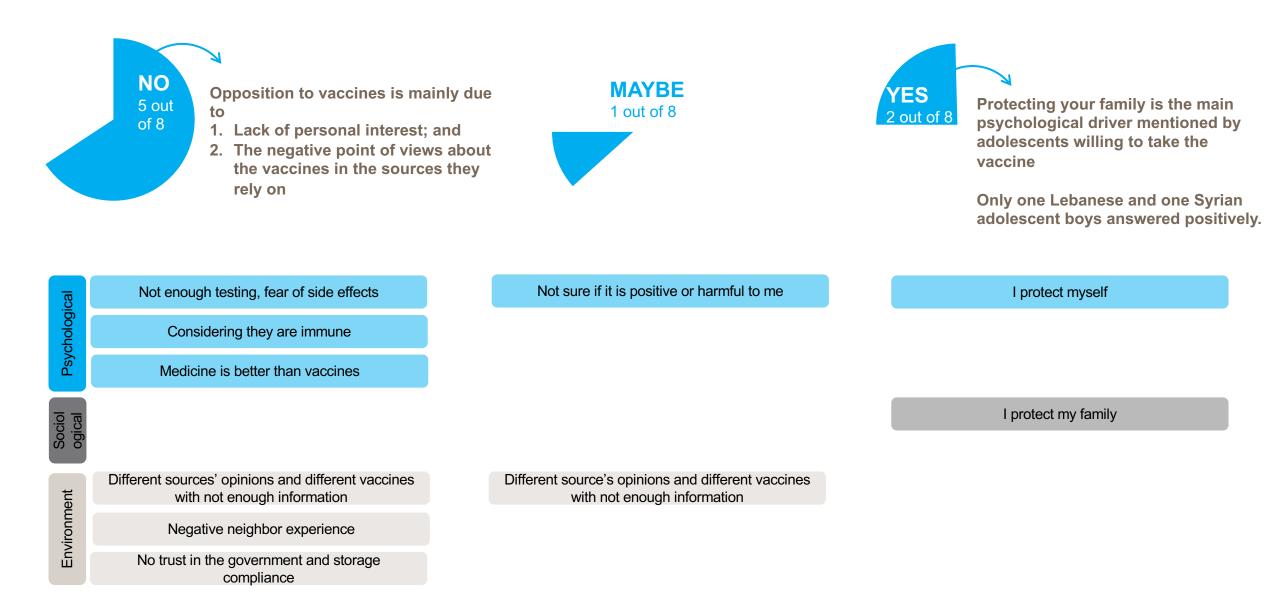
1. Wait and see the side effects on adults. stated most often Not 2. Might discover a medication 3. I don't know sure 4. Only if mandatory by schools 5. Not sure since kids are not that affected 1. To protect them, stated most often Yes 2. To go back to normal life 3. Other vaccines are effective 1. Kids are not affected and have strong immunity, stated most often No 2. The virus mutates too fast 3. The vaccine is not safe

2. Caregivers of disabled children interviewed during Klls (April – May) were more open to vaccinating their children



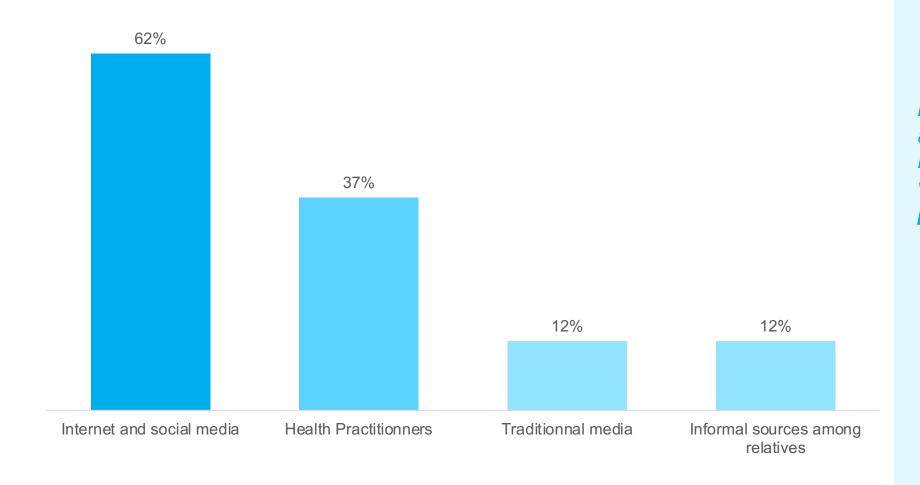
among caregivers now than it was in February

# Adolescents themselves are reluctant to take the vaccine, due to an absence of positive psychological drivers and many negative drivers in their environment



# This age difference in vaccine acceptance could partially be explained by the sources used by adolescents, which differ from those of the caregivers

Sources used by adolescents, in %



Internet and social media are adolescents' first source of information about the vaccine, ahead of health practitioners.

All caregivers gave similar priority targets for the vaccines

In order of popularity, the following five profiles were identified

\*Age gap in answers: The only notable variation between age was that adolescents were mostly mentioning elderly ahead of all categories. This highlights a rooted perception that the vaccines is not for them but for aged individuals.



### Health workers



### Elderly\*



Patients and chronic diseases



Public sector employees (mainly police, public defense, firefighters)



Academic institutions

# A wide majority of participants (both KIIs and FGDs) would still adhere to preventive measures after receiving the vaccines followed by unsure responses



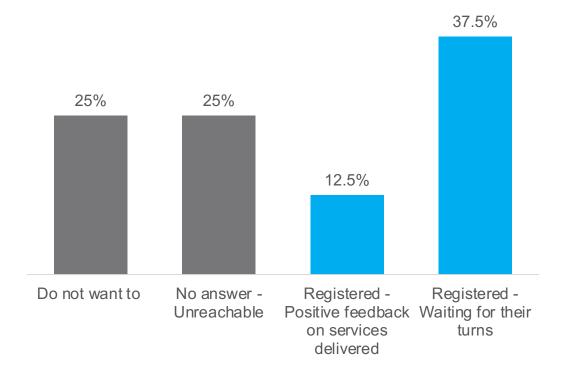
Legend reference: size and darkness of the color tone increases with the number of respondents referring to this point

# The gap of perceptions regarding the vaccines between caregivers and adolescent is also visible in the way they perceive the online registration platform

### **Caregivers of children with disabilities**

 Answers are similar to the overall perception about the vaccine with half of the respondents having used the platform and reporting positive feedback.

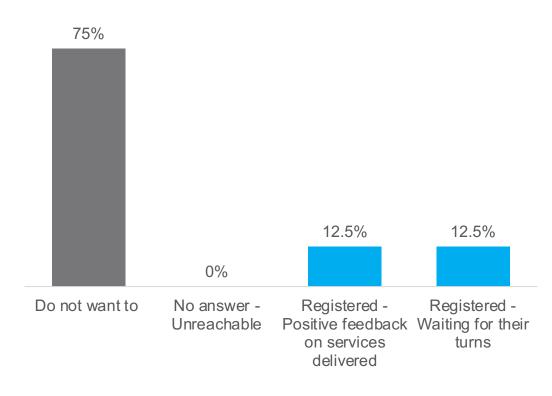
### Breakdown of answers for caregivers



### **Adolescents**

- Most adolescents insisted on their lack of interest for the platform.
- One positive experience was reported with one adolescent who registered his older relatives.

### Breakdown of answers for adolescents



Recommendations regarding caregiving

### **Summary of key communications recommendations**

### 1. Category

### 2. Recommendations

1. Impact on children

Utilise the increased attention on mental health and wellbeing to broach wider discussions on these topics among adolescents and caregivers.

Broader dissemination of digitalized parenting/caregiving resource materials.

Campaign to discuss the short and long-term impacts of stress and violence on child development

Enhanced utilization of social media to reach adolescents with mental health support and career planning materials.

Utilise increased attention on transmission of COVID-19 to discuss sexual and reproductive health with adolescents.

2. Relationship with caregiver & Mitigation measures

Campaign and communications around how to manage long-term stressors safely; focus on impacts of all types of violence on child development.

Target communications to mothers on how to discuss the pandemic with children to diminish anxiety around the topic.

Provide practical guidance to caregivers on how to support their children's education while schooling is remote.

Establish virtual meet-ups for new and expectant mothers to discuss parenting concerns.

Provide practical guidance to caregivers on how to support their children's education while schooling is remote.

### Summary of key communications recommendations

### 1. Category

### 2. Recommendations

3. Children with disabilities

Utilise the increased attention on mental health and wellbeing to broach wider discussions on these topics among adolescents and caregivers.

Broader dissemination of digitalized parenting/caregiving resource materials.

Campaign to discuss the short and long-term impacts of stress and violence on child development

Enhanced utilization of social media to reach adolescents with mental health support and career planning materials.

Utilise increased attention on transmission of COVID-19 to discuss sexual and reproductive health with adolescents.

4. Adolescents

Campaign and communications around how to manage long-term stressors safely; focus on impacts of all types of violence on child development.

Target communications to mothers on how to discuss the pandemic with children to diminish anxiety around the topic.

Provide practical guidance to caregivers on how to support their children's education while schooling is remote.

Establish virtual meet-ups for new and expectant mothers to discuss parenting concerns.

Provide practical guidance to caregivers on how to support their children's education while schooling is remote.



### Recommendations as compared to international literature on vaccination

2. Source general recommendation 3. Local observation 3. Local tailored recommendation 1. Source Communicate on effective vaccination in and out One of the main reasons for people taking of the country the vaccine and convincing others is positive experience of other countries as Communicate on positive emerging norms well as individuals in Lebanon among the local population Opinions for and against the vaccine are Making social norms in favor of balanced with no overwhelming majority vaccination more salient for or against the vaccine Focus communication efforts on reversing this short majority could have a spillover effect on the overall acceptance of communities Caregivers are waiting for more information before considering vaccinating their children WHO and the **Behavioral Insights** Ensure a disaggregation of communication Health professionals are the main source Team for information (mostly Lebanese) along channels by communities (e.g., Lebanese TV shows hosting health professionals with UN Agencies, and technical NGOs (non-Lebanese). Lebanese) Leveraging the roles health Respondents reluctant to vaccines are Target health practitioner with a specific strategy professionals and community leaders stating contradicting recommendations to align perceptions and recommendations to from health workers population Health professionals are more likely to recommend the vaccine if they took it first Respondents consider that health workers Ensure that health workers are given the should be among the first to receive the vaccines first and a platform to promote it

vaccines

### Recommendations as compared to international literature on vaccination

1. Source	2. Source general recommendation		3. Local observation		3. Local tailored recommendation
	Making sure people understand the high risks of Covid-19 contribute to a sentiment of fear that is positively impacting vaccine uptake		One of the key argument for not taking the vaccines is the perceived immunity to health consequences		Emphasis the social and economic risks of not taking the vaccine
			Respondents opposed to vaccine do not understand its usefulness if they were to continue to abide to preventive measures after		Raise awareness on the role of the vaccine as reducing the severity of symptoms and its contribution to better health, social and economic outcomes
WHO	Building trust at early stages		Participants refer to negative perceptions from social media and live rumors while not trusting local authorities		Identify and work (on fact checking) with individuals and groups that could reach out to communities that are not currently within reach of existing initiatives. That includes:  • Larger sample of social media activists  • Existing community groups under the protections and social stability sectors
					Use above mentioned networks to actively monitor and respond to changes in perceptions
The Behavioral Insights Team	Convincing people about the risks of the disease is unproven to increase vaccination uptake by itself		Some respondents think it is unavailable to them at the moment and others will take it only if it is mandatory		Shift the registration on the platform from a push factor-perspective to a pull, reaching out to individuals, requiring the vaccine, and proposing meeting dates and reminders