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[Chapter 4 Vaccines and
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Workforce vaccine mandates: The effect on vaccine uptake and healthcare workers' labour market outcomes



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Workforce vaccine mandates: The effect on vaccine uptake and healthcare workers' labour market outcomes

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Abstract

As part of its COVID-19 policy response, the New Zealand government implemented vaccination mandates as a condition of ongoing employment for certain workers. This paper examines the effect of these mandates on vaccination uptake among mandated healthcare, education and corrections workers and on healthcare workers' labour market outcomes. This is enabled by New Zealand's linked population-wide administrative data, which includes a comprehensive national COVID-19 vaccination register linked to tax records to identify employment outcomes.

P Overall, the results suggest that in the context of already-high vaccination rates, workforce vaccine mandates provided limited benefit in terms of increasing vaccination rates among mandated workers. Moreover, they negatively impacted healthcare workers' labour market outcomes, which may have had wider consequences in terms of exacerbating existing health workforce skills shortages.

JEL: C23; I12; I18

Keywords: COVID-19; vaccine mandates; vaccine uptake; healthcare workers; employment; earnings

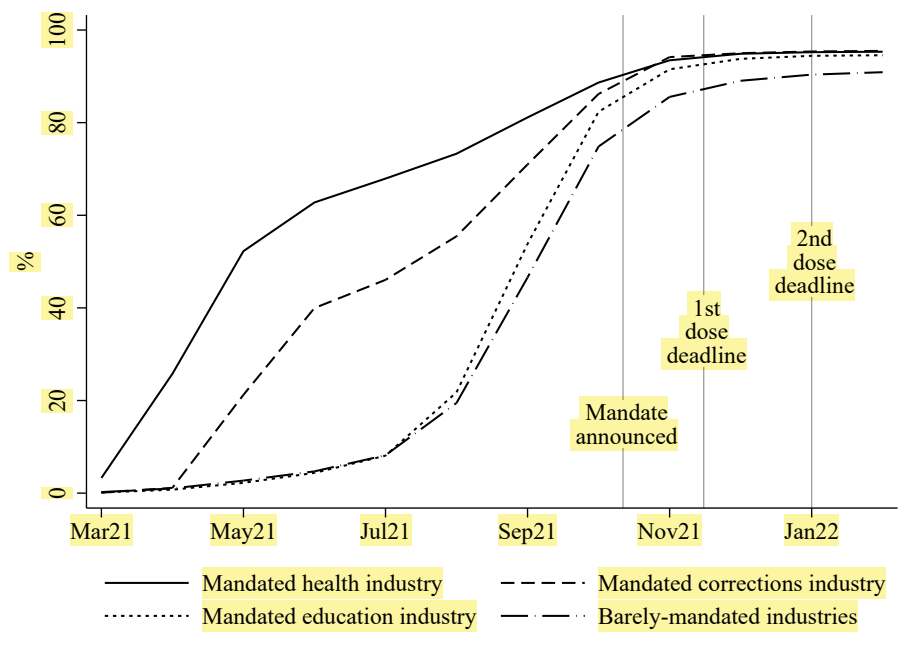
been vaccinated due to the mandates compared to groups one and three. Over 80% of education workers who were potentially vaccinated due to mandates were born in NZ, while this statistic is nearly 70% for the other two groups.

Like health and corrections workers, education workers who were vaccinated potentially due to the mandate have a higher deprivation score on average, compared with those that were vaccinated regardless of mandates or those who did not comply. However, unlike the health and corrections workers, education workers who were not compliant had the lowest monthly income and monthly earnings measures, compared to groups one and two.

6.2 Vaccination uptake over time

Figure 4 shows the cumulative share of health, education and corrections workers who had received two vaccine doses over time, compared with workers in barely-mandated industries 4. The vertical lines represent the mandate announcement date (11 October 2021 for all three mandated groups), the first dose deadline for HCW and education workers (15 November 2021, whereas it was slightly earlier on 6 November 2021 for corrections workers) and the second dose deadline for HCW and education workers (1 January 2022, whereas it was 8 December 2021 for corrections workers) respectively.

Figure 4: Cumulative double-vaccination rate by industry



HCWs had the earliest and fastest rate of vaccine uptake, with a fast initial uptake once the nationwide vaccination roll-out began, followed by a gradual increase to a 'steady state' vaccination rate. This pattern is perhaps unsurprising given they were