# PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (**http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf**) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

## ARTICLE DETAILS

| TITLE (PROVISIONAL) | Intervention studies to encourage vaccination using narrative: a systematic scoping review protocol |
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| AUTHORS | Okuhara, Tsuyoshi; Okada, Hiroko; Goto, Eiko; Kiuchi, Takahiro |

## VERSION 1 – REVIEW

| REVIEWER | Chou, Wen-ying<br>National Cancer Institute Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences, Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch |
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| REVIEW RETURNED | 17-Jun-2021 |

| GENERAL COMMENTS | I was unable to answer many of the questions posed on the review checklist because this paper is not an actual scoping review but a description of the protocol. While the plans are reasonable and well-thought-out by the authors, I am wondering why, given the small number of empirical publications on use of narratives for vaccine communication, they didn't simply undertake the review and publish the results at point of review completion. Given the urgency for fostering COVID vaccine confidence in those remaining hesitant (in the US where vaccine access is good, and across the world with uneven access/distributions), in order for this review to offer substantial contributions to health communication practice, as the authors stated, the review should be rapidly moving forward. Furthermore, the plans for the review (i.e. content beyond Introduction) appear to be standard and comparable to other similar scoping reviews and do not add significant contributions to the field. |
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| REVIEWER | Palumbo , Aimee<br>Drexel University, Epidemiology & Biostatistics |
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| REVIEW RETURNED | 23-Dec-2021 |

| GENERAL COMMENTS | This will be an important summary when the study and findings are published that can hopefully help us understand how to better persuade vaccine-hesitant individuals. My only small comment is to be sure that the forthcoming quantitative findings about the persuasiveness of narrative with other types of interventions be explicitly planned. The authors are proposing to include studies that do not have a comparison group, but does that actually imply a pre-post comparison or just post-intervention outcomes? I believe this will become clearer as the authors actually conduct their systematic review. |
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**VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE**

*I was unable to answer many of the questions posed on the review checklist because this paper is not an actual scoping review but a description of the protocol. While the plans are reasonable and well-thought-out by the authors, I am wondering why, given the small number of empirical publications on use of narratives for vaccine communication, they didn't simply undertake the review and publish the results at point of review completion. Given the urgency for fostering COVID vaccine confidence in those remaining hesitant (in the US where vaccine access is good, and across the world with uneven access/distributions), in order for this review to offer substantial contributions to health communication practice, as the authors stated, the review should be rapidly moving forward. Furthermore, the plans for the review (i.e. content beyond Introduction) appear to be standard and comparable to other similar scoping reviews and do not add significant contributions to the field.*

➔ As we mentioned in our manuscript, health-related narrative persuasion research is still emerging. Some studies have methodological flaws. We believe that, as with many other communication studies, we should be cautious in determining whether narratives are effective in vaccine communication by reviewing these previous studies. To accumulate high quality research is important for the time being. Therefore, as mentioned in the manuscript, the objective of this review is to create an overview of studies of interventions aimed at encouraging vaccination using narrative, and to identify the content and gaps in these studies. We consider that the importance of this review is not to show whether vaccine communication using narrative is effective, but rather to show what needs to be overcome in the studies. When we had previously planned an intervention study on vaccine communication using narrative, there were no review articles available, so we had to start with a review of previous studies and overview them ourselves. We believe that our scoping review will serve as a useful reference for researchers planning future intervention studies on vaccine communication using narrative, speeding up their research and helping them to conduct better designed intervention studies. We submitted this protocol manuscript because we believe that rather than rushing to conduct a review, we should conduct a better designed scoping review after peer review. We plan to conduct our scoping review and submit the paper as soon as this protocol is accepted.

➔ We have added the following sentence.
-----------------Page 4, line 6-10--------------------

This scoping review will serve as a useful reference for researchers who plan future intervention studies on vaccine communication using narrative, speeding up their research and helping them to conduct better designed intervention studies.

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*Dr. Aimee Palumbo , Drexel University, University of Pennsylvania*

*This will be an important summary when the study and findings are published that can hopefully help us understand how to better persuade vaccine-hesitant individuals. My only small comment is to be sure that  the forthcoming quantitative findings about the persuasiveness of narrative with other types of interventions be explicitly planned.*

➔ We have made the following additions to our manuscript to explicitly show the comparison or combination of narratives with other types of intervention, and the results of their intervention effects.

------------Page 4, line 21-28--------------

RQ3: What forms of intervention other than using narrative have previous intervention studies adopted to compare and combine with the persuasiveness of narrative in encouraging vaccination?

RQ4: What results have previous intervention studies shown about the persuasiveness of narrative approaches in encouraging vaccination including comparisons and combinations with other forms of intervention than using narrative?

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------------Page 5, line 38-40--------------

The following data will be extracted: study characteristics (author, year of publication, type of paper, and country), participant characteristics (student or non-student, gender, age, and other demographic information), methodology (study design, sample size, and outcome), comparators and combinations (forms of intervention other than using narrative), main results of the intervention including comparison and combination with other forms of intervention than using narrative, and theoretical foundation of the intervention.

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*The authors are proposing to include studies that do not have a comparison group, but does that actually imply a pre-post comparison or just post-intervention outcomes? I believe this will become clearer as the authors actually conduct their systematic review.*

➔ The purpose of our scoping review includes indicating methodological limitations of previous studies that need to be overcome. Therefore, our review will include quasi-experimental studies such as pre-post comparisons, and if a study reports only post-intervention outcomes without a comparison group using posttest design, we will include that study as well. We will not rush into a discussion of

the effects of narratives, but will focus on the discussion to accumulate high quality studies based on appropriate methods in our scoping review.

➔ We have revised as follows.
------------Page 4, line 56--------------

We seek to include all intervention studies in these databases that quantitatively examined persuasiveness of narrative to encourage vaccination, both experimental (e.g., randomised controlled trials, quasi-randomised controlled trials, non-randomised trials) and quasi-experimental research (e.g., pretest–posttest design, posttest design).