



# Pharmacists as Childhood Vaccinators: A Qualitative Thematic Analysis\*

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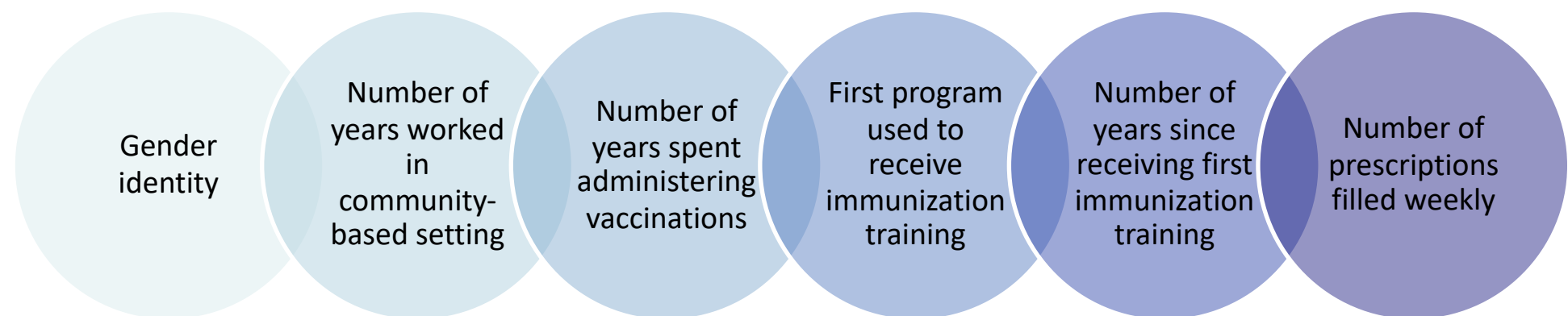
## Background

- Despite continuing efforts to promote **vaccinations** in the **pediatric population**, preventable infectious diseases remain a major cause of illness, disability, and death<sup>1</sup>
- A decrease in childhood vaccination rates has been an indirect effect and collateral harm caused by the **COVID-19** pandemic<sup>2</sup>
- Pandemic-related service closures have led to widespread omission or **delay of scheduled childhood vaccinations**
- Pharmacists are well positioned and trained to increase access to vaccinations to the public
- The Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act** granted pharmacists the ability to immunize persons ages 3 and up without a prescription<sup>3</sup>
- Because **pharmacists** of the United States were not previously administering vaccinations to very young children, many pharmacists perceive immunizing young children to be a challenge despite having been widely trusted and qualified providers of vaccinations for many decades
- Although there have been many studies investigating vaccine hesitation from the patient's perspective, more research is needed to examine the challenges of vaccinating children from the **pharmacist's viewpoint**

## Objectives

- Primary Objective:** Identify community pharmacists' perceptions, confidence, and barriers in providing vaccinations to children ages 3 and older

## Demographic Survey Questions



- Total of 6 questions
- Administered prior to focus group sessions via Qualtrics when participants first indicated interest in study

## Methods

Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Qualitative study</b> using <b>single-category design</b> for focus groups</li><li>Reviewed and approved by The Ohio State Board Institutional Review Board</li></ul>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Registered pharmacists</b> currently employed within one regional division of a large community chain pharmacy</li></ul>
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recruitment to conclude either when 40 <b>pharmacists</b> express interest or at the end of one month</li><li>Participants assigned to groups based on individual availability</li></ul>
Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Total of <b>4 focus groups</b>, with 5-8 participants in each</li><li>Focus groups were <b>60 minutes long</b> and held through a <b>video conferencing operation</b> over the course of one month</li><li>Focus groups held on weekends and on a weekday for variability</li><li>Focus groups were video and audio recorded and audio from focus group sessions reduced to text via a transcription feature on the video conferencing operation</li><li>Participants were asked five questions to explore their perceptions, confidence, and barriers in providing vaccinations to young children</li></ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All responses were identified, coded, and categorized by <b>common themes</b> for each session</li><li>Individual statements were coded and grouped into categories of different topics</li></ul>
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Data analyzed using the <b>Classic Approach</b></li><li><b>Thematic analysis</b> used to describe the themes that come out of focus groups</li></ul>

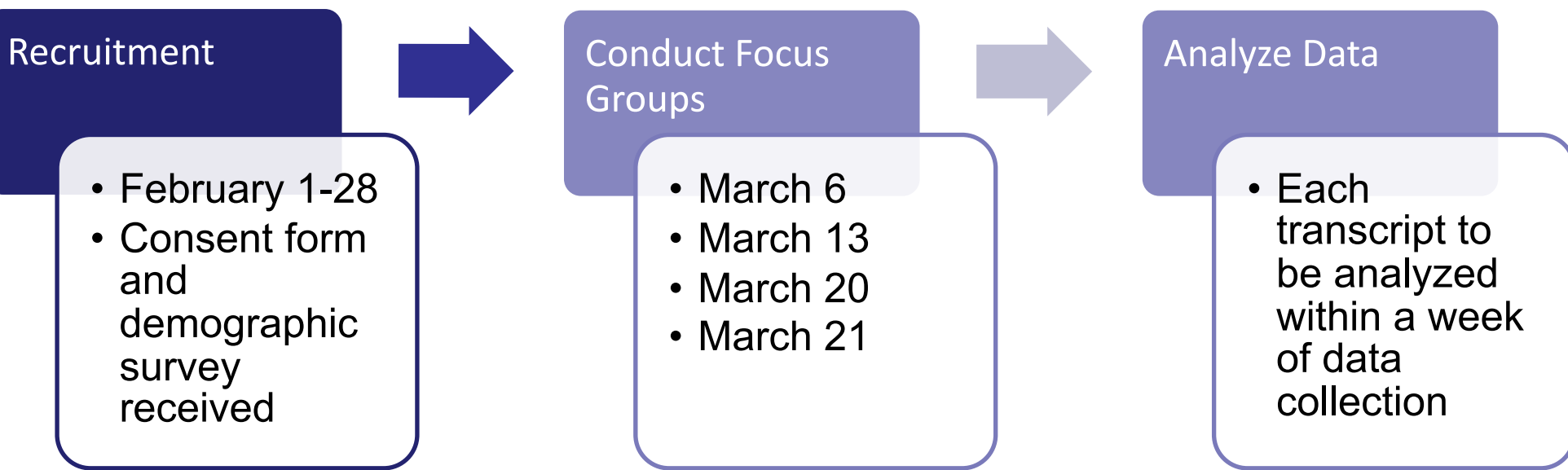
### Recruitment Strategies

- Advertisement through the company's pharmacy department internal email newsletter
- Invitation email sent only to pharmacists
- Verbal means

## Focus Group Question Topics

- Attitudes and perceptions toward expanded scope of practice
- Confidence in providing vaccinations to young children
- Possible challenges or barriers
- What prepared participants to be successful
- Potential solutions to any perceived challenges or barriers

## Timeline of Research



## Future Implications

- The PREP Act is expected to last until October 1, 2024, and therefore it will be necessary to address any perceived challenges that may arise
- The findings from this study will be useful in overcoming any **hesitancies** that pharmacists may possess and will shed important light in this area of pharmacy practice

## References

- Immunization and Infectious Diseases | Healthy People 2020. Accessed August 12, 2021.
- Chanchlani N, Buchanan F, Gill PJ. Addressing the indirect effects of COVID-19 on the health of children and young people.
- Center for Health Statistics N. Health, United States 2019. Published online 2019. Accessed August 12, 2021.

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