

# KNOWLEDGE IS POWER – DECISIONS ABOUT HEALTHCARE AND VACCINES

Being forewarned is being forearmed, especially where health, life and death are concerned.

The world is on edge, waiting for the first COVID-19 vaccine to be developed and made available. For many, a vaccine is a safety barrier against the coronavirus. However, individuals who remain reluctant to get vaccinated pose a serious threat to the uptake of vaccines.

Anti-vaccination movements are creating anxiety among the public, as they capitalise on people's fears about the coronavirus by spreading misinformation.

Researchers at the University of KwaZulu-Natal are investigating reasons behind the public's choice to be vaccinated or not. A better understanding of these reasons would facilitate the generation of tailored health education strategies and material that is pertinent to the public to dispel half-truths.

"Through appropriate education, we want to allay any fears, correct misinformation and empower the public to make evidence-based decisions about vaccination," says Dr Velisha Perumal-Pillay. "We intend to facilitate changes in behaviour through increased knowledge."

Healthcare professionals and policymakers have a responsibility to educate the



Vaccines save lives.

public and should advocate more vigorous vaccination education campaigns. The public also has a responsibility to seek healthcare information from reputable sources and to make responsible decisions regarding their health and that of their family and the community at large.

"Vaccines are the most effective public health intervention to reduce suffering and death from vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccination saves lives. Don't allow misinformation to influence your decisions regarding vaccines and compromise your health."

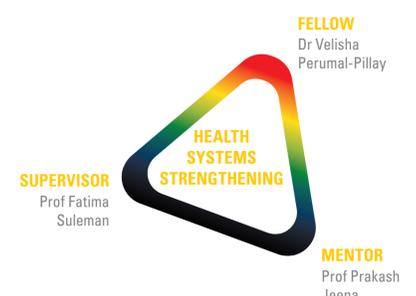


## Towards Research Leadership

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