

## **Abstract:**

### **How Does Insurance Status Relate to Trust Regarding Information About COVID-19 in Residents of the State of Illinois?**

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#### **Introduction:**

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been constant stream of information from sources ranging in credibility. It has been suggested that the level of panic associated with the pandemic correlates with the knowledge and perceptions of the general population, which is directly influenced by the information they receive. This study aims to better characterize what sources of information are trusted most and how insurance status might affect this trust in residents of the State of Illinois.

#### **Methods:**

Data was collected using a survey instrument that was composed of several validated survey questions obtained from the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR). Responses were collected using RedCap software and Facebook advertising. Survey questions characterizing respondents' demographics, trust of various information sources, and trust of healthcare providers were analyzed across different insurance groups.

#### **Results:**

The study consisted of 773 respondents, 55.5% private insurance, 37% Medicare, 4.4% Medicaid, and 0.9% Uninsured. Those with Medicaid had a lower trust of physicians, the CDC, and the WHO, compared to those with private insurance or Medicare. Those with Medicaid had more trust in information from social media and information gained from friends and family members, compared to those with private insurance or Medicare.

#### **Discussion:**

It has been well documented in the literature that socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, including low-income populations, are less likely to trust physicians. Misinformation from various sources may contribute to a lack of trust in the healthcare system, which has been especially apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our research suggests that individuals with Medicaid insurance have a lower level of trust in physicians, as well as in national and international medical authorities about COVID-19.