



Behavioural insights in support of the response to COVID-19

*PUTTING SCIENCE INTO CONTEXT:
THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN RISK ANALYSIS
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Why do we need behavioural insights research?

- Provides understanding of behavioural choices, barriers and drivers
- In the context of COVID-19, BI is important for:
 1. Facilitating adherence to non-pharmaceutical interventions
 2. Promoting vaccination
- Without BI, policies and communication strategies may be **shooting in the dark!**

Figure - Fréquences de l'adoption systématique déclarée des mesures de prévention et évolutions (% pondérés). Enquête CoviPrev (vague 28 : 28 septembre - 5 octobre 2021), France métropolitaine.



Dark blue:
Wear a mask in public places

Grey: Greet without shaking hands and stop hugging

Red: Regularly wash hands

Green: Avoid groups of people and face-to-face meetings

Here we see the 'what'; qualitative BI data can provide the 'why' and the 'how'

[<https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/etudes-et-enquetes/coviprev-une-enquete-pour-suivre-l-evolution-des-comportements-et-de-la-sante-mentale-pendant-l-epidemie-de-covid-19>]

How has the pandemic helped raise awareness of BI?

We now have much wider recognition of BI as an area of key importance in public health

During the pandemic, BI helped to:

- Develop risk communication strategies that met people's information needs
- Give authorities the confidence to judge what people will and will not accept and adhere to
- Shape effective strategies for promoting vaccination

But.....

- BI is still not fully integrated into the preparedness and response systems of a number of EU/EEA countries
- Social and behavioural scientific expertise is generally under-represented in national COVID-19 management teams



So what do we need to do now?

- The COVID-19 crisis has been an **opportunity** to show that intervention involving human behaviour will not work well unless social and cultural context is taken into account

Therefore:

- We need to highlight the achievements BI has made in the pandemic
- BI must be institutionalised and properly embedded in countries' pandemic preparedness and response activities
- Memories are short, and this needs to happen before the next crisis captures the attention of decision makers