

JITSUVAX:
Jiu-Jitsu with Misinformation in the Age of Covid

Report on the Train the Trainers Workshop

June 2023

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Report on Train the Trainer Workshop

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Summary

This document reports on the JITSUVAX Train the Trainers event held in Coimbra, Portugal on 20-23 February 2023.

Scope and purpose of this document

This document describes the JITSUVAX Train the Trainers event during which JITSUVAX team members and others were trained in both Motivational Interviewing and the new Empathetic Refutational Interviewing (ERI) techniques.

Outside of the scope of this document is the development of the ERI (Deliverables 2.3 'Report on effects of refutational training' and 2.4 'Reports on experiments to develop empathic refutational interview').

Project overview

Vaccine hesitancy—the delay or refusal of vaccination without medical contraindication—has been cited as a serious threat to global health by the World Health Organization (WHO), attributing it to misinformation on the internet. The WHO has also identified Health Care Professionals (HCPs) as the most trusted influencers of vaccination decisions.

JITSUVAX will leverage those insights to turn toxic misinformation into a potential asset based on two premises:

1. The best way to acquire knowledge and to combat misconceptions is by employing misinformation itself, either in weakened doses as a cognitive “vaccine”, or through thorough analysis of misinformation during “refutational learning”.
2. HCPs form the critical link between vaccination policies and vaccine uptake.

The principal objective of JITSUVAX is to leverage misinformation about vaccinations into an opportunity by training HCPs through inoculation and refutational learning, thereby neutralizing misinformation among HCPs and enabling them to communicate more effectively with patients. We will disseminate and leverage our new knowledge for global impact through the team’s contacts and previous collaborations with WHO and UNICEF.

Background

The principal output of JITSUVAX is the development of the Empathetic Refutational Interview, a tool for HCP’s when discussing vaccination misinformation and disinformation with patients concerned about vaccination. The steps taken to develop the ERI are described in Deliverable 2.3, ‘Reports on effects of refutational training’ and D2.4, ‘Reports on experiments to develop empathetic refutational interview’.

The next steps in JITSUVAX are to test the ERI. In WP3.1 the ERI will be field tested in three countries, with quantitative experiments conducted in France and qualitative experiments in Portugal and Germany. In all, the effectiveness of the ERI will be evaluated in comparison to both a baseline (untrained HCP’s) and to a motivational interview (MI) approach.

The HCP’s will be trained in either MI or the new ERI approach, before conducting interviews with patients who have concerns about vaccines. Their interview approach will be evaluated by patient evaluations, vaccination rates and the HCP’s own assessment of the approach. A control group will receive no training.

In order to train the HCP's in MI or ERI it was first necessary to 'train the trainers'. This was done in a four day workshop held in Coimbra, Portugal in February 2022.

Overview of the Empathetic Refutational Interview

The first steps in developing the ERI were to establish the psychological attitude roots underlying belief in mis- and dis-information about vaccination. This work is described in D2.1, 'Taxonomy of fallacious arguments against vaccination'. This taxonomy was used to produce a comprehensive document which provides refutations to the arguments as well as an overview of the truths or underlying beliefs underpinning them. The text of this document was then adapted to produce the content for the jitsuvax.info website <https://jitsuvax.info> which offers affirmations and refutations of 62 types of arguments against vaccines, classified by their attitude roots.

The taxonomy provides the background for understanding the psychological roots underpinning the beliefs in mis and dis-information, which allows for the provision of tailored responses to patients' concerns. The website provides a look-up and learning tool for the contrarian arguments and how to respond to them according to the steps of the ERI.

It follows the following general steps:

1. Elicit concerns from the patient, inviting them to share their thoughts about vaccination. Practice active listening by reflecting what the patient is saying and considering the underlying reasons, or "attitude roots", that motivate the patient's hesitancy. Attitude roots refer to deep psychological factors, such as a person's level of trust or distrust, that shape and constrain people's beliefs and attitudes.
In this step, we can ask open-ended questions to get the patient to explain in more detail why they hold this position and express concerns about vaccination. This signals more empathy and can also encourage the patient to reflect on the logic of their position.
2. Build empathy with how the patient is feeling by affirming the attitude root. It is possible to affirm an attitude root without agreeing with the specifics of the argument against vaccination. Most arguments contain a partial truth. Acknowledging this partial truth can help build receptivity and openness to further information.
3. Offer a tailored refutation of the misconceptions or flaws in the anti-vaccination argument. It is important to speak about the misconception from a third-party perspective (e.g., "I know there are people who have said this"). Together with the empathetic affirmation in step 2, this encourages the patient to revise the belief without threatening their attitude root.
4. Provide relevant facts about vaccination, such as how vaccinations work, the benefits of vaccination against the risk of disease, or the collective benefit gained through vaccine-induced herd immunity. Bear in mind the patient may wish to take more time to consider. Remember the goals of the conversation – if the patient is more receptive and the relationship is still maintained, this is a successful outcome. Remain open to discussing at a later time.

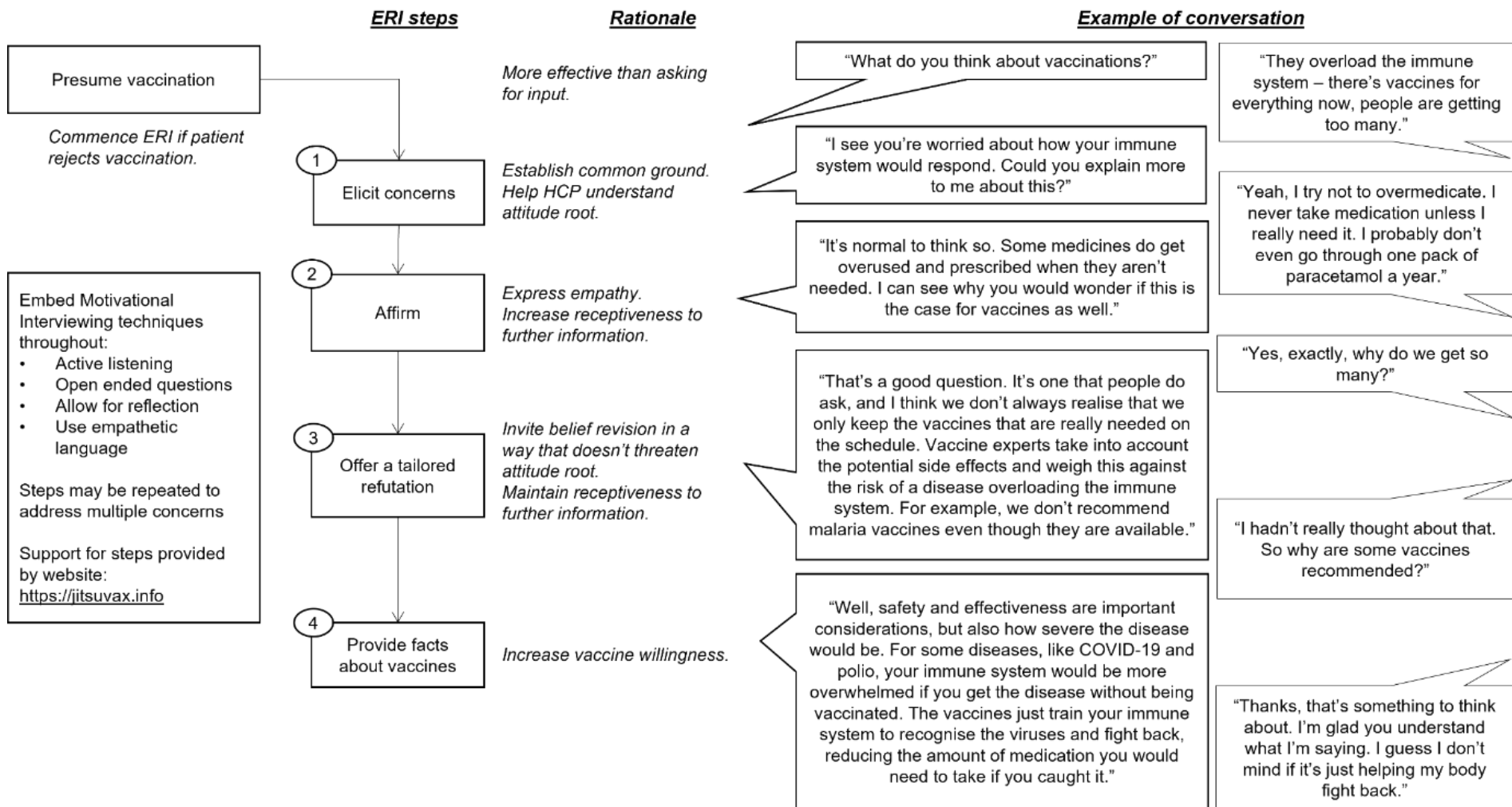


Figure 1: Steps in the Empathetic Refutational Interview

The Train the Trainers event

The Train the Trainers event was held in Portugal due to both cost efficiency and ease of access from the multiple countries. The JITSUVAX node at the University of Coimbra hosted the event, using the University's meeting rooms and facilities.

Aims of the event

There were several aims for this event:

- To provide those involved in WP3.1 and WP3.3 with a grounding in the ERI methodology which would allow them to train the HCP's involved in the field testing of the ERI in the technique.
- To give JITSUVAX researchers training in MI methodology to allow them to apply this background to their understanding and implementation of the ERI.
- To co-develop the training materials for the ERI method.
- To ensure that frontline HCPs and policy makers were involved with the ERI at this stage, providing their insight into the practicalities and acceptability of the method.

Attendees

Members of the JITSUVAX team from UNIVBRIS, UTU, ORS PACA, UE and UC attended the event along with team members from Sherbrooke University in Canada. In addition a number of HCP's attended, including a nurse/community outreach specialist from the UK, four French GP's, two Canadian clinicians and a Canadian nurse. We also had representatives from the German Robert Koch Institute who specialise in policy development and dissemination.

The French team joined the event at the end of day 2, after the Motivational Interviewing component was completed. This was for two reasons: firstly the French lead has already undergone training in MI and is very familiar with the technique. Secondly the French clinicians will be taking part in WP3.1, as the ERI arm of the RCT. A decision was therefore taken to avoid training them in MI at this point as they will be tested against clinicians in the MI arm of the RCT. Therefore they joined the group only for days 3 and 4.

The attendees of the workshop are listed in Table 1. Two of the JITSUVAX researchers (AF and PS) and four of the French general practitioners (RL, CG, AB and EM) who attended the Train the Trainer meeting will be providing training to the HCP participants who will be participating in WP3.1. In addition, two of the researchers (HF and EA) will be providing a condensed version of the ERI training in WP3.3 in the UK.

Agenda

Days 1 and 2 were dedicated to training in Motivational Interviewing, led by Arnaud Gagneur and Patrick Berthiaume. This provided a grounding in the technique which is complementary to and informs the ERI.

Day 3 was dedicated to training in the ERI, led by Dawn Holford, and day 4 to the start of production of a full training manual and materials for the ERI led by Stephan Lewandowsky.

The full syllabus is presented in Appendix 1.

Table 2: Attendees at the Train the Trainers workshop

Name	Country	Role
Stephan Lewandowsky	UK	JITSUVAX project coordinator
Ginny Gould	UK	JITSUVAX project manager
Dawn Holford	UK	JITSUVAX researcher
Emma Anderson	UK	JITSUVAX researcher
Harriet Fisher	UK	JITSUVAX researcher
Huda Hajinur	UK	Nurse practitioner and community outreach expert
Arnaud Gagneur	Canada	Paediatrician and Motivational Interviewing trainer
Patrick Berthiaume	Canada	Sexologist and Motivational Interviewing trainer
Renata Mares	Canada	Public health nurse and researcher
Pierre Verger	France	JITSUVAX co-investigator
Amanda Garrison	France	JITSUVAX researcher
Romain Lutaud	France	General practitioner
Eva Mitilian	France	General practitioner
Alexis Bernal	France	General practitioner
Charlotte Goolaert	France	General practitioner
Lucie Cattaneo	France	Research assistant
Anna Soveri	Finland	JITSUVAX co-investigator
Linda Karlson	Finland	JITSUVAX researcher
Otto Maki	Finland	JITSUVAX postgraduate student
Philipp Schmid	Germany	JITSUVAX researcher
Nora Schmid-Küpke	Germany	Psychologist and health communication expert
Julia Neufeind	Germany	Clinician and Lead on vaccine communication
Jule Schmitz	Germany	Communications researcher
Angelo Fasce	Portugal	JITSUVAX researcher

Summary of outcomes

The meeting was successful, with all participants agreeing that they benefitted from the training. An additional benefit was the opportunity for the wider JITSUVAX team to meet in person, many for the first time, and this has strengthened the bonds in an already strong and cohesive team. In addition, the inclusion of frontline HCP's and policymakers ensured that their needs and priorities were heard from the start and incorporated into the co-developed ERI training materials and methods.

All of the attendees, including the frontline HCP's, have expertise in training, research and/or policy and so brought a different perspective to the training than would be expected in most groups undergoing the training. In addition one of the aims of this meeting were to co-develop the training methods that will be used when providing training to HCP's. Therefore, while the MI training provided was very similar to what will be presented to HCP's in the study, the ERI training was not and instead focused on presentation of the method and rationale behind it, and discussion of the best practices for training HCP's.

An outline training manual and guidance was produced by the end of the meeting and the first draft of this has subsequently been completed by the JITSUVAX team for use in WP3.1. Feedback from use in this training will be fed into further development of this package. These training materials will form the backbone of the output in WP4 which will see the results of all studies and field testing carried out in JITSUVAX turned into a comprehensive suite of resources for policy makers, researchers, trainers and communication leads and HCP's. This will be actively and widely presented and disseminated to ensure that the JITSUVAX project is not just an academic exercise but a contribution towards enabling people to make informed decisions about vaccination that is actively used in practice.

Feedback

“I really appreciated the opportunity to learn about motivational interviewing and refutational interviewing in the context of vaccine hesitancy from the most renowned experts in the field. Their rich and extensive experience in conversations with vaccine hesitant patient and all the compelling examples was inspiring. It both helped me to develop more empathy with patient anxieties and worries and made me more confident in my ability to actually lead these conversations myself. I would recommend this training to all public health professionals who would want to have guidance on how to improve their communication about vaccines.” Julia Neufeind

“It was a great honor for me to learn from so many renowned scientists. The workshop gave me valuable scientific and practical insights into communication and it was a great opportunity to learn about and try out motivational and refutational interviewing. I already notice how what I learned gives me a new perspective on my work.” Nora Schmid-Küpke

“I thought the program was really good. I work with marginalised communities that lack vaccine confidence and from a healthcare professional perspective it gave me tools and understanding of how I can refute misinformation about vaccines. I learned how I could support somebody through motivational interviewing and thought it was really good and something that all healthcare professionals could benefit from in order to increase vaccination uptake” Huda Hajinur.

Appendix

The Train the Trainers Syllabus

JITSUVAX – Train the Trainers Workshop

Coimbra, Portugal

Monday 20 February – Thursday 23 February 2023

Day 1 MONDAY: Motivational Interview (led by Gagneur)

9:00 Introduction
Presentation of each trainer and participants Exercise
Presentation of learning objectives

9:40 Pre-test MISI
Three natural styles of communication

10:20 – 10:40 coffee break

10:40 Identification of patients' needs in VH
Information overload
Determinants of vaccination intention

11:00 Vaccine hesitancy continuum

11:20 Vaccine hesitancy experience
Shark experience
Three components of motivation

12:00 – 13:00 LUNCH

13:00 MI definition and scientific data
Resistance and discord
Spirit of MI

15:00 MI skills in immunization
Exercises, with coffee break as needed

17:30 End

Day 2: TUESDAY: Motivational Interview (led by Gagneur)

9:00 MI use in VH synthesis

9:30 Practical exercise MI in immunization
Exercises, with coffee break as needed

12:30 Post-test MISI
Conclusion of MI

13:00 – 15:00 LUNCH

15:00 Stream 1: Introduction to jiu-jitsu approaches (including jitsuvax.info) (led by Soveri, Holford, Karlsson)

Stream 2: WP3.1 planning meeting (led by Lewandowsky, Verger, Schmid, Fasce)

Stream 3: (from 4.30 pm) Review WP3.3 video scripts (Holford, Finn, Gagneur, Anderson, Gould)

17:00-17:30 End

Day 3: **WEDNESDAY: Empathic refutational interview (ERI)** (led by Lewandowsky & Holford)

9:00 Overview of ERI

9:30 The science behind the ERI
Taxonomy of roots and its implications
Components of the ERI and empirical support

10:30 – 10:50 coffee break

10:50 Arguments, roots and affirmations
Classifying arguments and selecting roots and affirmations
The Jitsuvax.info website
Exercises

12:00 – 13:00 LUNCH

13:00 Practising the ERI
Exercises, with coffee break as needed

16:00 Consolidation of ERI training

16:30 Summary and wrap-up

17:00 End

Day 4: **THURSDAY: Designing the training manual** (led by Lewandowsky and Holford)

8:30 Core JITSUVAX team: Drafting the manual "write-a-thon"
Other attendees: rest period

10:00 All convene for coffee break

10:20 Reviewing and developing the manual (Led by Lewandowsky)

12:30 LUNCH

Close of workshop