

From the “garrison” to the “beehive”. Metaphors and Framing Strategies in Vaccine Communication

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Abstract: In vaccine communication, metaphor might be an effective device for patients' education, that influences their views on vaccination and their willingness to get vaccinated, especially in case of vaccine hesitancy. However it is not clear which metaphors have more chances to be effective in vaccine communication to achieve population's compliance in the management of vaccine-preventable diseases. The paper presents different vaccine metaphors, ranging from the highly conventional military metaphor of the “garrison” to the novel metaphor of the “beehive” to explain the concept of “herd immunity”, and argues that their framing strategies do not necessarily involve a belief or an attitude change. Instead, a deliberate use of novel or “revitalised” metaphors might act as “perspective changer” in the addressees, thus becoming an effective communicative device for health operators to promote a change in people's attitudes toward vaccination and thus an optimal vaccination coverage.

Keywords: Metaphors, Vaccine communication, Framing, Persuasion.

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