

Actualités du Pharo 2022 – Session 6

Covid-19 epidemic in Guyana March 2020 to May 2022: variants, vaccines and people

Keywords: Guyana, Amazonia, Covid-19, vaccinepticism

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French Guyana, an overseas territory located in South America, is the region of France with the lowest vaccination coverage against Covid-19 in France.

The epidemics that have successively affected this Amazonian territory have differed from France in many respects: staggered epidemics, different viruses, heterogeneous coverage of the territory, different and sometimes "innovative" sanitary measures (interruption of domestic flights and flights to neighbouring countries, limitation of flights across the Atlantic, closure of borders, localised or generalised confinement, curfews of varying geometry, etc.), all in a multicultural and multi-ethnic territory with one of the highest rates of insecurity in the country.

In this context, the arrival of vaccination, which was supposed to be the way out, has instead been the subject of all sorts of controversy.

Locally, the health authorities and health workers have increased their interventions and actions in order to find solutions for getting the vaccines to the most remote areas of the Amazonian forest, while convincing the many communities that make up French Guyana of the benefits of this vaccination.

Conviction or, on the contrary, hesitation about vaccinations took many forms depending on the place and the community, from the coast to the inland communes, from the Oyapock river to the Brazilian border, to the Maroni, to the Surinamese border, from the "metros" to the Amerindians, from the Creoles to the Hmongs, from the Bushinengues to the Brazilians, etc.

In the melee, the health and administrative authorities, healthcare workers, associations, health mediators, epidemiologists, autonomist movements, anti-vax movements, politicians in French Guyana and in France, have all found themselves in the same situation, which has resulted in an atmosphere that is rather less harmful than in the West Indies, but with the lowest vaccination coverage in France.

These phenomena, which receive little media coverage in France, have had a profound effect on Guyanese society. We offer you here a presentation of the determinants of the epidemic and Covid19 vaccination in French Guyana from March 2020 to May 2022.