



22. DANI PSIHOLOGIJE U ZADRU  
22<sup>nd</sup> PSYCHOLOGY DAYS IN ZADAR

KNJIGA SAŽETAKA  
BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Odjel za psihologiju  
Sveučilište u Zadru

Department of Psychology  
University of Zadar

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## 5G, VACCINES AND VIDEOTAPE: BELIEF IN CONSPIRACY THEORIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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As a major societal crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic is fertile ground for conspiracy theories. This aspect of the “infodemic” might be especially dangerous since previous research consistently reported that medical conspiracy theories have been associated with a range of risky health behaviors. Our study was aimed to examine antecedents and consequences of COVID-19 related conspiracy theories, as well as their relations with other forms of irrational thinking. We developed Belief in COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories Scale for the purpose of our study (N = 407) which consisted of 13 items representing a sample of conspiracy theories circulating in digital media and conversations on social networks. In accordance with findings on the monological belief system, the scale was unidimensional ( $\lambda_1 = 6.34$ ) and highly reliable ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Belief in COVID-19 conspiracy theories correlated with measures of irrational thinking such as percentage of intuitive responses on Cognitive Reflection Test ( $r = .28$ ) and frequency of type I error responses on set of heuristic-and-biases tasks ( $r = .33$ ). Results also revealed that older ( $r = .11$ ) and less educated ( $r = -.27$ ) were more prone to believe in COVID-19 conspiracy theories, as well as those subjects who showed higher scores on measures of psychoticism-proneness ( $r = .27$ ), religiosity ( $r = .31$ ) and right-wing orientation ( $r = .36$ ). More importantly, belief in COVID-19 conspiracy theories was consistently related to each examined health-related behavior during the first wave of pandemic – it predicted adherence to COVID-19 guidelines ( $r = -.17$ ), use of pseudoscientific practices ( $r = .31$ ), and intentions to get vaccinated against COVID-19 ( $r = -.53$ ) – thus suggesting a possible effect on decisions that may lead to detrimental public health outcomes.

**Ključne riječi / Keywords:** COVID-19 conspiracy theories, irrational beliefs, health behavior, pseudoscience

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