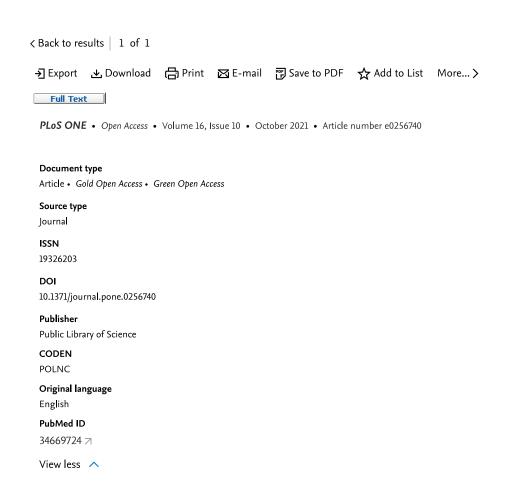


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# Politicization of COVID-19 health-protective behaviors in the United States: Longitudinal and cross-national evidence

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>b</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA, United States

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>c</sup> Laboratory of Psychology, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>d</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, United States

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#### **Abstract**

During the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. conservative politicians and the media downplayed the risk of both contracting COVID-19 and the effectiveness of recommended health behaviors . Health behavior theories suggest perceived vulnerability to a health threat and perceived effectiveness of recommended health-protective behaviors determine motivation to follow recommendations. Accordingly, we predicted that—as a result of politicization of the pandemic—politically conservative Americans would be less likely to enact recommended health-protective behaviors . In two longitudinal studies of U.S. residents, political conservatism was inversely associated with perceived health risk and adoption of health-protective behaviors over time. The effects of political orientation on health-protective behaviors were mediated by perceived risk of infection, perceived severity of infection, and perceived effectiveness of the health-protective behaviors . In a global cross–national analysis, effects were stronger in the U.S. (N = 10,923) than in an international sample (total N = 51,986), highlighting the increased and overt politicization of health behaviors in the U.S. © 2021 Public Library of Science. All rights reserved.

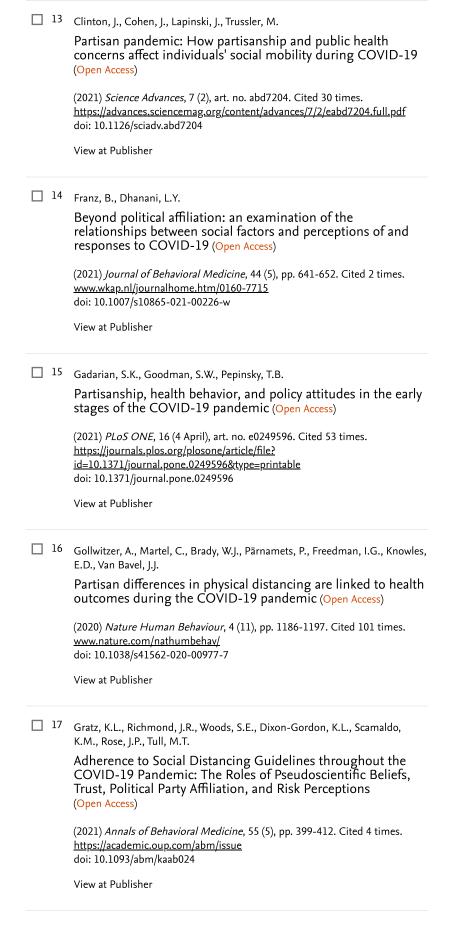
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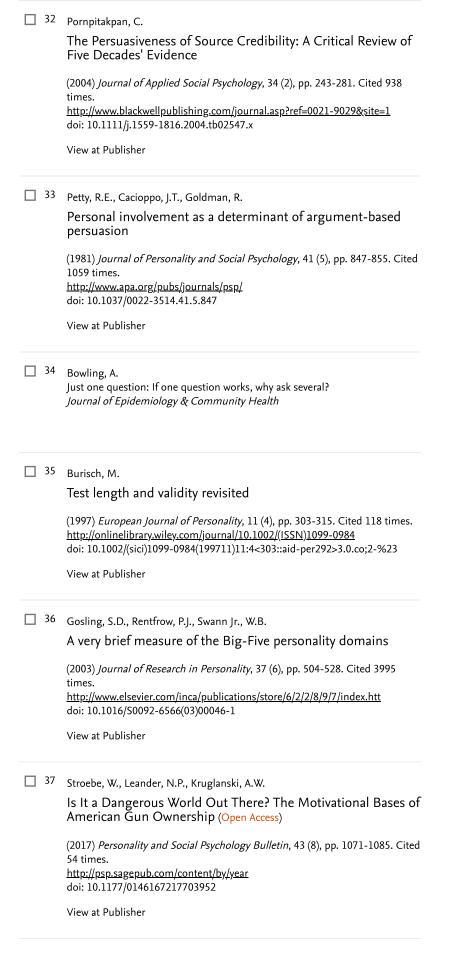
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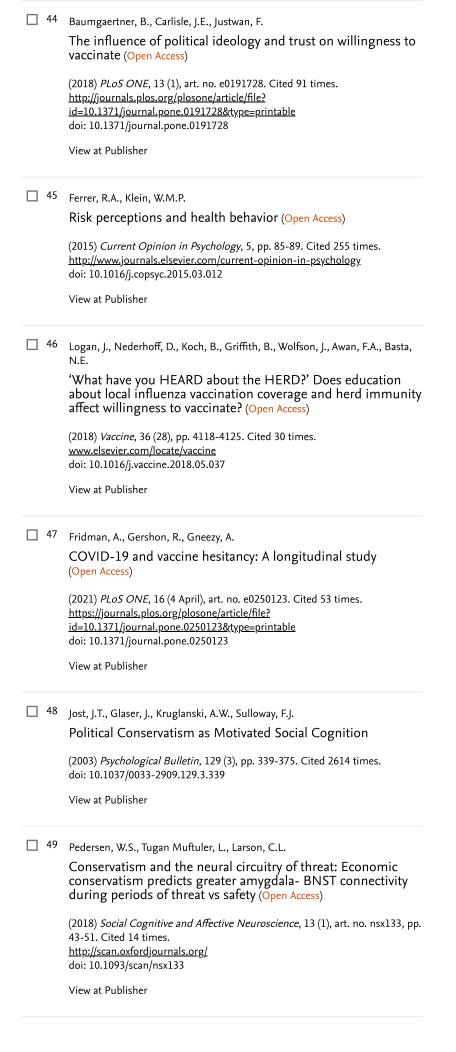


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	∠ vanDellen, M.R.; Department of Psychology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA, United States; email:mvd@uga.edu
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