Digital influencers—everyday people who author their own blogs and make significant impacts within their online communities—have changed the way we communicate about health online. These everyday people have earned the trust of many people and consequently, health and medical organizations are adopting influencer/blogger strategies for health promotion. However, the academic literature is lagging when it comes to examining how health messages from these influencers impacts the health attitudes, beliefs and behaviors among mothers, especially those whom are skeptical of certain health practices, such as vaccinating their children or serving their children dairy milk. This research makes a significant contribution by filling this gap by examining how health and science beliefs, perceptions of trust, and different source and message strategies influence promotional health message interpretation. An online experiment was conducted by recruiting moms from Facebook groups where these health issues are often topic of discussions.

Findings suggest that while health professionals are more highly trusted sources than mom bloggers, mom bloggers had a larger influence on health behaviors in comparison to health professionals. Data supports the use of a layperson source and narrative message style as the most effective strategy for positively influencing attitudes and behaviors among skeptical moms. Results also reflect the need for long-term strategies increasing public trust in scientific endeavors so that health promotion in the future can be as effective and influential as possible.