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Community Attitudes Towards Covid-19 Vaccination

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John O'Keefe

Additional data collection by Michael Mikheal

▼ **Community Attitudes
Towards COVID-19
Vaccination**

Problem Identification

- Uncertainty or unwillingness to receive vaccinations are major barriers to combating the COVID-19 pandemic long-term.
- Vaccinations depend on herd immunity and a high percentage of the population being inoculated to protect the most vulnerable members of society that are unable to be vaccinated.
- It has been demonstrated that scientific sounding misinformation can significantly reduce an individual's willingness to get a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Attitudes towards vaccination have been changing, with 71% of people in December of 2020 saying that they would definitely or probably get a COVID-19 vaccine, up from 63% in September of 2020. This still falls far short of the ~95% immunization required for herd immunity.



Public Health Costs

- The direct health costs of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States are currently unknown but are likely in the hundreds of billions of dollars.
- The economic impact of the pandemic is massive and incalculable. U.S. unemployment rate is currently at 6.3%, and reached a high of 14.8% during the height of the pandemic. The full reopening of the economy will require significantly reducing caseload and risk, largely through vaccinations.
- Vaccinations have been partially attributed to the major reduction (~50%) of COVID-19 cases in nursing homes since the beginning of 2021.



Community Perspective

“Along with wearing masks, the COVID-19 vaccine is a valuable tool to fight our global pandemic. I am encouraging all of my patients to get the vaccine when they are eligible, with very rare exceptions. Being unvaccinated may put patients at risk of more serious disease (if they are infected with COVID-19) and will likely prolong the pandemic.”

-Gordon Powers, MD Milton Family Practice

“Vaccinations will be essential to eventually lifting pandemic restrictions. We need our schools, restaurants, and communities back, and vaccinations are a big part of that. I would recommend that all of my patients get vaccinated if they are able so we can all get back to a normal life.”

-Melisa Gibson, MD Milton Family Practice

Intervention and Methodology

- A survey was designed to evaluate patients' attitudes toward receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, as well as comparing that against their sources of information on the vaccine and how often they receive another common vaccine, the flu shot.
- Surveys were conducted on adult patients at Milton Family Practice and Berlin Family Health.

COVID-19 vaccination questionnaire - All information provided is anonymous and confidential

Please Circle Your Answers, you may choose more than one answer for question #3

1. Have you received a vaccine (at least one dose) against covid-19?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - If **YES**, which one?
 - a. Pfizer
 - b. Moderna
2. If **NO**, would you voluntarily receive a Covid-19 vaccine when it becomes available to your group?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Unsure
 - If **YES**, do you have a preference in the brand of vaccine?
 - a. Pfizer
 - b. Moderna
 - c. no preference
 - If **NO** or **UNSURE**, what are your concerns?

3. What are your preferred sources of information about the vaccine?
 - a. Traditional newspapers (paper or online)
 - b. Local News
 - c. Cable NewsWhich one (s) _____
 - d. Government Websites (CDC, VT Dept of Health, Etc.)
 - e. Primary Peer reviewed articles (NEJM, Nature, Science)
 - f. Social MediaWhich one(s) _____
 - g. Other Sources (please list) _____
4. How often do you receive a flu (influenza) vaccine?
 - a. Every year
 - b. Some years
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never

Results

- N=21 (16 Milton, 5 Berlin)
- 3 patients (14%) had already been vaccinated (2 Pfizer, 1 Moderna)
- Of the remaining patients 17 (94%) were willing to get the vaccine and 1 was unsure. No patients refused to take the vaccine outright if offered to their age group.
- 86% of patients surveyed get their influenza vaccine yearly. 9% never get a flu vaccine.
- The most popular sources for vaccine information were local news (52%), government sources such as CDC or VT Dept of Health (52%), and newspapers (14%). Less common sources included social media (9%), cable news (9%), primary peer reviewed articles (6%) and medical professionals (6%).
- The one patient who was unsure about getting the vaccine cited “rapid vaccine creation and unknown long-term effects”. They were also notably the only patient who listed Facebook as a news source for the vaccine.



Evaluation of Effectiveness and Limitations

- Our results show that the Vermonters surveyed widely approve of the vaccines available against COVID-19, and that some of them have already begun their vaccination cycle. This is encouraging but does not provide much useful information to providers wishing to reach people who may feel differently that did not participate in the survey.
- Our most significant limitation was the number of people surveyed. We were unable to provide surveys to every patient that came to the clinic due to COVID-19 restrictions, and were instead limited to the patients that we saw in clinic ourselves. Other possible limitations include unwillingness of people who are not willing to get the vaccine to disclose their opinions on the matter, and the limited demographics of the patients surveyed due to the number of responses.



Future Projects

- A continuation of this survey at many different sites with a higher number of responses would significantly improve the quality of data and provide more insight into which people are less likely to be vaccinated.
- A follow up informational pamphlet about the vaccines could be paired with this survey for anyone who wants additional information about the vaccines available.

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