

Identifying Barriers to COVID-19 Vaccination in Hispanic Populations

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Introduction

Vaccination hesitancy has always been an issue within marginalized communities. This is why it came as no surprise when the COVID-19 vaccine was met with resistance upon its release¹. However, it has been many years since the FDA approved the first COVID-19 vaccine and on some level, COVID-19 has become a part of our daily lives. This means that people have had time to determine how they feel about the COVID-19 vaccine and reflect on their decisions to receive or decline the vaccine.

There are many reasons as to why people choose to receive or decline the COVID-19 vaccine. This ranges from barriers to getting vaccinated, concerns about the vaccine itself, and sources used to receive information. Many institutions have collected data to try and better understand why there was so much hesitancy towards the COVID-19 vaccine in many different populations, such as the Hispanic population. However, the Hispanic population is extremely large and diverse so they cannot all be grouped together as a singular population. There are a variety of characteristics and factors that influence a person’s decision to get vaccinated.

Aims and Objectives

This project aims to further our understanding as to why certain communities are hesitant to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and to verify if something such as language of preference can impact a person’s decision to get vaccinated.

The goals of this project include:

1. Identify barriers to COVID-19 vaccination in Hispanic populations
2. Assess the reasons as to why Hispanic individuals either decided to receive the COVID-19 vaccine or decided to not receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
3. Determine whether there is a difference in vaccine hesitancy between Hispanics whose language of preference is Spanish compared to Hispanics whose language of preference is English.

Methods

An online survey was developed and distributed via Qualtrics in both English and Spanish which collected both demographic and vaccination information. The following questions were asking on the survey:

Demographic Information:

1. Do you identify as Hispanic?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your age range?
4. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
5. What is your language of preference?

Vaccination Status:

1. Are you vaccinated?
2. Which brand of vaccine did you receive?
3. If yes, do you have all of the doses?
4. If yes, have you have received a booster shot?
5. Have you received a second booster shot?

Reasons for vaccination:

1. If you have received any vaccinations for COVID-19, why did you decide to get vaccinated?
2. If you have not received any vaccinations for COVID-19, why did you decide to not get vaccinated?
3. Do you have any barriers for getting vaccinated?
4. Do you have any reasons you cannot get vaccinated?
5. From what sources do you receive information about COVID-19?
6. What concerns do you have about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Final Questions:

1. If you have not received a vaccination, are you seriously planning on getting one soon?
2. If you have received the vaccine, do you regret having received it?

The link to this survey and a QR code were distributed online via social media. Participants were not allowed to continue in the survey if they did not identify as Hispanic. The data was analyzed by the primary author.

Results

Table 1. Language of Preference for Participants.

Language of Preference	Number of Participants	Percentage
English	45	90%
Spanish	5	10%

Table 2. Vaccination Status of Participants.

Vaccination Status	Number of Participants	Percentage
Vaccinated	48	96%
Not Vaccinated	2	4%

Table 3. Reasons Why Participants Were Vaccinated.

Reasons for Vaccination	Number of Participants	Percentage
To Take Care of Loved Ones	41	85%
To Take Care of Myself	39	81%
To Help My Community	29	60%
My Job/School Made Me	16	33%
Somebody Else Convinced Me	2	4%

Table 4. Reasons Why Participants Unvaccinated.

Reason for Not Vaccinating	Number of Participants	Percentage
Could Not Leave Work/School	1	50%

Table 5. Sources of information about Vaccines.

Source of Information	Number of Participants	Percentage
Internet	40	80%
TV News	28	56%
Social Media	28	56%
People I Know	18	36%
Newspaper	7	14%
Radio	3	6%
CDC Website	2	4%
Work	1	2%

Conclusions

Although a large number of participants were vaccinated, many stated that vaccine side effects were of concern to them and most of the participants received information via the Internet. In terms of not being vaccinated, one participant stated that they were not vaccinated because they did not feel like getting it and the other stated that they had distrust towards the vaccine.

It should be noted that the sample size was not large enough for sufficient analysis in terms of how language preference affects vaccine hesistancy. Unfortunately, only 2 of the 50 participants stated that Spanish was their language of preference. There was also not many participants who were not vaccinated which would have given more insight as to why people were not willing to get vaccinated.

This data and project overall demonstrates the importance of distributing vaccination information to patients which clearly states potential side effects and in a way that is easily understood to the average reader on the Internet.

References

1. Wang K, Wong EL-Y, Ho K-F, et al. Change of willingness to accept COVID-19 vaccine and reasons of vaccine hesitancy of working people at different waves of local epidemic in Hong Kong, China: repeated cross-sectional surveys. *Vaccines*. 2021;9(1):62. doi:10.3390/vaccines9010062

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