

Attitudes Toward Participation in COVID-19 Vaccination Clinical Trials and COVID-19 Vaccination in Detroit, MI during the Pandemic

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Introduction: Vaccines for COVID-19 will play a crucial role in achieving herd immunity. Vaccines are a prerequisite for returning to pre-pandemic societal function. Vaccine trials are underway, and several COVID-19 vaccines have emergency use authorization. Various studies on attitudes toward participating in vaccination trials have identified factors that predict participation. We serve a population that has reason to feel skeptical about research participation and about vaccines. Thus, it would be useful to determine willingness to enroll in a trial and get vaccinated as well as barriers and concerns.

Objective: To determine which factors might predict willingness of patients in the Internal Medicine Clinic (IMD) and the Internal Medicine Specialty Clinic (IMSC) to participate in a COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial or obtain a COVID-19 vaccination.

Methods: We conducted a cross-sectional de-identified survey of patients seen at the IMSC or IMD over a six-week period. Patients were given a survey by the front desk staff and asked to complete it while they were waiting for their appointment. A brief consent letter was attached to the survey; filling out the survey was taken to indicate consent. Data were analyzed using Student's t-test and the chi-squared test.

Results: Respondents (n=206) had a mean age of 50.3 ± 14.7 years, 63.7% were female and 86.9% were black/African-American. Factors associated with willingness to be in a vaccine trial included younger age ($p=0.002$), male sex ($p=0.03$), received the flu shot ($p<0.0001$), having comorbidities ($p=0.02$) and white race ($p=0.08$). Factors associated with willingness to be vaccinated were: older age ($p<0.001$), white race ($p=0.005$), having comorbidities ($p<0.001$) and not being diabetic ($p=0.02$). Barriers to vaccination included: side effects, 67.1%; vaccine safety, 65.1%; effectiveness, 63.4%; and lack of trust in clinical research and vaccines, 51.9% for each. Over 80% of respondents said that they had no likelihood of becoming infected with COVID-19.

Conclusions: In the Detroit area, factors associated with willingness to be in a trial or get vaccinated included age, sex, race, willingness to get other vaccines and presence of comorbidities. The high percentage of respondents who did not perceive a risk of COVID and the substantial concerns about vaccines demonstrate areas for community education.