3 March 2021

BRIEF19

A daily review of covid-19 research and policy

RESEARCH BRIEFING

Vaccine hesitancy and political affiliation.

Vaccine hesitancy is a well described phenomenon amongst Americans, and a new study sought to evaluate the rate of covid-19 vaccine hesitancy and to unveil predictors of the types of individuals who may be more associated with refusal to get a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine. This paper (co-authored by a member of the *Brief19* staff) was published yesterday on the preprint server, medRxiv, meaning it has not yet undergone peer review.

Nearly 1,800 participants were recruited across the United States to participate in a 43-question survey. The group, 53 percent of whom were female, averaging 38 years old, answered questions designed to determine which types of individuals balked at vaccines. Participants took the survey in mid-November, a few weeks before EUA authorization for the first covid-19 vaccines was granted by the US Food and Drug Administration.

The results showed that almost 40 percent of those surveyed were either hesitant or refused to get a covid-19 vaccine. In particular, those with Republican party affiliation and those who had not received a seasonal influenza shot in the past five years were the most likely to report being unlikely to sign up for a coronavirus vaccine. Other predictors of hesitancy included being female, Black, or having a high school education or less.

Most of the concerned individuals were worried about vaccine side effects, had doubts about their efficacy, and wanted more information about the particular vaccines. However, this survey was conducted before the release of the three vaccines now on the market and a good deal of subsequent safety and efficacy data has since become public, so attitudes may have changed. Interestingly, the majority of individuals who intended to get vaccinated preferred to receive it at either their primary care doctor's office, pharmacies, or dedicated vaccine locations.

On one hand, the study has several limitations: it was conducted online with a younger, tech savvy population. Still, it remains worrisome that approximately 40 percent of participants were dubious about receiving a potentially life-saving inoculation. Future efforts this year should aim at educating the public about the safety and efficacy of the currently available covid-19 vaccines, targeting patient populations most likely to avoid the shot.

—Joshua Niforatos, MD MTS

POLICY BRIEFING

New rapid saliva-based test receives FDA approval.

On Monday the US Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for a saliva-based test covid-19 developed by the University of Illinois. Although just recently approved, the covidSHIELD test has reportedly been used over one million times as part of a screening program for the University's students. The test offers results in approximately 24 hours.

Interestingly, while University officials tout having sold the test to "dozens of organizations around the world," the EUA restricts the laboratories able to process these samples to those approved by the University of Illinois Office of the Vice President for Economic Development and Innovation. The EUA also waives "good practice manufacturing requirements" for the continued use and distribution of this test.

In a statement, the Governor of Illinois, J.B. Pritzker, said that with the EUA designation, he will delegate $20 million in CARES Act money for one million tests to be distributed to twelve other Illinois public universities and forty-eight community colleges. *Various.*

—Brief19 Policy Team

Kimi Chernoby, MD, JD, Policy Section Founder, Joshua Niforatos, MD Research Section Editor, Frederick Milgrim, MD, Editor-at-Large, Barb Cunningham, Copy-editor, Benjy Renton, Thread-of-the-Week, Anna Fang, Week-in-Review. Megan Davis, social media. Kane Elfman PhD, Publishing and Design. Jeremy Samuel Faust MD MS, Editor-in-Chief. http://www.brief19.com/ Twitter: @brief_19 submissions@brief19.com. Brief19 is a daily executive summary of covid-19-related medical research, news, and public policy. It was founded and created by frontline emergency medicine physicians with expertise in medical research critique, health and public policy.