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Original Article

Survey on Awareness of COVID-19 Vaccination for General Population Residing in Pondicherry

Yasir Malik, Shivashankar Kengadaran, Divvi Anusha

Department of Public Health Dentistry, Indira Gandhi Institute of Dental Sciences, SBV, Puducherry, India

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Abstract

Introduction: Government of India has selected the priority groups who will be vaccinated on priority as they are at higher risk. The first group includes health-care workers because they are at high risk of contracting the infection and protecting them helps sustain essential health services. The vaccination of frontline workers will help in reducing the societal and economic impact by reducing COVID-19 mortalities. The next group to receive COVID-19 vaccine will be persons over 50 years of age and persons under 50 years with comorbid conditions because there is high mortality in this category. Therefore, the aim of the study is to assess the awareness of COVID-19 vaccination for general population residing in Pondicherry. **Materials and Methods:** A questionnaire was prepared and sent using Google Forms through e-mail and WhatsApp and the participants were asked to submit the response. A total of 135 responses were received. Data were entered in Microsoft Excel sheet and then subjected to data analysis using SPSS software version 23. Descriptive statistics were expressed by means of frequency and percentage. **Results:** About 80% of the participants were aware of the COVID-19 symptoms. 91.7% of the participants were very much aware that COVID 19 is a viral disease. Majority of them answered that COVID-19 vaccination may help them to defend infectious disease condition. 66.4% of them reported that vaccination could cause you adverse effect and 52.2% felt that only vaccination could help us from COVID-19 virus. Only 46.3% of the participants were willing to get vaccinated. **Conclusion:** The present study shows that there is lack of appropriate awareness on COVID-19 vaccination among general population. People in Pondicherry are fear of adverse effect that causes by vaccination.

Keywords: COVID-19, cross-sectional survey, general population, Pondicherry

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Address for Correspondence:
Dr. Shivashankar Kengadaran
Department of Public Health Dentistry, Indira Gandhi Institute of Dental Sciences,
SBV, Puducherry, India.
E-mail: shiva.freee@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Vaccine trials are under different stages of finalization. Government of India is geared to launch a vaccine for COVID-19 soon. Based on the potential availability of vaccines, the Government of India has selected the priority groups who will be vaccinated on priority as they are at higher risk. The first group includes health-care and frontline workers. The second group to receive COVID-19 vaccine will be persons over 50 years of age and persons under 50 years with comorbid conditions. It is advisable to receive the complete schedule of COVID-19 vaccine for protecting one-self against this disease and also to limit the spread of this disease to the close contacts, including family members, friends, relatives, and co-workers. Vaccines will be introduced in the country only after the regulatory bodies clear it based on its safety and efficacy.

The vaccines must be proven safe and effective in large (phase III) clinical trials. Some large clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccine candidates have reported encouraging preliminary results, and many other potential vaccines are being developed.[1] A series of independent reviews of the efficacy and safety evidence is required, including regulatory review and approval in the country where the vaccine is manufactured, before the WHO considers a vaccine product for prequalification.

Part of this process also involves the Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety. Officials in individual countries decide whether to approve the vaccines for national use and develop policies for how to use the vaccines in their country based on the WHO recommendations. The vaccines must be manufactured in large quantities, which are a major and unprecedented challenge – all the while continuing to produce all the other important life-saving vaccines already in use.

As a final step, all approved vaccines will require distribution through a complex logistical process, with rigorous stock management and temperature control. The impact of COVID-19 vaccines on the pandemic will depend on several factors. These include factors such as the effectiveness of the vaccines; how quickly they are approved, manufactured, and delivered; and how many people get vaccinated. Most scientists anticipate that, like most other vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines will not be 100% effective.

The WHO is working to help ensure that any approved vaccines are as effective as possible, so they can have the greatest impact on the pandemic. COVID vaccine will be introduced only when the safety is proven. As is true for other vaccines, the common side effects in some individuals could be mild fever, pain, etc., at the site of injection. Two doses of vaccine, 28 days apart, need to be taken by an individual to complete the vaccination schedule. Protective levels of antibodies are generally developed 2 weeks after receiving the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine.[2] Government of India has selected the priority groups who will be vaccinated on priority as they are at higher risk.

The first group includes health-care workers because they are at high risk of contracting the infection and protecting them helps sustain essential health services. The vaccination of frontline workers will help in reducing the societal and economic impact by reducing COVID-19 mortalities. The next group to receive COVID-19 vaccine will be persons over 50 years of age and persons under 50 years with comorbid conditions because there is high mortality in this category.[3-5]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study design was a conventional study conducted among the people regarding the COVID-19 vaccinations for general population residing in Pondicherry. This questionnaire was prepared and sent using Google Forms though e-mail and WhatsApp, and the participants were asked to submit the response. A total of 135 responses were received. Google Forms automatically tabulates the submitted responses in pie diagrams.

RESULTS

About 80% of the participants were aware of the COVID-19 symptoms. 91.7% of the participants were very much aware that COVID-19 is a viral disease. Majority of them answered that COVID-19 vaccination may help them to defend infectious disease condition. 66.4% of them reported that vaccination could cause you adverse effect and 52.2% felt that only vaccination could help us from COVID-19 virus. Only 46.3% of the participants were willing to get vaccinated [Table 1].

Questions	Option	Responses (%)
Gender	A. Male	100 (74.6)
	B. Female	34 (25.4)
Age		133 (99)
Are you aware of COVID-19 vaccination?	A. Yes	121 (91)
	B. No	12 (9)
What do you think of COVID-19?	A. Viral disease	121 (91.7)
	B. Bacterial disease	5 (3.8)
	C. Other disease	6 (4.5)
Are you aware of COVID-19 symptoms?	A. Yes	117 (88)
	B. No	12 (9)
	C. May be	4 (3)
Do you think this vaccination could help us from infectious disease condition?	A. Yes	50 (37.6)
	B. No	10 (7.5)
	C. May be	73 (54.9)
Do you think vaccination could cause you adverse effect?	A. Yes	33 (24.6)
	B. No	12 (9)
	C. May be	89 (66.4)
Are you aware of vaccination approved in India?	A. Yes	104 (77.6)
	B. No	30 (22.4)
Do you think only vaccination could help us from COVID-19 virus?	A. Yes	64 (47.8)
	B. No	70 (52.2)
If vaccination is available are you ready for the vaccination?	A. Yes	62 (46.3)
	B. No	27 (20.1)
	C. May be	45 (33.6)

Table 1 : Awareness regarding COVID-19 vaccination among the study subjects

DISCUSSION

This study is based on awareness on COVID-19 vaccination among general population. The study is focused in only one union territory in India that is Pondicherry. We have seen that most of the responders are eagerly waiting for a vaccine which is a good sign. Although some responders have many misconceptions and educational gaps, for which they do not want to take a vaccine. A proper awareness is needed to them. This study shows people eagerly waiting for a COVID-19 vaccine without any adverse effect. Due to COVID-19 situation, we are unable to reach the area community people. Some people do not know anything about vaccine, so there is an educational gap.

A proper awareness about vaccination is needed. Communities should listen to problems, find answers to the questions, and clear any misinformation.[6] As public trust in vaccination is relatively low, the COVID-19 vaccination program can succeed if there is a belief that the available vaccines are safe and effective.[7] Lucia et al. confirmed the need for transparency and to give answers for concerns about vaccine safety. Supporting COVID-19 vaccination through messages to the population and news releases and monitoring and controlling false news are crucial.[8] The majority of the participants believed that it is necessary to wear masks after taking the coronavirus vaccine. The public vaccine hesitancy may lead to a bad situation.

Although COVID-19 vaccines are now available, safety measures, for example, face masks, personal hygiene, and social distancing, are still important to protect personal and public health against coronavirus.[9] Most of the participants thought that immunity after infection with the virus is better than immunity after taking the vaccine. Natural immunity and vaccine immunity are likely to play a role in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and its associated mortality.[10-12]

CONCLUSION

The present study shows that there is lack of appropriate awareness on COVID-19 vaccination among general population. Moreover, majority of the patients were not willing of vaccination the fact that the vaccinations are available free in India. People in Pondicherry are fear of adverse effect that causes by vaccination. Hence, there is a need to educate and spread knowledge of proper and prevention of COVID-19, outreach programs, and relevant public awareness. It is suggested to educate population among the Pondicherry for the aware and knowledge of vaccinations.

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Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

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