

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Acceptance of COVID -19 vaccines and associated barriers among dental students at college of Dentistry, University of Basrah: A cross-sectional study

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ABSTRACT:

Dental students (DS) were classified to be at a considerable risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to the nature of their practice. Assess the attitudes of DS towards COVID-19 vaccines and look into possible motivators for students' acceptance levels were carried out. This descriptive, cross-sectional survey was conducted among dental students to assess DS familiarity with and willingness to be vaccinated against COVID-19. A total of 880 DSs completed the survey. About 70% of DS confirmed that they would take the vaccine voluntarily, without any hesitation/apprehension. While 16% were reluctant to take the vaccine, and 14 % refused to take the vaccine. Vaccine acceptance among DS differed by various sociodemographic characteristics. Males (192/260; 73.8 %) appear to be more accepted to be vaccinated than females. On the other hand, DS at the clinical stage (162/209; 77.5%) represents the most respondents who were most likely to receive a COVID-19 vaccine (P =0.002). Only two variables show a significant difference between males and females regarding reasons behind not being vaccinated: fear of needle injection and fear of rumours that the vaccine may cause infertility (p-value = 0,048, 0,013), respectively. Social Media (n= 552: 62.7%), family and friends (n=549: 62.4%) were chosen by DS as the most trustworthy resources for information about the COVID-19 vaccination. The study showed a high acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination among DS at the University of Basrah. The increased acceptance of COVID-19 immunization among DS is expected to benefit the community by raising awareness and vaccine uptake.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19 vaccines, SARS-CoV-2, Vaccination, dental students, acceptance, refusal, hesitant.

INTRODUCTION:

In December 2019, an unknown respiratory illness known as coronavirus emerged in Wuhan city, China. It quickly became a major outbreak in various cities across China and expand globally¹

Healthcare providers faced one of their biggest challenges in 2019 with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. It has been predicted that vaccination programs might control the pandemic if more than 67% of the population becomes immune due to vaccination or infection². A novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 outbreak was identified¹. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV2) emerged in late 2019, spreading to trigger a global pandemic in 2020. It is linked to the SARS-CoV and Middle Eastern Respiratory Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) that occurred in the 2000s in East Asia and the Middle East³. SARS-CoV2 is one of these zoonotic viruses that may originate