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Perspectives of Patients Attending Endocrinology Clinic About COVID-19 Vaccination.

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Introduction: The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was initially detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019. It spread rapidly, and in March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a worldwide pandemic. In May 2020, the 73rd World Health Assembly issued a resolution recognizing the role of extensive immunization as a global public-health goal for preventing and stopping transmission of COVID-19. Vaccine hesitancy is a great threat in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, as it prevents populations from reaching target thresholds of coverage necessary for herd immunity. It is important to know the determinants of vaccine hesitancy so that we can develop tools to combat it. The goal of our study was to evaluate patient perspectives on vaccination in our outpatient Endocrinology clinics.

Methods: We created a 7-question survey study which was offered to all patients waiting to be seen in our three Endocrinology clinic locations. We distributed and collected data from all clinics over a 3-week period (5/31/21-6/18/21). We used descriptive statistics to analyze this data.

Results: We collected 446 responses between three clinic locations, one urban and two suburban. 361 patients (81%) reported planning to or already having received the COVID-19 vaccine. 29 patients (7%) reported being unsure and 56 patients (13%) reported they did not plan to get

vaccinated. Among 85 patients with vaccine hesitancy, 51% are blacks, 35% are whites, 24% reported concerns related to side effects, 13% felt COVID was not as bad as the media portrays, 14% did not believe in vaccines and 29% wanted more data on side effects and efficacy before receiving it. Hesitancy is higher among blacks which is statistically significant ($P = 0.035$) and slightly higher at the urban compared to the suburban clinics (20% Vs. 15%; $p=0.197$). On chi square analysis, this had no significant difference.

Discussion: In the United States, COVID-19 vaccine acceptance ranged from 60 to 79% in five surveys among the general population. The rate of vaccination acceptance is higher in our study compared to general population. We suspect this is related to our clinic patients having better vaccine counseling as most patients have multiple risk factors for severe infection. The results did show higher vaccine hesitancy among black patients and those seen in our urban clinics suggesting the need for improvement in health literacy in these populations.

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