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Reasons for COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy in hemodialysis patients



To the editor: We read the excellent series of reports and editorial on the effectiveness of vaccination in patients on dialysis.¹ We would concur that although vaccination is less effective in these high-risk patients it remains critical to ensure our at-risk population remains as protected as possible. We would draw attention to the other significant challenge in such a population, namely hesitancy toward vaccination in patients on maintenance dialysis. Vaccine hesitancy is defined by the World Health Organization as a delay in acceptance or refusal of safe vaccines despite availability of vaccine services. We have completed vaccination of our large cohort of patients on renal replacement therapy and have found that while a substantial portion agreed to vaccination, hesitancy still exists in approximately 3% (12 of 378) of our patients. Various reasons for declining the vaccination by these patients are detailed in [Table 1](#). Because others have reported even higher rates of unvaccinated patients on dialysis (and between 8% and 41% may display vaccine hesitancy, depending on ethnicity, sex, age, and deprivation²), this represents a significant risk to the remaining cohort of patients and staff as we approach considering booster vaccinations this winter to minimize further COVID-19 disease spikes. A mandatory vaccination is a potential solution for minimizing the risk but could be considered a controversial approach that may interfere with patients' autonomy and choice. The nephrology community needs

Table 1 | Reasons given by patients on hemodialysis for not being vaccinated with any of the available COVID-19 vaccines

No. of patients	Reason
2	"Their choice"—no faith in the COVID-19 vaccines.
1	Noncompliant with all treatments and did not wish additional treatment.
1	Refused to give reason for not accepting a COVID-19 vaccine.
1	Verbally aggressive to staff when offered and not prepared to give reasons.
1	Believes COVID-19 is just flu and so will not have it—does not take flu vaccine.
1	Refused to consider COVID-19 vaccine and does not want to be approached. Again a patient who has general noncompliance.
3	We are young and we believe the media reports that it is all overhyped and we are not convinced of the benefit.
1	Recovery from a recent long-term illness but may consider it.
1	Stated they are allergic to vaccines, but this is not substantiated.

COVID-19, coronavirus disease 2019.

to provide recommendations that involve a universal thoughtful process.

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2. Razai M, Chaudhry UAR, Doerholt K, et al. COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy. *BMJ.* 2021;373:283–285.

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Humoral response after 3 doses of the BNT162b2 mRNA COVID-19 vaccine in patients on hemodialysis



To the editor: Dialysis patients are at increased risk of severe coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) infections.¹ Therefore, they are considered as being a priority population for COVID-19 vaccination. Because immune responses against vaccines are considerably reduced in this population,² a vaccination strategy including 3 doses of vaccine has been recommended for dialysis patients. However, few data exist concerning humoral response to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) vaccination with 3 doses of BNT162b2 (Pfizer–BioNTech) in patients on hemodialysis (HD). Moreover, about 90% of HD patients exhibit antibody positivity after 2