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## Letter to Editor

### Vaccine hesitancy over the upcoming COVID-19 vaccine – A thought-provoking concern with regards to the present scenario



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#### Dear Editor,

As of May 1, 2021, the confirmed COVID-19 cases worldwide have crossed 150 million and the total deaths are over 3 million [1]. Currently in India, Covishield (developed by the Serum Institute of India) and Covaxin (the first indigenous Indian COVID-19 vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech, Hyderabad and ICMR for 'MAKE IN INDIA' initiative) are available for vaccination [2]. But amidst the crisis, will the vaccines be accepted by everyone? "Vaccine hesitancy refers to either delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite the existence of vaccination services." The hesitancy is due to doubtful safety of the vaccine, its adverse effects and the misconceptions like vaccination causes deaths, infertility and stunting; lack of proper communication, lack of faith in the healthcare system, lower education background, the role of the media and local community leaders in misguiding the public and logistic difficulties [3].

To tackle COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, we must spread awareness through mass media and health education sessions, collaborate with the local leaders to convey the advantages of vaccination and incentivize immunization. The healthcare system must have a robust protocol to effectively assess the impact of the interventions [4]. The launch of the Co-WIN (Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network) mobile application is a big leap towards the COVID-19 vaccination drive. Currently, the fourth phase of vaccination is underway from May 1, 2021 and includes all those over 18 years of age [5]. Out of 1.3 billion Indian population, only 160 million have been vaccinated till date [1].

We would like to conclude that vaccination reduces the disease burden and medical expenses for preventable diseases. The healthcare system should employ skilled health care workers and proper infrastructure and enhance vaccination sites for smooth COVID-19 vaccination drive. Prompt reporting of adverse effects due to vaccination, assurance of immediate emergency medical care and availability of vaccines is essential.

#### Declaration of competing interest

All authors have participated in (a) conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of the data; (b) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and (c) approval of the final version.

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Amrit Mishra, Abhijit Vinodrao Boratne\*

Department of Community Medicine, Mahatma Gandhi Medical College & Research Institute, Puducherry, 607403, India

Yogesh Bahurupi

Department of Community & Family Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, 249202, India  
E-mail address: [yogesh.cfm@aiimshrishikesh.edu.in](mailto:yogesh.cfm@aiimshrishikesh.edu.in).

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [amritm@mgmcri.ac.in](mailto:amritm@mgmcri.ac.in) (A. Mishra), [abhijitvboratne@mgmcri.ac.in](mailto:abhijitvboratne@mgmcri.ac.in) (A.V. Boratne).

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